

ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2026

ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA

Publishing Schedule & Deadlines:	
• Publish Selection Criteria	August 15, 2025
• Publish Tentative Ranking Lists	August 15, 2025
• Publish Updated Ranking Lists	Monthly after August 15, 2025
• Publish tentative Final Ranking List	Oct. 1, 2025
• Deadline for Athletes to Report Errors to the Final Ranking List	Nov. 1, 2025
• Deadline for Athletes to Request Residency or Canada Card Exemption	Nov. 1, 2025
• OAWA to publish the final Ranking List.	Dec. 1, 2025

The Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association will operate the annual Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP, also commonly referred to as 'Carding') based on receipt of approval and funding of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport Annually. Publishing this Selection Criteria or other information about the OAAP is not a guarantee that the program will operate, or that payment will be provided to athletes, in any given year.

Quest for Gold – The Ontario Athlete Assistance Program (OAAP) is funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport

The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP is directly related to the High Performance Sport goal of the *Canadian Sport Policy* – that Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition – by improving 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:

- i) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- ii) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- iii) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- iv) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- v) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

The intent of the OAAP is to provide support to athletes in 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.** Ideally an athlete will first receive a Quest for Gold "Ontario Card" for 1 to 3 years, which will allow them to train towards the goal of a national team position in subsequent years. Once an Ontario athlete reaches the national level and becomes a recipient of Sport Canada's carding program, they become eligible for the Quest for Gold "Canada Card". Athletes who are not planning to train towards this level of competition should not apply for this program.

1. How does it work?

In accordance with the OAAP guidelines, ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION develops sport-specific selection criteria and forms a Selection Committee that will apply these criteria. The top-ranked athletes, based on the criteria, will be awarded Ontario Card status. This Selection Criteria has been approved by the PSO. Nominated athletes will be required to sign and comply with an Athlete Agreement between the athlete and ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION. Carding status will be for one year. Carded athletes will be required to compete exclusively on behalf of the Province of Ontario at National Championship events and for Canada at International Championship events, for a period of one year from the date carding is approved and acknowledge Ontario as their permanent place of residence on athlete profiles, Media Guides, PSO/NSO and personal websites, and in similar types of public communications.

The ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will:

- Determine how much of the funding received from the Ministry will be allocated to fund programs for athletes and how much will be allocated to payments directly to athletes nominated for funding based on this criteria
- Determine how many carding positions will be awarded.
- Determine how many Full Cards and Split or Junior cards are to be awarded.
- A maximum of 30% of the Ontario Cards may be allocated to athletes no longer eligible for "junior athlete" status, (athletes 23 and over).

The Selection Committee, as approved by the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION is comprised of the following members:

- Vice President Technical, OAWA
- High Performance Manager, OAWA
- Other Carding Committee Members as determined by the Vice-President Technical of the OAWA and approved by the OAWA Board of Directors.

2. How much funding is available?

The exact level of funding for the carding year will be determined by the Ministry annually and communicated to the OAWA at a time of the Ministry's choosing. The OAWA will communicate this information to its members as soon as reasonably possible after receiving the information from the Ministry.

3.0 How will the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION Selection Committee decide who receives funding?

The ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION Selection Committee will develop an Eligibility Criteria and the Sport Specific Selection Criteria detailed below to determine which athletes will be nominated for Ontario Card status.

3.1 Non Sport-Specific Eligibility Criteria:

All athletes must meet the following minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

- Athletes must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (previously known as a Landed Immigrant).
- Athletes 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) are not eligible for Ontario Cards (Exception: Athletes who have received a Development Card are eligible for Ontario Cards).
- Athletes must be eligible for a National Card and registered with the OAWA at the time of nomination.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario. Athletes who live outside Ontario to attend school may appeal to be eligible for carding. To be eligible to appeal, the athlete must continue to maintain membership in the OAWA, be a member of an OAWA member-club in good standing with OAWA, and must represent Ontario at the National Championships.

3.2 Residency Exceptions:

Exceptions to these criteria, known as a “Residency Exception” will be considered **on a case specific basis by the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION Selection Committee**. The athlete must show in writing that 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.

The athlete must submit written documentation to the Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association by no later than Nov. 1, 2025, clearly indicating how they meet a residency exception(s). To be eligible to appeal, the athlete must continue to maintain membership in the OAWA, be a member of an OAWA member-club in good standing with OAWA, and must represent Ontario at the National Championships.

Any change in an athlete's residency status must be communicated in writing to the PSO/MSO immediately.

3.3 Non Sport-Specific Selection criteria continued:

- Athlete must be a member in good standing with the Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association;
- On nomination, the Athlete must enter into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with the OAWA and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
- Athletes must have met all terms and conditions of any previous OAWA Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the OAWA.
- Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program, the goal of which is to continue to train towards a national team position and Sport Canada carding;
- Athlete's coach should be minimum Level 3 or Competition/Development NCCP certified Wrestling Coach.
- Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
- If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of nomination into the OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial team competitions;
- Athletes 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.
- OAWA will work to maintain athlete Eligibility limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 (“junior-aged” refers to chronological age. The OAWA will consider exceptions, but will work towards only 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age.

3.4 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 dependent 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 contact ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION for more information if you are applying for this exemption.

- 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.
- All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP Athlete Agreement. 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.

4 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, to March 31 of the carding year, also known as the OAWA Fiscal Year) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card'. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport 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.

An athlete who received Sport Canada AAP carding during any part of OAWA fiscal year April 1, to March 31, of the year in question and/or any part of the prior year and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year April 1, to March 31, of the fiscal year being awarded.

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. Athletes may appeal the decision to not be awarded funding for this reason. See the Appeals/Canada Card Exception sections of this document.

5 CANADA Card Exception (CCE)

Exceptions may apply to this rule (known as a **Canada Card Exception (CCE)**) and will be considered by the OAWA on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (e.g. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to contact ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION Selection Committee prior to **Nov. 1, 2025** to request a CCE. The athlete must submit, in writing, an explanation of why they have not been, or do not expect to be carded by Wrestling Canada Lutte. The submission must include a statement from WCL, signed and dated on their letterhead, confirming that the athlete still has potential to return to the NSO's carding program in the future. It is the responsibility of the athlete to submit this letter to the PSO; the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will not obtain this letter from the NSO on the athlete's behalf.

ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will then contact MHSTCI in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nomination Form to seek individual Canada Card Exceptions. ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION is not responsible for seeking a CCE for any athlete unless requested to do so by the athlete as detailed above.

6 National College Athletic Association (NCAA):

On August 1, 2013, the NCAA revised their By-law that previously prevented an athlete from accepting grants from a governmental entity, such as Quest for Gold. Despite this change, any athlete considering an application to an NCAA institution is strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to applying for QFG funding.

National Collegiate Athletic Association www.ncaa.org

700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222
Phone: 317-917-6222

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.

7 **ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION SPORT-SPECIFIC CARDING CRITERIA** **SPORT-SPECIFIC ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA**

SPORT-SPECIFIC ATHLETE SELECTION TIE-BREAKING CRITERIA

8 **Failure to Meet Selection Criteria for Health-related Reasons**

The ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION does not have an injury provision for not earning enough points to be carded.

9 **APPLYING FOR ONTARIO ATHLETE ASSISTANCE (CARDING)**

Athletes do not need to apply to be carded. The ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will maintain a Carding Ranking list. This list is communicated to all High Performance Coaches regularly, and will be posted in the Athletes Section of the OAWA website. The onus is on the Coach and/or athlete to notify the OAWA of any errors in the Ranking list.

9.1 Athletes applying for a Residency Exemption must apply by the date noted above.

9.2 It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to provide a full and complete Appeal or Request for Exemption that meets all stated requirements. ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will neither review appeals and requests for Exemptions in advance of the deadline in order to make applicants aware of any missing/incorrect information and/or attachments nor make corrections on behalf of the athlete. Any revisions on the part of the athlete will only be accepted prior to the posted submission deadline.

Appeals or requests for Exemptions that are sent directly to the Ministry Tourism, Culture and Sport rather than to ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will not be considered valid or to have been received by

the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION deadline.

- 9.3** The OAWA – Athlete Agreement will only come into effect if an athlete is selected and accepts carding status through the OAAP program. Athletes who fail to return a signed Athlete Agreement by the deadline date will not be carded.
- 9.4** ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION will publish or make known a draft list of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status by no later than August 15, 2024.

10 Appeals:

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION 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 OAWA. Appeals will be heard by the OAWA Carding Selection Committee.

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.

Issues related to the specific content or selection requirements contained in the ONTARIO AMATEUR WRESTLING ASSOCIATION Selection Criteria are not grounds for an appeal.

- 10.1** The deadline for athletes to submit an "**Athlete's Notice of Appeal**" to the OAWA Carding Selection Committee is **Nov. 1, 2025**
- 10.2** Appeals must be completed on the Notice of Appeal template below and will be directed to:

OAWA Carding Selection Committee

c/o David Tremblay, High Performance Manager, OAWA highperformance@oawa.ca

**Ontario Amateur Wrestling Association
Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
Athlete's Notice of Appeal Template**

Appeals will only be accepted on this Appeal template.

Return form to:

Deadline: Nov. 1, 2025

OAWA Carding Selection Committee

c/o David Tremblay, High Performance Manager, OAWA, highperformance@oawa.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 as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card:

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 Appeals decisions of the OAWA Selection Committee are final.

Print Name of Appellant

Signature of Appellant

Date