

## **AthletesCAN brings messages of leadership to 2009 Canada Summer Games in PEI**

AthletesCAN board members, staff, volunteers and a prestigious team of eight high performance athletes recently braved Hurricane Bill and tropical storm Danny to bring messages of leadership, to the over 5,000 participants at the 2009 Canada Summer Games across PEI.

The AthletesCAN Ambassador all star line up included the following athletes:

**David Calder** (BC), Rowing - 3-time Olympian, 2008 Olympic silver medalist, 2003 World champion, 1993 Canada Games champion and bronze medalist

**Erin Carter** (MB), Cycling - Former Canadian pursuit and Pan American Road Race champion, 1997 Canada Games champion

**Jared Connaughton** (PEI), Athletics - 2008 Olympian and 2009 Canadian 200m silver and 100m bronze medalist, 2005 Canada Games double gold medalist (100m & 200m)

**Thomas Hall** (QC), Canoe - 2008 Olympic C-1 1,000m bronze medalist, 2008 Overall World Cup champion, 1997 Canada Games champion

**Benoit Huot** (QC), Swimming - multi Paralympic, Para Pan American and Commonwealth Games medalist

**Jeane Lassen** (YT), Weightlifting - 2008 Olympian and 2006 World silver & bronze medalist, 1995 Canada Games silver medalist and 1997 Roland Michener Award recipient

**Heather Moyse** (PEI), Bobsleigh & Rugby – 2006 Olympian, 2010 Olympic hopeful, 1997 Canada Games athlete (Athletics)

**Kevin Stittle** (ON), Sailing – 2008 Olympian, 2008 World silver medalist and 1997 Canada Games champion

“The Canada Games provide AthletesCAN the opportunity to introduce the organization and its leadership programs to provincial/territorial athletes,” says Moira Lassen, AthletesCAN Executive Director. “Bringing Canada’s high performance athletes to the Games as mentors enables us to provide inspiration and direction for developing athletes at a pivotal point in their careers. At the same time, we are able to plant the seed of athlete leadership” continues Lassen. “Athlete leaders go beyond their own training and performance to effect change within society. Who better to help promote messages of healthy lifestyles, responsible decision making, and ethical values than Canada’s internationally experienced athletes?”

Each week during the two-week Games, AthletesCAN hosted three major athlete-centered events. The Athlete Forums provided provincial/territorial athletes the opportunity to meet and network with the Ambassadors and learn from their success stories; the Focus Groups gave athletes the chance to give feedback on their overall Games experience as well as their experiences as provincial/territorial athlete. Feedback gathered during the Focus Groups, as well as from the AthletesCAN survey, will provide key stakeholders valuable information in order for the continuous improvement of the Canada Games. Ambassador’s also participated in a weekly media conference where AthletesCAN introduced and promoted the importance of the Canada Games within an athlete’s long term development.



“I was fortunate enough to be an AthletesCAN ambassador this past August during the 2009 Canada Games in PEI”, says Thomas Hall, Olympic medalist. “My role was to help inspire young athletes and promote AthletesCAN to the

next generation of high performance athletes. My fellow ambassadors and I told our stories and fielded questions during the AthletesCAN Forum and through focus groups sought to find out what could be done better for athletes at future games. My experience was truly enlightening. I was ignorant of much of what AthletesCAN has done for me over the years and I was really amazed by how dedicated the staff is to athletes. In short my experience at the Canada Games was fantastic."

Outside of scheduled events, the AthletesCAN team spent time at the various sporting venues mingling with Games athletes and spectators, signing autographs, giving interviews and presenting medals. The Ambassador's also participated in meetings with individual teams to provide support and insight on certain issues or just to pump up the competitors for their events.

"Being asked to be an AthletesCAN Ambassador at such an important national event for Canada's developing athletes was a great honour - especially as my home province of PEI was hosting!", says Heather Moyse, Olympian "To be called a leader and a positive role model is one of the highest compliments one could receive, and it was wonderful to be able to share my story and answer questions to hopefully inspire the 2009 Canada Games athletes to fulfill their potential."



"The Canada Games Council is proud to be associated with AthletesCAN," says Sue Hylland, President and CEO of the Canada Games Council. "The high profile athletes' perspectives that AthletesCAN was once again able to facilitate through focus groups, forums and appearances on site at the 2009 Games, were invaluable for the Canada Games property as a way to promote the possibilities to the 2009 Canada Games participants, our next generation of national, international and Olympic / Paralympic champions. The 2009 Canada Games athletes will not soon forget the passion and love of the Canada Games and sport in Canada that was clearly communicated by the accomplished AthletesCAN athlete ambassadors, and the Canada Games Council and future Games will benefit from the work done in PEI for years to come."

Halifax 2011 Canada Games Host Society staff and volunteers also attended the PEI Summer Games to observe everything from results to accreditation and accommodations in preparation for the Winter Games. "We've taken away some great lessons from PEI and we will work hard over the next year and a half to first and foremost put on an exceptional sporting event," said Chris Morrissey, Chief Executive Officer, for the 2011 Host Society. "We want to make these Halifax Games unique and special for everyone involved – athletes are at the top of that list."

AthletesCAN is already looking forward to bringing some amazing athlete leaders to the 2011 Canada Winter Games in Halifax, Nova Scotia...What will you bring?

#### **Most memorable moments:**

Jared Connaughton: My most memorable moment at 2009 Canada Games has to be AthletesCAN allowing me the platform to speak at the closing ceremonies. Addressing the athletes, coaches, parents and fans in their last moments of the games was a tremendous honor and an unforgettable experience!

Kevin Stittle: My most memorable moment at the 2009 Canada Games was presenting the medals, it was awesome to see the joy and excitement in the eyes of the athletes who had achieved their goals, it was really inspiring.

Erin Carter: I realized that as an athlete ambassador you can have an impact... sometimes more than you can imagine. My most memorable moment at the Canada Games came when I found out that something I had once said to a young athlete as a way of inspiring him to keep going in sport he later had tattooed on his arm. I was glad to see him competing at the Canada Games...tattoo and all.

Benoit Huot: My most memorable moment was to present a medal to one of my good friends who won a bronze medal in Swimming. I was really proud of him because I knew he worked hard and it was a privilege for me to be there and give him his medal.

Jeane Lasen: My most memorable moment of the Games was watching the women's medal matches in wrestling. It was awesome to be a part of such a big crowd cheering on such exciting fights. I was lucky to be chosen as the AthletesCan ambassador designated to give out the medals at this event. It was great see all the athletes in the marshalling area encouraging and congratulating each other. It was also neat to see so many provinces represented on the podium. I hope one day Olympic weightlifting will be back in the Canada Games so we can follow the lead of women's wrestling!