



Synchro Swim Ontario

Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2011-2012

ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA

Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2011-2012 (OAAP) is funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport (MHPS), and operated through the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Branch. The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold – OAAP* is directly related to the Enhanced Excellence goals of the *Canadian Sport Policy* – to improve the performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level; thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions. Specific objectives of the program are:

- a) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- b) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- c) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- d) To enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals;
- e) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- f) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

The program will provide direct financial assistance to Ontario junior-aged athletes through an “Ontario Card” designation. “Junior-aged athlete” is defined as those athletes who fall within the eligible age range for the Canada Games - 11 to 22 years of age. A PSO/MSO with a NSO-approved Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTADM) that identifies older athletes in the “Train to Train” and “Train to Compete” categories may apply to MHPS for a variation to this 11-22 age range. A PSO/MSO may choose to allocate a maximum of 30% of its carding allotment to athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO’s selection process.

The intent of the OAAP is to provide funding to individual athletes based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport, allowing them to pursue athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition.

How does it work?

In accordance with the OAAP guidelines, Synchro Swim Ontario is responsible for developing sport specific selection criteria and forming a Selection Committee that will apply the criteria to select those athletes who will be awarded Ontario Card status in 2011-2012. The Selection Criteria are approved by the Board of Directors and reviewed by MHPS staff. Nominated athletes will be required to sign and comply with an Athlete Agreement between the athlete and Synchro Swim Ontario. Carding status will be for one year starting April 1, 2011 ending March 31, 2012.

In 2011-2012, the MHPS allocated a certain amount of OAAP Ontario Cards to each eligible Provincial Sport / Multi-Sport Organization (PSO/MSO). Synchro Swim Ontario has been allotted a total of **10** Ontario cards.

Synchro Swim Ontario has also decided to exercise the option made available by MHPS to split up to 30% of its carding allotment (i.e. issue ½ cards in designated categories).

A minimum of 70% of the Ontario Cards will be allocated to what the MHPS defines as junior-aged athletes (11 to 22 years of age). A maximum of 30% of the Ontario Cards may be allocated to athletes no longer eligible for "junior athlete" status, (athletes 23 and over).

As a result, the 10 cards issued to Synchro Swim Ontario will be allocated as follows:

	Female
Full Cards – 8	8
Half Cards – 2 full cards = 4 half cards	2

Cards will be specifically allocated to the following categories/disciplines:

Category	Number of cards
13-15 FINA level athletes	2 Full = 4 Half Cards (female)
Junior FINA (aged 16-18) level athletes	8 Full Cards (female)

The Selection Committee, which has been approved by the PSO/MSO Board of Directors is comprised of the following members:

Janice McLaughlin, High Performance Chair, FINA B Judge
 Karen Seymour, Chair of the High Performance Selection and Hiring Committee
 Ted Smith, VP Finance Synchro Ontario Board of Directors
 Mary Jane Ling, National Level Coach and former Provincial Team Coach
 Jennifer Saunders, National Level 4 Judge

How much funding is available?

The exact level of funding for the 2011-2012 carding year will be determined by the MHPS after the total number of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status has been determined. Funding will be released prior to March 31, 2012.

How will the Synchro Swim Ontario Selection Committee decide who receives funding?

The Synchro Swim Ontario Selection Committee will use both the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport Eligibility Criteria and the Sport Specific Selection Criteria detailed below to determine which athletes will be nominated for Ontario Card status in 2011-2012:

Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport Eligibility Criteria:

All athletes must meet the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport's minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant.
- Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status.
- Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status are not eligible for Ontario Cards.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario. Exceptions shall be made **on a case specific basis by the PSO/MSO Selection Committee** provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing at the time of application/nomination for carding status that:
 - (a) He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. due to lack of facilities, coaching, competitions);
 - (b) He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province either because the course of study is not offered by an Ontario institution: or
 - (c) It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances that require the athlete to be out of the province.

The onus is on the athlete to demonstrate that he/she needs to be out-of-province for one of the above reasons. Any documentation required to clarify this “residency exception” must be submitted in its entirety to the **Synchro Swim Ontario** Selection Committee by no later than **December 2, 2011** in order to be considered. Documentation related to exception (a) above may include, but shall not be limited to, a letter from the athlete’s NSO outlining the following, as well as any other pertinent information:

- why the athlete is training out of province;
 - whether or not the athlete was formally invited by the NSO;
 - what additional opportunities are being made available beyond those provided in Ontario; and
 - any other information that will illustrate that the athlete is receiving enhanced training while still meeting all obligations of Synchro Swim Ontario.
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- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable;
 - Athlete must have entered into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with his or her PSO/MSO and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
 - Athlete must have met all terms and conditions of any previous *Quest for Gold* Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO in order to be eligible for consideration in 2011/2012;
 - Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program;
 - Athlete’s coach must be minimum Level 2 NCCP certified or trained status Competition Stream or the sport’s equivalent in the Instruction Stream;
 - Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
 - Athlete must be attending an educational institution full-time (i.e. elementary and secondary schools):
 - Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate that his/her training will not allow for full-time attendance or if an athlete requires special needs that preclude full or part-time attendance (e.g. Athlete with a disability (AWAD) athlete);
 - Athletes who have completed their area of study at the secondary level (i.e. high school) and who continue to train towards participation in major national or international competitions will also be considered;
 - If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of the Minister’s letter informing the athlete of acceptance into OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial team competitions;
 - Athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program. This does not include academic scholarships, bursaries, student grants, student loans, social assistance, disability pensions, and other forms of financial assistance that have nothing to do with competitive sport.
 - Eligibility will be limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 (“junior-aged” refers to chronological age, not a sport’s specific age category - only exception is for PSO/MSOs using 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO’s selection process.

Residency Exemption for Military Families: The one-year Ontario residency requirement is waived for any Ontario Card or Canada Card applicant who is a spouse or dependant of a: Regular Force member of the Canadian Forces; or Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service and who takes up residence in Ontario during the fiscal year. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please see the 2011-2012 *Quest for Gold* Athlete Handbook for details of this exemption, including a list of documents needed to verify eligibility for this waiver of the one-year Ontario residency requirement.

Important Notes:

- To be deemed a potential next generation national team athlete, the athlete must be age-eligible to compete on the national team in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding.

- An athlete that received Sport Canada Carding during any part of MHPS' fiscal year April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2011-2012 (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012.) The intent of this rule is to prevent athletes whose performance levels and rankings no longer qualify them for Sport Canada carding from taking an Ontario Card from a future national-level athlete. However, exceptions may apply and will be considered by the MHPS on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (ex. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc. Synchro Swim Ontario must contact MHPS in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nominations to seek individual exceptions.
- All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP application form. Cheques will be processed in the name of the eligible athlete.
- An athlete can only be nominated to receive *Quest for Gold* funding in one sport.
- Athletes who are attending any foreign post-secondary educational institution (including NCAA institutions) and are receiving an athletic scholarship in any sport are not eligible to receive OAAP support.
- The onus is entirely on the athlete to determine the impact of accepting OAAP funding on current or future NCAA eligibility and to decide whether or not to accept OAAP funding. The athlete will be required to acknowledge this onus and responsibility when signing the OAAP Ontario Card application form and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. Athletes are strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine the impact of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on current or future eligibility for a NCAA scholarship or on eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

National Collegiate Athletic Association

www.ncaa.org

NCAA Eligibility Center mailing address:

NCAA Eligibility Center

P.O. Box 7136

Indianapolis, IN 46207

Customer service hours - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday.

Toll-free phone number (U.S. callers) - Customer service line – 877-262-1492

Phone number (international callers) - Customer service line – 317-223-0700

Fax number - 317-968-5100

- In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between the MHPS eligibility requirements detailed in the MHPS binder provided to PSO/MSOs and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete and the eligibility requirements listed in the PSO/MSO Athlete Selection Criteria Document prepared by the PSO/MSO, the MHPS Binder/Athlete Handbook shall prevail.

Athletes funded through the Sport Canada AAP:

Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted for funding through Sport Canada's AAP within the government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card'. MHPS will contact those athletes directly at the mailing and email addresses the athlete provided to Sport Canada. Athletes are solely responsible for ensuring that their contact information is kept accurate and up to date at all times.

Sport Specific Athlete Selection Criteria:

The following sport specific athlete selection criteria will be utilized in the identification, ranking and selection of athletes for Ontario Cards:

Synchro Swim Ontario Sport-Specific Criteria:

1. Athletes must meet the “Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport Eligibility Criteria” (above) for an Ontario Card.
2. Athletes who were registered as a Competitive Synchronized Swimmer with Synchro Swim Ontario and competed with an Ontario club for the 2010-11 season.
3. Athletes who are registered Competitive Synchronized Swimmer members in good standing with Synchro Swim Ontario for the 2011-2012 season (By-law, Article II) and fulfil the Quest for Gold Program’s residency requirements.
4. Athletes who are still in pursuit of the “Quest for Gold” (“improve performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level; thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions”)
5. Athletes who are participating in a full competitive program for the 2011-2012 season (September 2011-June 2012) and whose intention is a commitment to reach the National Team level, which is defined as follows:
 - a. For athletes 13-15 FINA for 2011-2012:
 - Minimum of 13-15 FINA Team Competition in National Stream Competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*) and 13-15 FINA Figures in National Stream competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*), and may include extra routines such as solo, or duet, and/or free combination routine.
 - In the event that a club cannot field a National Stream 13-15 Team, the athlete must participate in National Stream Competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*) in three of five possible events: 1. Figures; 2. Solo; 3. Duet; 4. Team; 5. Free Combination Routine.
 - In the event that there is only one 13-15 National Stream athlete in a club, they must compete in a minimum of two National Stream events (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*)
 - b. For athletes Junior FINA in 2011-2012:
 - Minimum of team competition in National Stream Junior FINA Competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*), and Junior FINA Figures in National Stream Competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*) and may include extra routines such as solo or duet and free combination routine.
 - In the event that a club cannot field a National Stream Junior FINA Team, the athlete must participate in National Stream Competition (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*) in three of five possible events: 1. Figures; 2. Solo; 3. Duet; 4. Team; 5. Free Combination Routine.
 - In the event that there is only one Junior FINA National Stream athlete in a club, they must compete in a minimum of two National Stream Junior FINA events (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*)
 - c. For athletes Senior in 2011-2012:
 - Involves competing in two of seven Senior FINA disciplines (entry into 2012 Provincial Trials*) which may include any combination of Technical Solo, Free Solo, Technical Duet, Free Duet, Technical Team, Free Team, or Free Combination Routine. (Senior athletes as determined by FINA Rules and that are under 22 yrs of age). *Note: Team requirement may be fulfilled by*

participation on a 16-18 team as per Synchro Canada rules for the 2011-12 season only (CASSA rule 3.1.6.c)

***Provincial Trials Competition – January 21-22, 2012; Location TBA**

6. Order of Card Allotments:

- a. Athletes, in ranking order, who made (regardless of declining or accepting the offer) a 2011 National Team (first considering Junior Top 16 in ranking order and then the 13-15 National Team Top 14 in ranking order), but who did not receive Sport Canada Carding, and who meet the criteria in 1-4. Ranking order is determined based on Synchro Canada's posted "Final Order of Finish" at:

- For Juniors, the 2011 Junior National Team Trials, April 27-May 1, 2011, Calgary, AB
- For 13-15, the 2011 13–15 National Team Trials, June 1-5, 2011, Gatineau, QC

Ties are broken by re-ranking the tied swimmers based on the combined Figure scores from Phase 1 and Phase 2 from the appropriate National Team Trials results as dated above.

- b. Athletes who qualified and participated in 2011 National Team Trials (by ranking order), first considering Junior National Team Trials and then 13-15 National Team Trials and who meet the criteria in 1-4. Ranking order is determined based on Synchro Canada's posted "Final Order of Finish" at:

- For Juniors, the 2011 Junior National Team Trials, April 27-May 1, 2011, Calgary, AB
- For 13-15, the 2011 13–15 National Team Trials, June 1-5, 2011, Gatineau, QC

Ties are broken by re-ranking the tied swimmers based on the combined Figure scores from Phase 1 and Phase 2 from the appropriate National Team Trials results as dated above.

- c. Participating members of the 2011 Junior Provincial Team (in ranking order) from the 2011 Provincial Team Trials, May 14-15, 2011 in Brantford, ON. Ranking order is determined based on Synchro Swim Ontario's posted "Final Order of Finish", and who meet the criteria in 1-4.

Ties are broken by re-ranking the tied swimmers based on the Phase 2 Figure scores from the Provincial Team Trials event as dated above.

- d. Participating members of the 2011 13-15 Provincial A Team (in ranking order) from the 2011 Provincial Team Trials, May 14-15, 2011 in Brantford, ON. Ranking order is determined based on Synchro Swim Ontario's posted "Final Order of Finish", and who meet the criteria in 1-4.

Ties are broken by re-ranking the tied swimmers based on the Phase 2 Figure scores from the Provincial Team Trials event as dated above.

7. An athlete who previously received Quest for Gold funding and entered into a Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement must have complied with the terms of that agreement to the satisfaction of the PSO (Synchro Swim Ontario) in order to be considered for funding in fiscal 2011-2012.

Category	Number of cards
Full Cards	10 female

Category	Number of cards
13-15 FINA	2 full cards split into 4 half cards (female)
Junior FINA	8 full cards (8 female)

Rankings will be compiled by the Selection Committee for all athletes that submit an Athlete Selection Application Form. **See the “To Apply” section for instructions.**

Each athlete must enter into an athlete agreement with Synchrono Swim Ontario (agreement will be supplied by Synchrono Swim Ontario to the athlete).

Provision for unused cards: If a Junior card goes unused after all eligible nominees (including alternates) turn down carding, it/they may be used for the 13-15 athletes who meet the criteria in 5c or 5d. If the two 13-15 half cards go unused after all eligible nominees (including alternates) turn down carding, they may be used as a full card for a Junior athlete who meet the criteria in 5c.

Breaking a Tie:

Breaking ties are outlined in 5a-5d.

Alternates: Synchrono Swim Ontario will also nominate alternates to those athletes nominated for Ontario Card status. Alternates will be those athletes who are ranked directly behind those athletes nominated for the allotment of Ontario Cards in a particular category/discipline. The names of alternates will be published along with the names of nominated athletes. If an athlete drops out or is removed from the OAAP an alternate will be substituted into that athlete’s position, provided that:

- Alternate is substituted within 2011-2012 fiscal year;
- An alternate is available from the same category/discipline/card level (Full/Half);
- Funding for athlete being substituted is still available within fiscal year (e.g. full funding for card has not already been paid out to athlete no longer in program).

To Apply:

All required information as on the Synchrono Swim Ontario Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program – Athlete Selection Application Form posted on the Synchrono Swim Ontario website (www.SynchroOntario.com) must be completed and submitted no later than **Friday, December 2, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.** to:

Synchrono Swim Ontario Quest for Gold Selection Committee
 128 Galaxy Boulevard, Etobicoke, ON M9W 1Y6
 Email: questforgold@synchroontario.com
 Phone number: 416-679-9522
 Fax number: 416-679-9535

Applications will **ONLY** be accepted via email to questforgold@synchroontario.com, fax to **416-679-9535** or mail/courier to the **Synchrono Swim Ontario office address**. Please do not submit applications via volunteers or staff members.

An email will be sent to the email provided on the application form no later than **Monday, December 5, 2011 at 4:00 p.m.** confirming receipt. It is the athlete’s responsibility to contact the Synchrono Swim Ontario office if this email is not received to be certain that the application has been successfully received by the deadline date.

The Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement will only come into effect if an athlete is selected and accepts carding status through the OAAP program.

Synchro Swim Ontario will publish or make known a draft list of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status by no later than **January 13, 2012**.

Appeals

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by the Synchro Swim Ontario Selection Committee or who have been nominated for a 'Half Card' versus a 'Full Card', where applicable will be allowed to appeal that decision by filing a "Notice of Appeal" with MHPS. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community, selected by the MHPS.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to:

- A) Whether or not the Selection Committee has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- B) Whether or not the Selection Committee applied the selection criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Please note that before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, he or she must first ask Synchro Swim Ontario for reasons explaining why he or she was not nominated for an Ontario Card.

If the athlete is not satisfied with the PSO/MSO's response, the athlete may submit a Notice of Appeal, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MHPS by 4 p.m. on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

Once MHPS has received the Notice of Appeal, it will share it with Synchro Swim Ontario, who will then have an opportunity to file a "Response" with MHPS by a specified deadline. The Response will outline why Synchro Swim Ontario believes that the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete should be upheld by the Appeals Committee. MHPS will share the Synchro Swim Ontario Response with the athlete.

If, after receiving the Synchro Swim Ontario Response, the athlete believes that Synchro Swim Ontario has raised new or additional reasons to justify the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario Card, then the athlete will have an opportunity to file a "Reply" with MHPS, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided template.

Once MHPS receives the Notice of Appeal, the Response, and the Reply (if applicable), it will provide those materials to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once. During its review of the appeals, the Appeals Committee reserves the right to request additional information from both the athlete and Synchro Swim Ontario.

After reviewing an appeal the Appeals Committee will have the authority to:

1. Direct Synchro Swim Ontario to redo the selection process using the correct criteria/process and submit a new list of nominated athletes;
2. Deny the appeal; or
3. Allow the appeal and nominate the appellant for carding status.

Once the Appeals Committee has reached its decision, it will contact the athlete and Synchro Swim Ontario in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore.

An athlete who has had his or her appeal denied is not permitted to submit a second appeal to the Appeals Committee on the same or different grounds.

Note: Synchro Swim Ontario is encouraged to resolve disputes or disagreements informally with athletes who have not been nominated to avoid, wherever possible, formal appeals.

The deadline for athletes to submit an “**Athlete’s Notice of Appeal**” to the Appeals Committee is
Cycle Two: January 26, 2012.

Appeals must be completed on the Notice of Appeal template below and will be directed to:

Quest for Gold Ontario Athlete Assistance Program Appeals Committee
c/o Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Branch
Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
Suite 702, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1S5

**2011/2012 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
Athlete’s Notice of Appeal Template**

The deadline for an athlete to submit an appeal to the Appeals Committee is 4:00 p.m. on October 27, 2011 for Cycle 1 and 4:00 p.m. on January 26, 2012 for Cycle 2. Appeals will only be accepted on the MHPS-provided Notice of Appeal template. **Please refer to the appeals section of your PSO/MSO’s Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.**

Return form to:

**Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport
777 Bay Street, Suite 702, Toronto ON M7A 1S5
Fax: 416-314-6301 Email: Scott.Cooper@ontario.ca**

Full Name _____
Address _____ City _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Sport / PSO _____

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply):

- Whether or not the PSO/MSO has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- Whether or not the PSO/MSO applied the section criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Provide a two-line summary of the reason for the appeal:

In the space below, (continue on to next page as needed) provide the reasons communicated to you by your PSO/MSO as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card. (Note: If your PSO/MSO did not provide you with any reasons, please make a request to your PSO/MSO to see these reasons before completing this Appeal Template.)

In the space below (continue on to next page as needed), provide a detailed account of the situation to allow the Appeals Committee to understand the basis of the appeal (please submit additional pages/supporting documentation as necessary):

PLEASE NOTE that all decisions of the Appeals Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant

Signature of Appellant

Date

All information provided to the Appeals Committee will be shared with both the Appellant and the PSO/MSO.