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PODIUM | PODIUM

2024 – 2025 Impact Report

A Message from the CEO



Own the Podium prioritizes its unique role in providing strong leadership, clear communication, and supporting a healthy culture of excellence to ensure the physical and psychological safety of everyone involved in Canada's high-performance sport system.

The landscape in sport has never been as challenging. We are all being tasked to do more with less resources.

That said, the resilience, perseverance, and adaptability of Canadian athletes and coaches were on full display at Paris 2024 where Team Canada delivered a best-ever performance at the Olympic Summer Games with a record 27 medals (9 gold, 7 silver, and 11 bronze), while the Canadian Paralympic Team wrapped up an outstanding performance there to earn 29 medals (10 gold, 9 silver, and 10 bronze).

Last summer, we anxiously watched every breathtaking moment in Paris. There were inspiring and gritty performances that resulted in goals achieved, surprising wins, heartbreaking losses, setbacks and surges. Through it all, we witnessed the power of the Canadian spirit, collaboration and teamwork on full display.

Each of the sports that won medals in Paris received technical guidance and support from Own the Podium, as well as financial support on behalf of the funding partners. Canada's sport and government partners made a commitment to winning well, and the results in Paris affirm the steady progress Canada's sport system has made in this space over the last quadrennial.

As we continue to celebrate the many inspiring summer performances, it is now time to shift our focus to closing the final gaps on the road to Milano/Cortina 2026 while building a bold plan for LA 2028.

Over the past year, Own the Podium revised its mission and mandate to reinforce the importance of supporting Olympic and Paralympic athletes in winning well, while launching a new strategic plan that will serve as the organization's roadmap through 2028. This is also reflected in the organization's new web site.

The mission is simple, yet, challenging: enhance the high-performance sport system by providing advice, deliver on our four strategic priorities (lead the pursuit of podium performances; strengthen the high-performance sport system; provide recommendations for optimal resource allocation aligned with funding partner priorities; and advocate for an increase in financial resources for high-performance sport) and continue to provide funding recommendations that align with our funding partners' priorities.

The bedrock foundation of our new, values-led, strategic plan is the goal of continuing to win well.

This will be done by supporting all national sport organizations in helping all athletes get to the start line, knowing they have done everything possible to achieve their goals in an environment that protects their health and safety. Own the Podium knows participant well-being, both physical and psychological, is a pre-requisite to achieving goals.

Own the Podium is driven to connect sport science support, research, and innovation activity with the realities of high-performance sport so that coaches, athletes, and support teams have access to the resources and services they require to achieve their performance goals. The Performance Sciences and Innovation team is focused on three core areas: culture of excellence; data sciences and performance analytics; and practitioner development and quality assurance.

None of this work is achievable without the continued collaboration with our dedicated partners at Sport Canada, Canadian Olympic Committee, and Canadian Paralympic Committee, along with new partnerships established with the Institute national du sport de l'expertise et de la Performance and Japan Sport Council. These organizations will play an important role in helping make Canada's sport system better.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff at Own the Podium, we would like to thank and congratulate everyone in Canada's high-performance sport community for their focus on this never-ending journey, and for their dedication and wide-ranging contributions in the pursuit of their performance goals.

In closing, we owe extreme gratitude to our outgoing Board members Chris Clark, Jeremy Hall, and Andrew Poje for their passion and commitment to growing sport in Canada.

We also welcome newcomers to the Board, including Saad Rafi, two-time Olympic gold medallist and three-time World Champion trampolinist, Rosie McLennan, along with Paralympic basketball athlete, Erica Gavel-Pinos. Rosie and Erica bring important athlete voices to Own the Podium's Board of Directors as it continues to prioritize the creation of a healthier, safer, more inclusive sport system.

We will never settle for good enough in this area of work and will always put people first so all Canadians can enjoy the benefit of sport. Sport, done well, is nation building and we will continue to focus on this in the build up to Milan-Cortina 2026 and LA 28.

The true power of sport is most impactful when we work together and support one another.

Anne Merklinger
Chief Executive Officer



Our Purpose

To support Olympic and Paralympic athletes in winning well.

Our Vision

For Canada to be leaders in Olympic and Paralympic sport.

Our Mission

Enhance the high-performance sport system by providing advice, delivering strategic priorities and providing funding recommendations that align with our funding partners' priorities.

OTP's Values

Own the Podium's strategic plan is guided by the organization's core values which include:

EXCELLENCE – Excellence is a habit. We strive for performance solutions every day within our team and with our partners to drive continuous improvement.

BOLD LEADERSHIP – Forging new paths takes courage. We challenge the status quo by encouraging innovation, supporting calculated risks and empowering the pursuit of excellence.

COLLABORATION – Working together is powerful. We work with our partners to achieve greater success by leveraging personal and collective strengths.

RESPECT – People and their perspectives matter. We show our teammates and partners that we care about the consequences of our actions and treat them with dignity by considering their ideas and opinions.

INTEGRITY – Integrity is the foundation of trust. We are committed to building mutual confidence and trust in all of our relationships through honesty, transparency and fairness.

ACCOUNTABILITY – Owning our actions is fundamental. We constantly meet our commitments and take responsibility for our behaviours and decisions.

DIVERSITY – Difference is valued. We believe in an inclusive culture that empowers all of us to connect, belong and grow.

Inspire Canadians through sport



Winning Well

Own the Podium is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to support Olympic and Paralympic athletes in winning well. It is our goal to help all athletes get to the start line and know they have done everything possible to achieve their performance objectives in a culture of excellence that protects their psychological and physical health and safety. For OTP, participant well-being, both physical and psychological, is a pre-requisite to all athletes, coaches and support staff achieving their performance goals.

Our Strategic Priorities

Over the past year, Own the podium rolled out a 2024-2028 Strategic Plan to serve as the organization’s road map in leading its purpose to support Olympic and Paralympic athletes in winning well. The plan is focused on four strategic priorities:

LEAD THE PURSUIT OF PODIUM PERFORMANCES

Enhance podium performances in targeted Olympic and Paralympic sports by providing technical guidance. This involves enhancing coaching, improving training and competition environments, delivering quality sport medicine and sport science services and backing NSO-led research programs to provide performance solutions and drive continuous improvement.

STRENGTHEN THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE SPORT SYSTEM

Lead the development of a positive high-performance sport system that achieves podium performances. This involves enhancing coaching expertise, empowering technical leaders and fostering a healthy culture of excellence across Olympic and Paralympic sports and providing technical support to non-targeted sports. OTP leads by example and sets the standard in all organizational aspects.

PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPTIMAL RESOURCE ALLOCATION
ALIGNED WITH FUNDING PARTNER PRIORITIES

Optimize resource allocation by providing funding recommendations based on NSO podium probabilities, athlete progress tracking, and identification of NextGen athletes on the podium pathway based on funding partner objectives.

ADVOCATE FOR AN INCREASE IN FINANCIAL RESOURCES
FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT

Our goal is to advocate for an increase in financial resources for high-performance sports by identifying efficiencies and gaps that hinder our ability to achieve more podium performances.

Paris 2024

Team Canada Brings Home Historic Medal Haul

Team Canada won a record 27 medals at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games (9 gold, 7 silver and 11 bronze) while the Canadian Paralympic Team wrapped up an outstanding performance at Paris 2024, earning 29 medals (10 gold, 9 silver, and 10 bronze).

Each of the sports that won medals in Paris received technical guidance and support from Own the Podium as well as financial support on behalf of the funding partners.

TEAM CANADA'S OLYMPIC HIGHLIGHTS:

317

Athletes celebrated the second largest haul in both gold medal count and total medals at a single Olympic Summer Games with 81 top-8 finishes

27

Medals were won across 15 sports for Canada

17

Of Canada's medals came from athletes competing in women's events

9

Of Canada's medals came from athletes competing in men's events

1

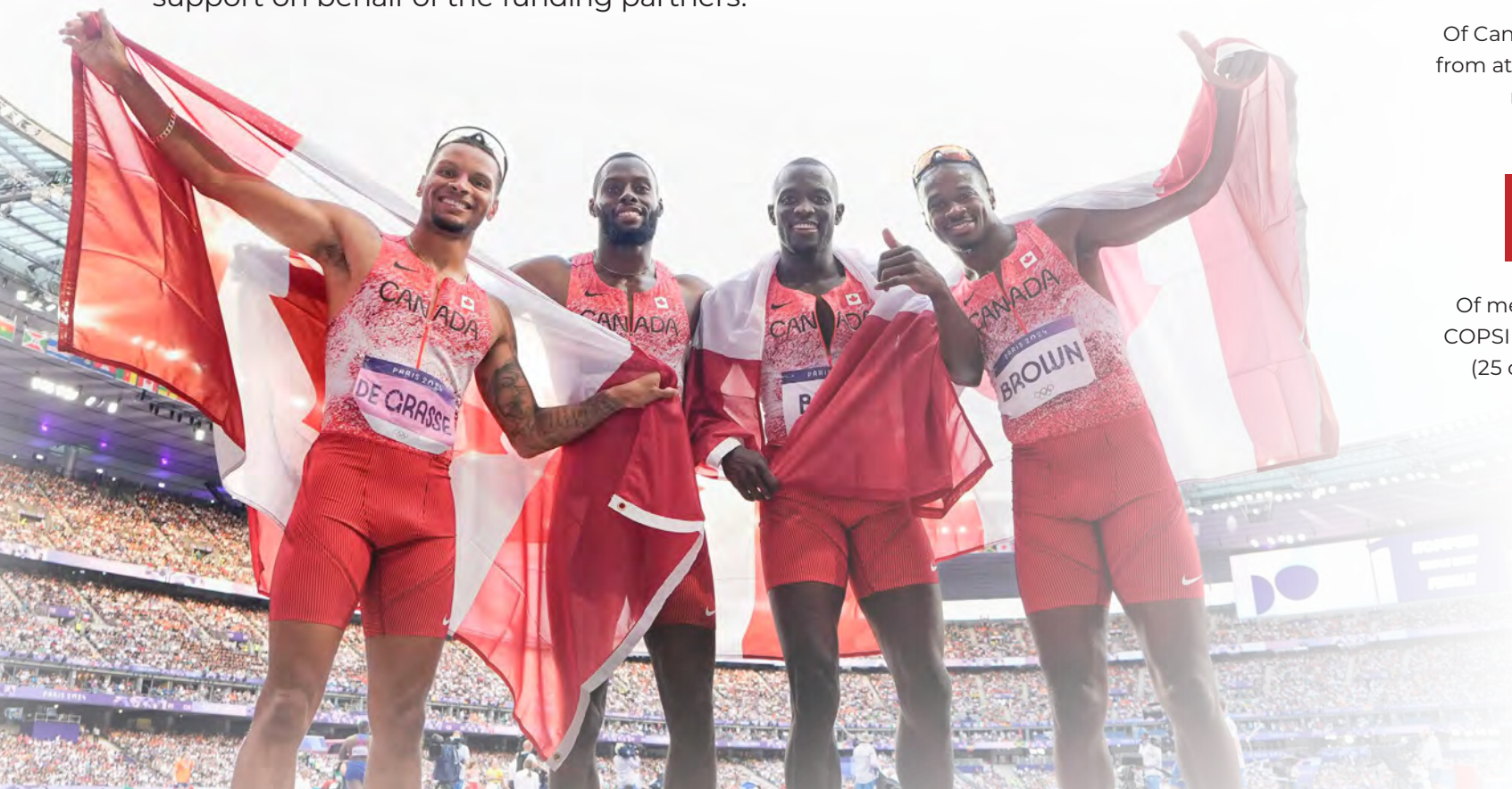
Of Canada's medals came from athletes competing in a mixed gender event

93%

Of medals were won by COPSIN affiliated athletes (25 of the 27 medals)

8

Provinces represented by athletes who won Olympic medals – Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan



Making History

Canada's women's sitting volleyball team also made history, winning a bronze. It was the first team sport medal since 2012.



TEAM CANADA'S PARALYMPIC HIGHLIGHTS:

126

Athletes celebrated 29 podium finishes. This medal count surpassed the 21 medals from Tokyo 2020, and tied the team's Rio 2016 performance

10

Gold medals are the most since Beijing 2008

6

Canada saw success across six sports

13

Medals in Para swimming

9

Medals in Para athletics

4

Medals in Para cycling

1st

Brianna Hennessy made history with Canada's first-ever Para canoe medal

2

Multi-medallists – Nicholas Bennett and Aurelie Reivard both captured three medals

New Website

Telling Our Story on Ownthepodium.org

The founding purpose behind Own the Podium is, “Our Unlikely Story.”

In an effort to better educate Canadians on OTP’s purpose, strategic priorities and programs, Own the Podium created a more user-friendly web site that is reflective of its culture and values-based strategic plan. The web site – ownthepodium.org – is a fresh, modern and efficient web site that better reflects Own the Podium’s current approach and priorities. It was created to:

- revitalize and strengthen Own the Podium’s brand; story and purpose;
- tell the Own the Podium story to educate and give confidence to existing stakeholders;
- give Own the Podium a more active, contemporary and vibrant brand personality;
- signal the changes and growth that is happening inside the organization.

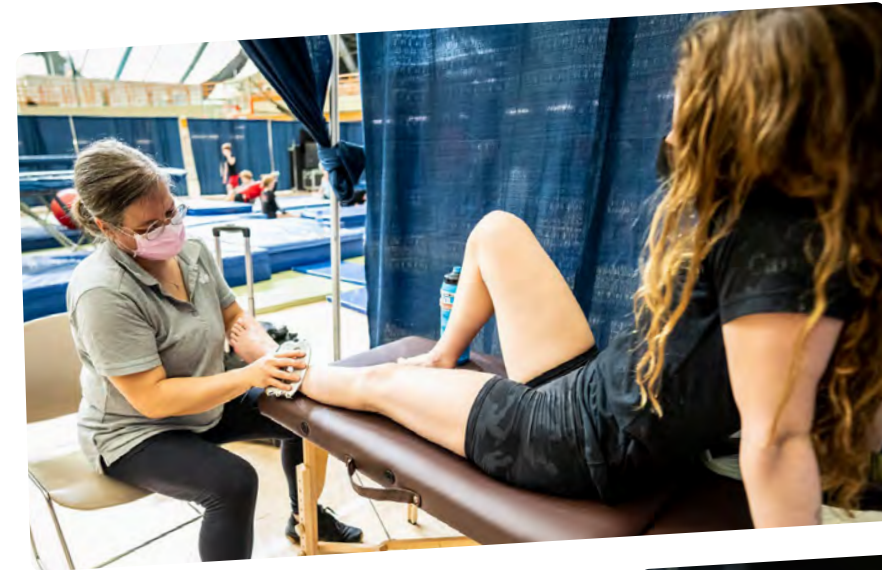


Beyond Performance

Partnering in the Pursuit of Putting People First

Own the Podium, along with its sport partners, launched a values-led storytelling initiative in 2024 coined “Beyond Performance” that is focused on amplifying the stories of athletes and coaches who have achieved excellence while training and competing in an environment where their physical and psychological health and safety is protected.

The campaign featured six inspiring short videos, along with 15 print stories on coaches and technical leaders involved in summer and winter Olympic and Paralympic sport.



Partnering in the Pursuit of Excellence

Own the Podium continues to establish cherished partnerships at home and abroad with those united in a deep commitment to support Canadian athletes in an effort to inspire the country through sport. The following are key partnerships established in 2024:



MOU with Japan Sport Council

Own the Podium, along with Canada's sport partners, renewed a Memorandum of Understanding with Japan Sport Council to achieve the following:

- staff exchange framework as part of people and professional development initiative with particular focus on
 - female sport leadership development
 - Paralympic sport development
 - application of technologies in sports including AI
- establishment of workspace as "Network Hub" for the purpose of people development and capacity building at the following locations:
 - Japan High Performance Sport Center, Japan Sport Council (Tokyo)
 - Own the Podium (Ottawa)
 - Canadian Sport Institute Pacific (British Columbia)
 - Canadian Sport Institute Ontario (Toronto)

OTP Teams Up with INSEP

Own the Podium signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Institut national du sport de l'expertise et de la Performance (INSEP) through the 2030 Olympic and Paralympic Games to collaborate in the following areas:

- sports medicine and sport science
- applied innovative programs within the field of high performance and research
- conferences, participation of interveners, keynote speakers
- joint professional development opportunities for sport leaders and coaches
- training camps for sports within respective facilities in the lead up to Olympic and Paralympic Games through to 2030
- working together on women in sport leadership, best practices and culture building
- athlete development and transfer strategies

Performance Sciences and Innovation

Own the Podium is driven to connect sport science support, research, and innovation activity with the realities of high-performance sport so that coaches, athletes, and support teams have access to the resources and services they require to achieve their performance goals. The Performance Sciences and Innovation team is focused on three core areas: culture of excellence; data sciences and performance analytics, and practitioner development and quality assurance.

Culture of Excellence

Own the Podium supports national sport organizations in building a healthy Culture of Excellence – one where people and performance are both prioritized, and where athletes, coaches, practitioners, and technical leaders feel valued and supported in the pursuit of their goals. At its core, our culture work helps ensure that people are not just seen as contributors to performance – but as central to it. By investing in culture, we're helping national sport organizations create environments where everyone can thrive, and where excellence is achieved the right way.

CULTURE OF EXCELLENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

30

NSO programs have engaged with the Culture of Excellence Project

12

NSO programs have completed the culture assessment

17

NSO programs currently engaged in the Culture of Excellence Project

5

New NSO programs initiated in the Culture of Excellence Project for 2024-2025



Data Sciences and Performance Analytics

Own the Podium supports national alignment around athlete data – helping sports develop clear, responsible strategies for collecting and using data to improve performance and athlete development.

DATA SCIENCES AND PERFORMANCE ANALYTICS HIGHLIGHTS:



Practitioner Development and Quality Assurance

Own the Podium is committed to building stronger expert networks. Through communities like Sport Scientist Canada, we continue to bring sport scientists and practitioners together to share knowledge, explore new ideas, and support one another across disciplines.

PRACTITIONER DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE HIGHLIGHTS:



Summer Paralympic Sport System Strategy to 2030

Own the Podium, in conjunction with the Canadian Paralympic Committee, spearheaded a Canadian Paralympic Summer Sport System Strategy with the goal of improving overall team success at the Paralympic Games. The advisory group proposed bold, made for Canada technical strategies and tactics that would uplift long term system and performance sustainability. While the work focused primarily on summer sport, the outcomes of the work are also replicable to subsequently benefit Paralympic winter sports.

SUMMER PARALYMPIC SPORT SYSTEM STRATEGY TO 2030 HIGHLIGHTS:

- + System wide classification strategy
- + Athlete transfer strategy
- + Upgrade sport science and research with a focus on PSRI practitioner development
- + Strengthen pathways for athlete development, coaching and technical leader development, officials development, competition pathways and equipment pathways

Winter Infrastructure Analysis and Benefits

Own the Podium led the analysis of winter infrastructure in collaboration with winter national sport organizations and key partners.

WINTER INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS AND BENEFITS HIGHLIGHTS:

- + Completed initial 2021 report identifying the challenges and opportunities associated with planning future winter high performance sport infrastructure priorities for Canada
- + Identified gaps in current facilities and identified infrastructure that is lacking
- + Prioritized the infrastructure gaps based on the impact it has on the training and preparation for Canadian medal potential athletes and teams

