

## **Quest for Gold 2023-2024 ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA**

Squash Ontario is a recognized sport with the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries (MHSTCI). Historically, Squash Ontario has worked with the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Division to employ the Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP) which is direct funding to Ontario's High-Performance Athletes and Programming.

Squash Ontario is grateful to share that the MHSTCI has provided Squash Ontario with \$10,547.00 to allocate directly to our High-Performance athletes for the 2023-2024 season. Quest for Gold will also fund the development of our Talent Identification program, as well as all Team Ontario programs (including juniors, masters, men and women) who compete at the national level. The direct to athlete funding will be provided to athletes through Squash Ontario based off the criteria below.

In order to distribute these funds in a transparent and fair manner, Squash Ontario will utilize pre-existing Quest for Gold Athlete Criteria.

### About the Quest for Gold Program

The Program was established to provide additional financial support to athletes from Ontario and to increase the performance and number of Ontario athletes competing at the highest national and international levels, thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions.

Specific objectives of the Program are:

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

Funds can be utilized by athletes to:

- Support high performance programming for athletes in the Train to Compete stage and above;
- Enhance access to expert coaching and support for provincial coach salaries;
- Enhance facility access;
- Access to sport science and sport medicine support;
- Card (direct funding) National level athletes not carded by Sport Canada; and
- Card (direct funding) top-ranked provincial level athletes.

Allow carded athletes receiving funding to spend it on:

- Normal living costs;
- Costs directly associated with training (e.g. coaching, facility fees, other athlete services);
- Costs associated with attending training camps and competitions (e.g. entry fees, travel costs);
- Sport-specific equipment; and
- Tuition and education related expenses (e.g. books, fees, commuting costs).

### Athlete Cards

Athletes will be identified who are in the the sport's Train to Train through Train to Win categories based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport, allowing them to continue to pursue athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition. Only those athletes that meet the required minimum performance standard detailed in this Selection Criteria will be considered for this program. This program will be offered for this one year, after which it is assumed that the OAAP will be reinstated. Of all

the identified athletes that meet the eligibility criteria, only the top-ranked athletes will be awarded 2023-2024 Quest for Gold funding.

Each year, the MHSTCI allocates Squash Ontario a total of 6 Ontario cards (split evenly as 3 male and 3 female Cards). There will be \$10,547 allocated to the athlete cards this year.

Squash Ontario has also decided to exercise the option made available by MHSTCI 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 MHSTCI 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 6 cards issued will be allocated as follows:

Category	Number of cards	Funding Per Card
Senior Card (Age 23 and Over)	2 Full Cards (1 male, 1 female)	\$1,757.83
Transition Card (Age 22 and Under)	2 Full Cards = (1 male, 1 female)	\$1,757.83
Junior Card (Age 19 and Under)	2 Full Cards = 4 Half Cards (2 male, 2 female)	\$878.92

An athlete's age will be determined as of January 1, 2024.

All athletes must meet the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (previously known as a Landed Immigrant).
- Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status, (and continue to be a permanent resident throughout the term of the agreement).
- Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status (carded by Sport Canada) in either Ministry fiscal years of April 2021 - March 2022 or April 2022 – March 2023 are not eligible for Ontario Cards.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario for majority of the year.
- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable.
- Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy.
- 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.

Athletes funded through the Sport Canada AAP:

An athlete who received Sport Canada AAP carding during any part of Ministry fiscal year April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive Quest for Gold funding during fiscal year 2023-2024 (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.) 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.

Squash Ontario Athlete Selection Criteria:

An athlete's age will be determined as of January 1, 2024.

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

#### 23 and Over:

- In order to be eligible to be considered for a Quest for Gold card, athletes must be a member in good standing with both the PSA and Squash Ontario
- Athlete must have a minimum PSA ranking of 250 (men) or ranking of 150 (women) as of January 1, 2024 to be eligible
- Athlete must have a minimum of 2 PSA Main Draw wins in last 10 PSA events
- Athlete must have participated in a minimum of 4 PSA sanctioned events in 2023
- Athlete must participate in the 2023 Ontario Open or Ontario Closed unless conflicting with a PSA event or injury note at the time of the event

If both cards are not able to be allocated after the application of these minimum criterions, the unused card(s) may be reassigned to the next highest ranking athlete(s) who meets the performance standard from the other gender. If no such athlete(s) exists, the unused card(s) may be transferred to the highest ranked (uncarded) athlete in the U23 category of the same gender to which the card was originally intended.

#### Under 23:

- In order to be eligible to be considered for a Quest for Gold card, athletes must be a member in good standing with both the PSA and Squash Ontario
- Athlete must have a minimum PSA ranking of 400 (men) or ranking of 300 (women) as of January 1st, 2024 to be eligible
- Athlete must have participated in a minimum of 4 PSA sanctioned events in 2023
- Athlete must have a minimum of 2 PSA wins including qualifying matches in last 10 PSA events
- Athlete must participate in the 2023 Ontario Open or Ontario Closed unless conflicting with a PSA event or injury note at the time of the event

If both cards are not able to be allocated after the application of these minimum criterions, the unused card(s) may be reassigned to the next highest ranking athlete(s) who meets the performance standard from the other gender. If no such athlete(s) exists, the unused card(s) may be transferred to the highest ranked (uncarded) athlete in the over 23 category of the same gender to which the card was originally intended.

#### Under 19:

- Must have a minimum Ontario Junior Ranking of Top 10 in Boys/Girls Squash Ontario rankings as of January 3, 2024
- Must be eligible to play Under 19 at the World Juniors Teams/Individuals (aged 18 or under as of August, 2023)
- Must participate in one (1) of the following two (2) mandatory events:
  - o Junior Gold #1, 2023
  - o Junior Gold #2, 2023
- Must participate in 2023 Ontario Junior Closed Championships
- Must participate in 2023 Canadian Junior Open Championships

**The highest nationally ranked players in each category who meet the criteria will receive the funding as of the January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 rankings.**