

Canada's Olympic Athletes Counting on Athletic Therapists

Canada's Olympic athletes are showing the results of years of training at Sochi, but that was only the start. For competitions at any level, victory comes down to the last second and the last meter. It takes a dedicated team of professionals to make sure our athletes reach that point.

Along with their coaches, Canada's athletes have a support team that includes athletic therapists at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi. They provided key support to Canada's athletes in the 2012 Olympic Games in London, and were part of the record-breaking gold medal achievement at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Sam Gibbs, a certified athletic therapist in Toronto, has been in Sochi throughout these games, assisting our athletes in their pursuit of the podium. Previously he was involved with Canada's national medical teams for about 20 years, from Goodwill Games, Pan-Am Games, and the last two Olympics, plus working with the Toronto Raptors and the Men's National Basketball Program. He knows what's required to ensure our athletes can compete at elite levels.

"Athletic therapists maximize performance potential and make it possible for athletes to compete even following an injury," said Gibbs. "At the Games our work is accelerated. We ensure athletes recover quickly, aren't limited by injury and are able to handle the physical pressures of a condensed schedule of competition."

Athletic therapists work with athletes to prevent injury and provide most of the on-field and on-site first response during the competition. They also provide clinical coverage throughout the Games. Athletic therapists are integral to the Games and athletes by providing immediate on-field assessment and emergency care for injured athletes and developing rehabilitation and reconditioning strategies to get athletes back in the game.

In addition to working with high performance athletes like Olympians, athletic therapists also help Canadians of all walks of life with injury prevention and rehabilitative techniques that allow individuals to return to work and play.

"These athletes train for years, often for just one shot at the Olympics. For them to be at their peak in their specialty in the one moment they've got, athletic therapists must do our part to ensure the athletes can put in their best performance," said Richard DeMont, President of the Canadian Athletic Therapists Association (CATA). "That's a heavy burden, but it's also what makes athletic therapy so important."

Our athletes will reach the podium through their own skill and efforts, but it takes the efforts of a large team to ensure they're prepared. Athletic therapists are proud of the role they are playing in Sochi for the Canadian Olympic Team.

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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