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Some 474 gold, silver and bronze medals will be awarded this summer at the '76 Olympics in Montreal. How many of these Canada will win is not known, but Game Plan will help.

While it is impossible to say who will win for Canada, it is not difficult to choose some outstanding talent likely to compete in July. The pictures overleaf show just a few of them — all classified under Game Plan as "A Class" athletes.

Game Plan — a Canadian venture aimed at athletic excellence

Canada's international athletic record has, for many years, been inconsistent. Certainly there have been high points. Percy Williams, a runner, won acclaim and two gold medals in 1928; Barbara Ann Scott struck gold with a spectacular skating performance 20 years later; Nancy Green in 1968, and Kathy Kreiner, as recently as last February, were champion skiers.

There have been many others — beginning with Canada's first gold-medal winner, Etienne Desmarteau in the St. Louis Games of 1904 — but, while this country's past participation in international sport was highlighted by brilliant individual and team efforts, one point persisted. It was haunted by over-all poor team standings.

The handicaps to athletic excellence were obvious, as were the answers. Heading the list of requisites were: (1) inadequate financing had to be replaced by sound economic programs to give all sports the opportunity to develop competitors; and (2) first class coaching and training plans had to be established. Greater competitive opportunities were needed for international exposure and each sport needed the expertise and incentive for individual programs to attain excellence.

Birth of Game Plan

These problem areas, emphasized by Canada's undistinguished standing at the 1968 Olympics, prompted the formation of a special kind of partnership.

In 1973, the national sport-governing bodies in Canada teamed up with the Canadian Olympic Association in cooperation with the federal and provincial governments in a venture aimed at excellence. They called it Game Plan. Its purpose is to develop a future source of strong competitors of international calibre with the potential to win.

It recognizes that excellence among Canada's amateur athletes will develop only if there are individual developmental programs, improved coaching, intensified training and increased competitive opportunities.

Game Plan, jointly funded by the pro-

vincial and federal governments and the private sector, operates with a coordinating committee (its decision- and policy-making body) and a technical committee to prepare strategies. One of the people who makes it work is Dr. Roger Jackson, technical committee chairman and acting director of the Federal Government's Sport Canada, a division of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch of the Department of Health and Welfare.

Dr. Jackson, a former Olympic medalist who won the gold in Tokyo in 1964 in rowing with team-mate George Hungerford, represented Canada in Mexico and Munich and in several other international competitions. During his athletic training he also earned his Ph.D. in physical education and physiology. He is a member of Canada's Sports Hall of Fame.

He works on the Game Plan technical committee with Geoff Gowan, technical director of the Coaching Association of Canada, and Imre Szabo, vice-president (technical) of the Canadian Olympic Association.

Classification system

A key to Game Plan's success has been the development of the Athlete Classification System to identify athletes of high potential, and to provide them with increased training and competition opportunities.

From 1973, Game Plan has classified athletes twice yearly and several hundred high-calibre athletes have been identified. Each is rated on the basis of individual or team performance against international class competitors. "A Card" athletes in individual sports are those rated 1 to 8 in the world in their event; "B Card" athletes stand 9 to 16. "A Card" athletes in team sports are those whose team is rated 1 to 4, while "B Card" team athletes stand 5 to 8. "C Card" holders are those showing potential on the national level.

Following classification by Game Plan, athletes receive special training and competition opportunities and