

## 5 TO WATCH

## CANADA'S SPORTS BUSINESS AWARDS

## Sports industry MVP scores three-pointer

NBA Canada's Dan MacKenzie recognized for career success and giving back with a prestigious 5 to Watch Alumni Achievement Award

There came a time in Dan MacKenzie's life when he was faced with a difficult choice about his career. He could take a full-time position as a high-school teacher and basketball coach or sign up for the Sport & Event Marketing program offered by George Brown College's Centre for Business to pursue a long-standing dream to channel his love of basketball, business and academics into the perfect job.

He had already attended McMaster University and earned a Bachelor of Commerce, then gone on to Brock University to get a teaching degree, but he was looking for a way to build on his skills and embark on a new journey. He found it with the Sport & Event Marketing program.

It's clear MacKenzie's decision to enroll was the right one. He not only graduated in 1997 but was also hired by NBA Canada as a basketball development coordinator after taking on an internship fresh out of school.

Fast forward two decades and he is now Vice-President and Managing Director with the association as well as this year's recipient of the George Brown College Alumni Achievement Award. In addition to recognizing five Canadian sports business professionals under 40 who have achieved remarkable success, the 5 to Watch also gives one annual Alumni Achievement Award to deserving graduates of the Sport & Event Marketing program.

He was chosen to receive this prestigious award based on criteria



Dan MacKenzie's success with NBA Canada and his devotion to giving back was a slam dunk that helped him win this year's alumni award. THOMAS BOLLMANN

that looks at what the nominee has achieved in their sports business career as well as what they've done to give back to the sports community. MacKenzie's achievements on both counts were exemplary.

Over his career, he chalked up a number of high-profile professional experiences, including working at TSN as Senior Marketing Manager and at NBA Canada, where he developed basketball sponsorships and organized exhibition games in cities such as Paris and Barcelona. While he was becoming a leader in the industry, MacKenzie never lost sight of the need to give back. He generously donated his time and expertise to various organizations like Sponsorship Marketing Council Canada and the Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association.

He was also instrumental in the development of Canada's 5 to Watch Sports Business Awards, alongside other George Brown Sport & Event Marketing alumni. "A bunch of us were in Montreal for a sponsorship conference," he recalls. "We were lamenting the fact Canadians were never chosen by the *SportsBusiness Journal's* annual Forty Under 40 Awards. We thought we should create our own and celebrate young talent in this country."

Now in its sixth year, 5 to Watch is an important event that recognizes the contributions of professionals like Dan MacKenzie. "I'm honoured to be the first one from the class of '97 to win this award," he says. "It really

shows the evolution of our industry." He is also proud of the funds raised by 5 to Watch for student bursaries.

MacKenzie credits much of his success directly to his time at the George Brown College Centre for Business. He remembers the professors who made a lasting impact, including Pete McAskile, and Mike Fenton. "Pete ran his own sports marketing agency (now SDI Marketing) and brought real-world experience to the classroom," he says. "I found his class was always very interesting. And Mike [co-chair of the 5 to Watch] brought in accomplished guest speakers."

George Brown's Centre for Business introduced its acclaimed Sport & Event Marketing program in 1991 to help propel the sports industry forward in Canada. "More than 25 years later, it is recognized as Canada's launch pad to post-graduate students seeking a sport and event marketing career," says Maureen Loweth, Dean of the Centre for Business at George Brown College. "We are proud of how our graduates are leveraging the marketing practices they learned in the world of sports, arts and nonprofits."

"When I decided to go to George Brown," MacKenzie recalls, "it was a leap of faith. It worked well for me because the program provided me with a transition year to go from one career, teaching, to another. Sport marketing is a hard industry to crack and George Brown gives students an opportunity to get their first foot in the door. What they do with that second foot is up to them."

## CLASS ACTS

## TOP TALENTS OF THE SPORTS BUSINESS INDUSTRY CREDIT GEORGE BROWN FOR THEIR SUCCESS

The class of '97 of George Brown's Sport & Event Marketing program is celebrating more than its 20th anniversary this year. With alumni Dan MacKenzie being recognized with such a prestigious leadership award, it's also a fitting time to highlight the outstanding career successes of other alumnae from his class.

These former '97 graduates represent the country's top talents in the sports business world, from classroom to boardroom. Among the notable executive alumni are: Brendan Fyfe (5 to Watch co-chair), Kelly Alguire (BMO Financial Group),

Blair Tripodi (Sound United), Peter Widdis (George Brown College), Philip Piazza (Golf Channel), Daniel Buckley (Innocean Worldwide), Kristi Petrushchak (Sportsnet), plus business owners like Scott Hulbert (Ideavation) and Deb Lewis (City Events).

The Sport & Event Marketing program was instrumental in providing them with the knowledge and confidence to pursue excellence. Many from the class of '97 credit their career success to George Brown. "It was a rewarding experience I will always cherish," says Daniel Buckley,

Vice-President, Innocean Worldwide Canada. "My classmates, professors and all the great people behind this excellent program gave me the inspiration to head out into this exciting industry and do great things."

Kelly Alguire, Director, North American sponsorships, BMO Financial, says that the program gave her invaluable skills for launching her career. Gratitude was a key motivator behind her desire to be involved with the 5 to Watch awards show. "I wanted to give back to the special program that gave me so much," she says.



George Brown College Foundation is championing student success through The Success at Work campaign. The \$60-million private fundraiser supports the college's expansion vision and increases scholarships and bursaries. If you wish to make a donation, visit [georgebrown.ca/giving](http://georgebrown.ca/giving).

## Two different roads to success

Emma Lambert and Candice Joseph win student bursaries, courtesy of funds raised by 5 to Watch

Though Candice Joseph and Emma Lambert both enrolled in the Sport & Event Marketing program at George Brown College Centre for Business, the paths they took to get there were very different.

For Lambert, who was born in England and raised in Kingston, Ont., the program brought together two worlds that were important to her – academic pursuits and sports. She did her undergrad at Queen's University in physical and health education.

"What I was really looking for was a way to pair that degree with a more applied postgraduate experience," she says. "I had a strong sports background after being at Queen's, but I was missing the business side. I was lucky to be accepted into the Sport & Marketing program. If you want to work in sports, it's definitely the best place in the country to be."

Lambert, who graduates in August, is ready to jump into the job market bolstered by her win of the TSN Award of Excellence – one of six



Emma Lambert (left) and Candice Joseph found inspiration and confidence to dream big through the Sport & Marketing Event program at the George Brown College Centre for Business. THOMAS BOLLMANN

5 to Watch student bursaries, created with funds raised by 5 to Watch. They were awarded at the George Brown College Centre for Business Awards ceremony on March 29.

"Receiving this award has also enabled me to not only relieve a lot of financial stress but also helped me expand my network," explains Lambert. "It gave me the confidence to realize, if I do keep working hard, I can become a leader in this industry and give back too, like everyone who's involved in 5 to Watch."

Having that kind of career has special meaning to Lambert. Her father was in the Canadian Armed Forces, which meant the family moved frequently. Sports, primarily basketball, helped her fit into new communities. "No matter how far technology progresses, nothing is going to take away the person-to-person experiences that come through sports," she says.

It was the Pan Am Games (hosted by Toronto in 2015) that pulled Candice Joseph in a new direction later in her life after a career as a Wedding and Event Planner. She had signed up to be a volunteer at the games but noticed that there were also full-time opportunities. "I took a leap of faith and applied," she says. "In turn, someone took a leap of faith with me and I was hired as a Logistics Coordinator."

It was an amazing experience that gave her an opportunity to talk to people about what they did and how they got their positions. Many mentioned postgraduate career-

focused programs. Though Joseph had her undergrad degree in anthropology, she realized she wanted to go back to school. "I started doing research through LinkedIn to see where people in positions that I would ultimately love to have had gone to school," she says. "The George Brown Centre for Business's Sport & Event Marketing program appeared to be the choice for many, so I applied and was grateful to be accepted into the program."

As she wrapped up her last semester, Joseph won the SDI Sport & Event Marketing Award in March and, on her very last day of classes, learned that she had an offer to join the FUSE Marketing Group as an Account Coordinator.

"When things like this happen, it validates making the right decision at the right time," she says. "From the first day of school to the last day, I poured my heart and soul into my education, so I could come out with a job that I could be proud of. It's been an incredible experience."

Lambert and Joseph are grateful to the corporate sponsors and the 5 to Watch committee for the financial support they received from these awards. They've allowed these students to pursue their passion fully.

This content was produced by The Globe's advertising department. The Globe's and Mail's editorial department was not involved in its creation.

FROM PAGE 1

# Aimia: Dividend suspension comes amid upheaval in company's executive ranks

“We've got the cash. ... It's a technical test on capital impairment, which means legally, we have to suspend the payment.”

The shares fell to \$1.53 on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Investors have given Aimia a beating since since Air Canada announced in May that it would leave the Aeroplan loyalty program that the company manages; the stock is down more than 80 per cent since.

The announcement comes at a time of upheaval in the company's executive ranks. At the same time as the Air Canada announcement, Aimia confirmed that its long-time CEO, Rupert Duchesne - who had been on a leave of absence due to a medical issue, as he was being treated for chronic mercury poisoning - would retire. Last week, Aimia announced that chief financial officer Tor Lonnung would leave the company in September, citing “family reasons.”

The raft of departures, including of the three directors this week, “will raise more questions than answers for not only

“

**If we focus our energy there and on the fundamental performance of the business, then I think we'll see confidence return to the stock.**

**David Johnston**  
Aimia chief executive

Aimia's investors and employees, but also for existing and prospective Aeroplan partners and members,” said Bank of Montreal Capital Markets analyst Tim Casey in a research note. He was among analysts who questioned why Aimia kept its dividend at the time of the original announcement.

The payment suspension includes dividends scheduled for a June 30 payout for shareholders who bought in as of June 16. The CBCA prevents a company from paying a dividend if doing so would mean the value of a

company's assets becomes less than the total value of its liabilities and stated capital.

Aimia said its stated capital account is worth about \$1.5-billion for both common and preferred shares - a high balance offsetting the ratio - due primarily from having previously issued common shares at much higher values than they're currently worth.

Mr. Johnston said the company passed this test in May, when it first announced the June dividends, but the subsequent collapse in share price changed the math when the calculations were re-run ahead of Aimia's board meeting earlier this week.

If the ratio of assets, liabilities and stated capital later comes back in favour of a dividend payout, it will be up to Aimia's board to decide to issue one, “depending on their view of the state of the business at the time, and the medium-term cash flow generation of the business,” Mr. Johnston said.

In the first quarter of 2017, Aimia reported \$332-million in cash and cash equivalents, re-

stricted cash and short-term investments; plus \$226-million of long-term investments in corporate and government bonds.

The company has touted its free cash flow as a sign of its sustainability, though analysts are concerned over how long that will last. Mr. Casey of BMO said that “we believe there continues to be significant uncertainty regarding the company's sustainable free cash flow outlook and a lack of visibility around the Air Canada contract expiry.”

Royal Bank of Canada Capital Markets analyst Drew McReynolds called the dividend suspension a surprise, and said in a note he expected shares to “remain under pressure pending greater clarity around the size of the funding gap at Aeroplan.”

Aeroplan accounted for 54 per cent of Aimia's \$2.34-billion in gross billings in 2016. Replacing its key partner is a huge priority, the CEO said. “It's a matter of real urgency for us and the management team, because we want our members to know that they've got great options for their points after 2020.”

The company has not set a deadline to ink a new deal, he continued, declining to provide many specifics on progress. “I don't want to triangulate too far into ‘Who are you talking to?’ But our members fly domestically, trans-border and internationally, and we're talking to a range of potential partners. ... If we focus our energy there and on the fundamental performance of the business, then I think we'll see confidence return to the stock.”

Aimia is also in the midst of cutting \$70-million in costs by 2019 to “simplify and focus” the business. “The chairman had conversations with the board about, frankly, the board being part of that process,” Mr. Johnston said.

As a result, the company announced Wednesday that directors Joanne Ferstman, Alan Rossy and Beth Horowitz had resigned. “It's a simpler and more focused board, and therefore a less costly board,” the CEO said.

With files from  
Susan Krashinsky Robertson

FROM PAGE 1

# Home Capital: Company admits OSC 'not to blame' over recent liquidity issue

“The Company also acknowledges that the Commission is not to blame for the events of recent months involving its liquidity position,” Ms. Eprile's statement said.

The settlements are conditional and still need approval from the Ontario Securities Commission and provincial courts. But if finalized at a hearing in August, the arrangement would resolve a regulatory threat that has weighed on the beleaguered mortgage lender for weeks.

The move to clean up the OSC case comes as Home Capital fields offers for some of its smaller lines of business and tries to negotiate new credit lines with a number of potential lenders, in an attempt to restore a sense of financial stability.

Home Capital experienced a run on the bank in April that almost led to the company's collapse, and announced it was considering asset sales and working on replacing a \$2-billion line of credit with onerous interest rates that it obtained during that funding crisis.

Toronto-based Home Capital recently turned down offers from rival financial companies for its consumer retail lending division, according to sources familiar with the process, because the board and financial advisers believed the bids were opportunistic and did not reflect the value of a profitable, although small, business. The division has about \$394-million extended to homeowners to finance purchases of water heaters and other big-tick-

et home improvement items.

Analysts say the company could pull in up to \$2-billion from asset sales by parting with units that include its credit card division, which has \$384-million of assets, and its \$2.2-billion commercial mortgage portfolio.

In April, Home Capital secured a line of credit from the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) and a group of global banks that came with a \$100-million upfront fee and 10 per cent annual interest rates.

Home Capital has borrowed \$1.65-billion on the HOOPP line and is in talks with a number of potential lenders, including the six largest Canadian banks, about a new credit line and other forms of financing that could replace the HOOPP loan.

Home Capital is targeting a new financial backstop with a lower interest rate and a longer term than the two-year line of credit that rival mortgage lender Equitable Group Inc. obtained in May, according to sources familiar with the process. The Equitable credit facility, backed by all six major Canadian banks, carries an interest rate that is 1.25 percentage points above the banks' cost of funds, which is relatively inexpensive financing for an alternative mortgage lender.

The main business at Home Capital is a \$18-billion portfolio of mortgages to home buyers who cannot borrow from the major banks, including immigrants, the self-employed and those with a poor credit history.

The home loans are backed by deposits in Home Capital high interest rate savings accounts and GICs, and the unexpected withdrawals from the savings accounts in April triggered the funding problem for the company. Clients pulled their money after the Ontario Securities Commission alleged that Home Capital failed to disclose problems in its mortgage business in 2015.

In recent weeks, deposits have stabilized, and Home Capital announced on Wednesday that deposits in high-interest savings accounts and at subsidiary Oaken Financial are nearly \$250-million, virtually unchanged since late May.

**Home Capital (HCG)**  
Close: \$12.13, up 83¢

## 5 TO WATCH CANADA'S SPORTS BUSINESS AWARDS

## LET'S CONGRATULATE THIS YEAR'S 5 TO WATCH WINNERS

Five Canadian sports business professionals under 40 who have achieved remarkable success.



**ANDREW AGRO**  
Director, Corporate Sponsorship  
and New Business Development  
New York Jets



**CATHERINE  
GOSSELE-DESPRÉS**  
Executive Director, Sport  
Canadian Paralympic Committee



**ATILA OZKAPAN**  
Senior Director,  
Technical Logistics  
NBC Sports Group



**JORDAN VADER**  
Senior Director, Global Partnerships  
Maple Leaf Sports  
& Entertainment



**LISA FERKUL**  
Director, Hockey Sponsorship  
Scotiabank



**2017 GEORGE BROWN  
COLLEGE ALUMNI  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
**DAN MACKENZIE**  
Vice President and  
Managing Director  
NBA Canada

### 5 TO WATCH AWARDS SHOW

TICKETS SOLD OUT

Thursday, June 22, 2017

George Brown College's Waterfront Campus

All proceeds go to student bursaries for the  
Centre for Business at George Brown College.

Find out more at [5towatch.ca](http://5towatch.ca)



AWARD SHOW HOST:  
**KATE  
BEIRNESS,  
TSN**

PRESENTED BY



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



THANK YOU TO OUR PREMIER PARTNERS

