

Candele picked for Olympics ? Canadian equestrian team nominated for Rio 2016

The Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) and Equestrian Canada (EC) have named the 10 athletes nominated to represent Team Canada in equestrian at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games from Aug. 5 to 21.

Caledon resident Yann Candele will be one of four members of the jumping team. He was a member of the gold medal winning team at last year's Pan American Games. He will be joined by Tiffany Foster of North Vancouver, who was on both the 2012 Olympic team in London and last year's Pan Am team, Eric Lamaze from Schomberg, who won individual gold in the 2008 Olympics and was part of the 2012 and 2015 teams, and Amy Millar of Perth. The reserve rider will be Kara Chad of Calgary. Both eventing and jumping will field teams of four athletes, while two individuals will represent Canada in dressage.

The eventing team earned their Olympic berth after finishing sixth at the 2014 FEI World Equestrian Games in Normandy, France. The jumping team got their spot after winning the gold medal on home soil at the Pan Am Games. Although the Canadian Dressage Team did not earn a team berth, spots for two individuals were secured through qualification criteria set by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI).

Riding for Canada on the Olympic eventing team in Rio will be Rebecca Howard of Marlborough, U.K., Colleen Loach of Dunham, Quebec, Selena O'Hanlon of Kingston, Jessica Phoenix of Cannington, Ontario, and the reserve rider will be Kathryn Robinson of Kettering, U.K.

The Dressage athletes will be Megan Lane of Collingwood and Belinda Trussell of Stouffville. The reserve rider will be Karen Pavicic of Surrey, B.C.

The Canadian Equestrian Team's final preparations for Rio over the next few weeks will include training camps in Florida and Germany. In addition, jumping athletes have been competing at the prestigious CHIO Aachen World Equestrian Festival in Aachen, Germany.

At the Games in Rio, equestrian sport will kick off with eventing Aug. 6 to 9. Dressage will follow Aug. 10, 11, 12 and 15. Jumping closes out the equestrian portion of the Games Aug. 14, 16, 17 and 19.

Historically, Canada has achieved impressive results at the Olympic Games, earning a total of six equestrian medals. Most recently, Lamaze claimed the individual gold medal in jumping at Beijing 2008. His teammates, Mac Cone, Jill Henselwood and ?Captain Canada? Ian Millar also helped secure the silver medal for the Canadian Jumping Team. Millar also set a record at London 2012 by becoming the first athlete in any sport, from any nation, to compete in 10 Olympic Games.

A total of 200 horse and rider combinations from 43 countries will compete at Rio 2016. Overall, Canada expects to field a team of approximately 315 athletes.

?Canada has a long history of equestrian excellence and I am very proud that these athletes named will be continuing the tradition in Rio,? Rio 2016 Team Canada Chef de Mission Curt Harnett declared. ?The partnership between athlete and horse is a unique bond that goes beyond athleticism and one that is admired by many. I look forward to celebrating the results of their hard work this summer.?

?Our Canadian Equestrian Team has worked extremely hard to earn their berths to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and achieved remarkable milestones along the way, from winning Pan Am medals to breaking Canadian records,? Equestrian Canada Chief Executive Officer Eva Havaris said. ?Our team for Rio also demonstrates how unique and extraordinary our sport is. Not only does equestrian sport display an incredible bond between horse and rider, as one of the only mixed gender Olympic sports, it celebrates gender equality. I know our athletes nominated today will continue to make Canada proud and I look forward to celebrating their success in Rio.?

?I am thrilled to be representing Canada in show jumping in Rio,? Foster remarked. ?The Olympics are the pinnacle of sport; for most athletes it starts as a dream, for the fortunate few it is then a goal and, for the lucky ones, it becomes a reality. I feel incredibly privileged to be one of those lucky ones. A huge thank you must be given to our incredible horse owners, our tireless support staff, and the hardworking individuals at Equestrian Canada who make it all possible. There may only be five people named to the Canadian Jumping Team, but the team that stands behind us consists of so many more. I'm looking forward to doing my very best in Rio and making Canada proud!?

Prior to being named to the final Canadian Rio 2016 Team, all nominations are subject to approval by the COC's Team Selection Committee following its receipt of nominations by all National Sport Federations.



Caledon resident Yann Candele has been nominated to the jumping team at the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio. Jason Ransom photo