



NZ TEAM **COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES**

Leading into Milano Cortina Olympic Winter Games

VERSION 1 – MAY 2025

Versions subject to change upon information release from IOC.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

INTRODUCTION



The use of Olympic Games and New Zealand Team Rights in New Zealand is reserved only for the Olympic Games Federation, the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) and their commercial partners. Unauthorised use of these rights (including logos and protected words) is illegal, with fines up to \$150,000.

Without the financial support of commercial partners, the NZOC would be unable to send New Zealand athletes to the Olympic Games. These partners make a substantial investment for the ability to use protected words, logos and talk about the New Zealand Team. For this reason, the NZOC takes rights protection very seriously.

Under the Major Events Management Act 2007, there are certain Olympic emblems / logos or words / terms that can only be used with the approval of the NZOC. This means your sponsors (providing they're not also NZ Team / IOC sponsors) are not able to use protected words such as: **Olympic Games, Milano Cortina 2026** and more. They're also **unable to use any Olympic imagery** in their promotions, including images of team members in the Games environment and/or in uniform. Any activation that implies a sponsor has a connection to the Games or the New Zealand Team is also prohibited.

Therefore: Athlete sponsors must not reference the Olympic Games in any of their activations.

And athletes must not reference sponsors in relation to any Games-specific activity or training.

This document is a summary of the NZOC's brand protection approach. More detail can be found in the NZOC Advertising, Promotion and Social Media Guidelines found at this [link](#)

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

GAMES TIME V ALL TIMES



Restrictions mentioned on the previous page around use of Olympic Games & NZ Team rights apply at **all times**, not only during Games time.

During Games time, an additional layer of protection is in place – the ‘protected period’ provides regulations around use of an athletes’ name or face by a brand in any marketing material (including social media). This programme is referred to globally as Rule 40.

The NZOC runs an exemption programme for Rule 40 restrictions – if the NZOC has deemed a sponsors marketing ‘generic advertising’ and formally granted a commercial waiver.

Rule 40 restrictions do not apply to NZ Team commercial partners, IOC worldwide partners or National Sports Organisations (for editorial, non-commercial storytelling. Any NSO commercial activity would require a waiver).

World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI) Pilot Project: The International Olympic Committee is trialing a project that allows some sporting brands to promote their personal sponsorships with athletes using limited Olympic properties globally. This project does not apply in New Zealand territory given the Major Events Management Act regulations.

TWO KEY RESTRICTIONS



At all times

No commercial brand use of Olympic logos, related words, or Olympic Games imagery.

NSOs and athletes themselves may use these provided there is no commercial brand association.

Protected Period 27 January – 25 February 2026

Restrictions around use of an athletes' name or face by a brand in any marketing material (including social media). Globally known as Rule 40.

The NZOC runs an exemption programme for Rule 40 – if the NZOC has deemed a sponsors marketing 'generic advertising' and formally granted a commercial waiver.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

COMMERCIAL WAIVERS



In agreeing to participate in the Games, an athlete's commercial rights are limited and subject to a number of rules and conditions. One of these rules is during the 'Protected Period', athletes' names and images may only be used for advertising purposes in accordance with the principles determined by the IOC Executive Board.

Athlete personal sponsors may apply for a commercial waiver which would allow them to continue to run generic advertising during this time.

Athletes, athlete managers and sponsors can all apply for a Games Commercial Waiver using the supplied application form.

- Protected Period Commences: Tuesday 27 January 2026
- Games: Friday 6 February – Sunday 22 February 2026
- Protected Period ends: 11.59pm Tuesday 24 February 2026
- The protected period is therefore **27 January – 24 February 2026 inclusive**
- The deadline for applications is **Wednesday 18 September 2025**.

Please note – there are restrictions on the minimum time for a campaign to be in market prior – outlined on the following page - which may bring certain deadlines earlier. Applications are encouraged, monitored and reviewed at all times.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

GENERIC ADVERTISING



The concept of Generic Advertising is an important one for sponsors who are not also NZ Team Partners. These brands can continue to run Generic Advertising featuring athlete identities during the **Protected Period** (27 January – 24 February 2026 inclusive) if:

- they have athlete permission,
- they have applied for and been granted a commercial waiver by the NZOC,
- no Olympic Games / NZ Team Properties or references (direct or indirect) are used in the advertising,
- the advertising has been **in the market for**:
 - Above the line advertising (including digital video): **at least four months** prior to the Games Period
 - Static social media: **at least 1 month** prior to the Games Period (ie similar static social content featuring the same athlete/s)
- the advertising has run **consistently** and **has not materially escalated** during the Games Period.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

WAIVER APPROVALS



The NZOC will consider all applications for a Commercial Waiver in good faith and will provide approval unless it considers (acting reasonably) that the advertising, activities or campaign:

- proposes to use Olympic Games / NZ Team properties; or
- creates an association with the NZOC, IOC, the Games or the Team; or
- brings the NZOC, IOC, the Games or the Team into disrepute; or
- has or is likely to have undue impact on the operations within the wider NZ Team.

The NZOC will not withhold commercial waiver approval without offering solutions to make the application compliant.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

ACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Company X

@companyx
10 January 2026

Good luck, **Athlete Example**!



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

No direct Olympic association is being made. As this is posted before the Protected Period this would also be acceptable.



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
10 January 2026

Thanks **Sample NZ Team Partner Company** for this awesome gear which is helping me train for Milano Cortina.



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Athlete Example is permitted to create a connection between an NZ Team Partner brand and the Games themselves.

ACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
10 January 2026

Thank you to **Company X** for always supplying top quality equipment. Can't wait to hit the ice with this gear in 2026!



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Although Company X is not an Olympic Partner, this post is made before the Protected Period and includes no Olympic reference.



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
19 February 2026

Having an awesome time in Livigno!
#KoTatouKatoa



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Athlete Example is in the Games environment and is not referencing any personal sponsors.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

ACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Company X

@companyx
10 January 2026

We sponsor **Athlete Example** who is competing this year at the World Championships, the International Series and in Cortina.



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This follows the rule of three without focusing on the Olympic Games. It also does not use any MEMA protected words and is posted before the protected period.



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
10 January 2026

Breakfast of champions! #KoTatouKatoa
#MilanoCortina2026



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Athlete Example has the ability to use protected words provided there is no connection with their personal sponsor.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

ACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Sample NZ Team Partner.

@SampleNZTeamPartnerCompany
16 February 2026

Another medal for the New Zealand Team at the Milano Cortina 2026 Olympic Games – congratulations
Athlete Example!



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

A NZ Team partner has the right to these protected words, and to communicate this during the Protected Period. The congratulatory message is in the context of congratulating the Team.

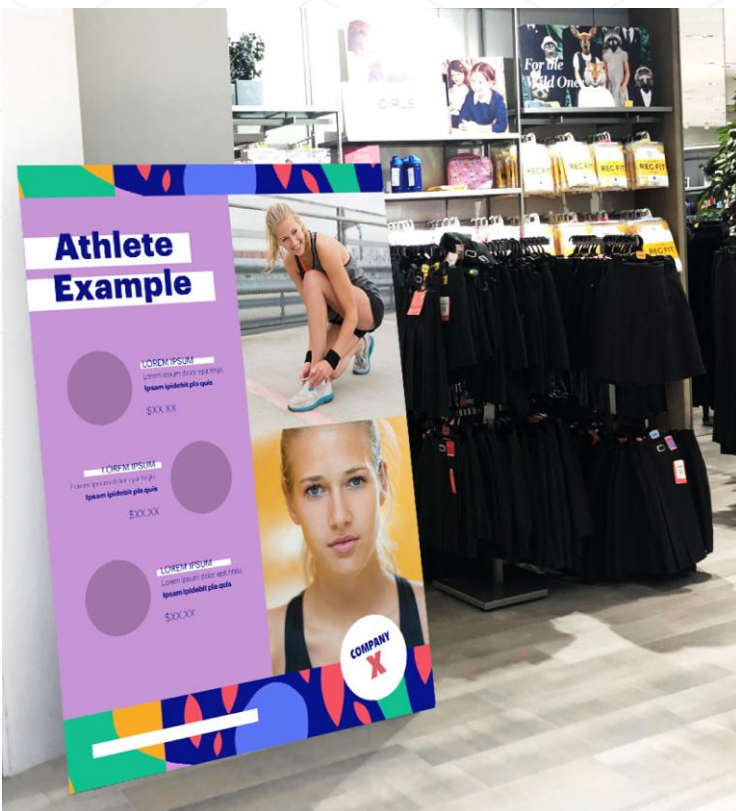


ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

A NZ Team partner has the right to continue to use athlete imagery on packaging year-round. Personal sponsors who are not Olympic partners would need to apply for a commercial waiver to continue this branding throughout the Protected Period.

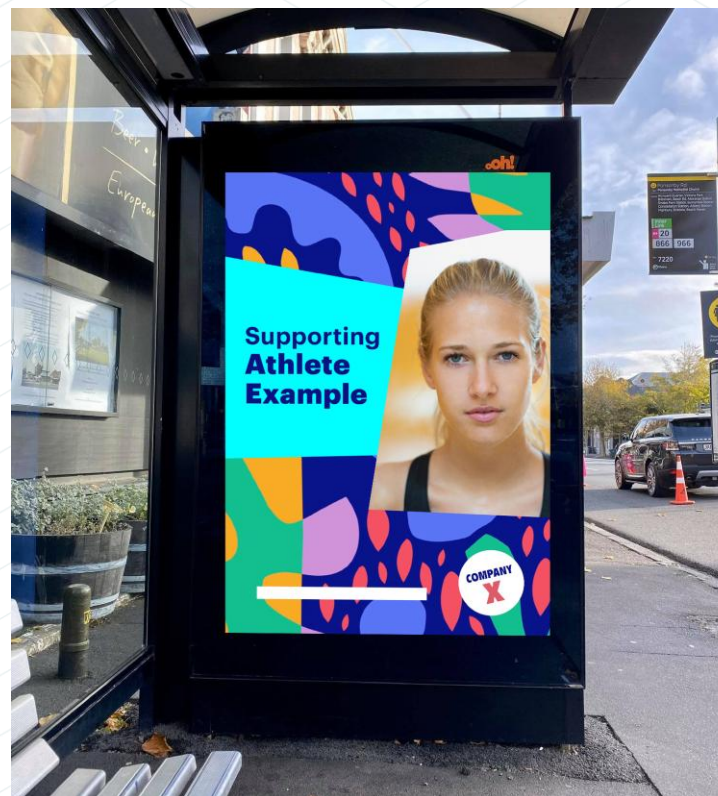
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ACCEPTABLE BRANDING



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This in store promotion has no Olympic references. It would require a commercial waiver to run through the Protected Period.

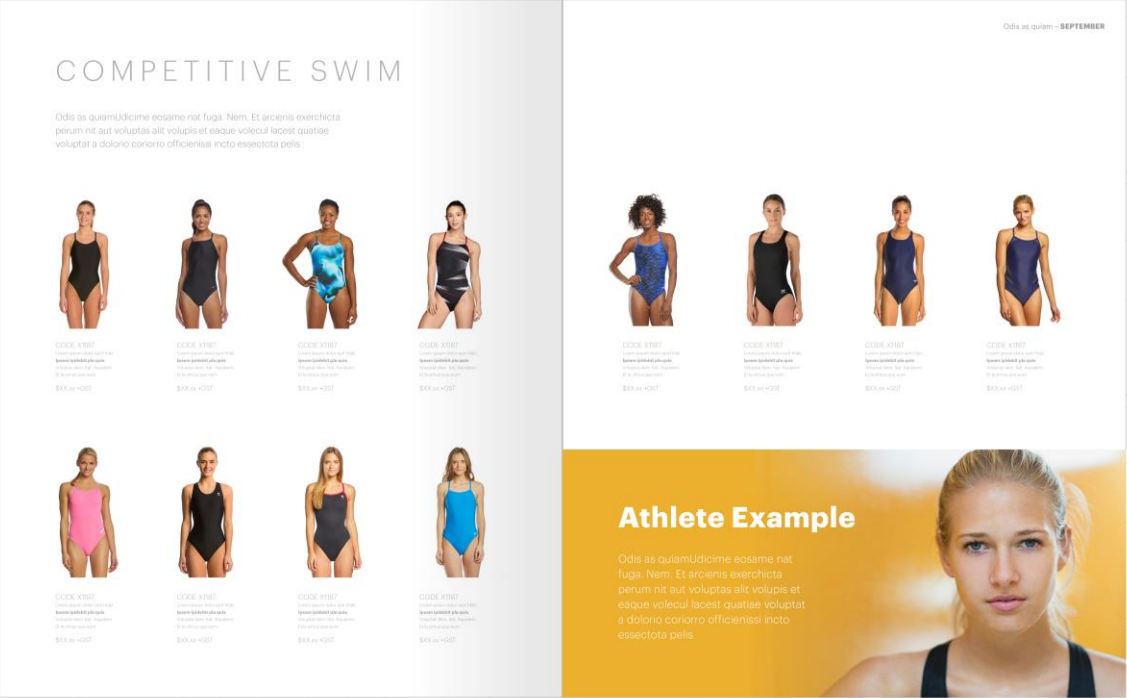


ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This adshel has no Olympic references. It would require a commercial waiver to run through the Protected Period.

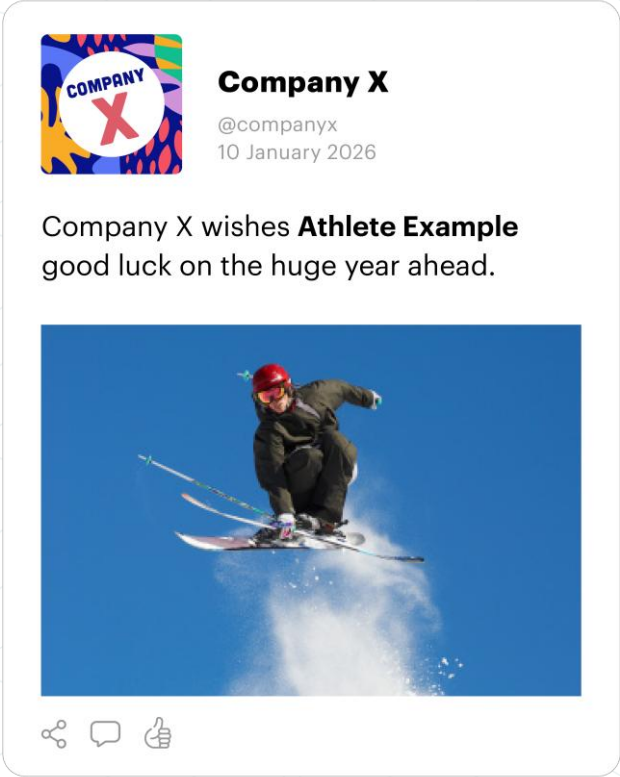
NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

ACCEPTABLE BRANDING



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This catalogue has no Olympic references. It would require a commercial waiver to run through the Protected Period.



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This social media post has no Olympic references. It would have to be posted before the Protected Period.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

UNACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Company X

@companyx
10 January 2026

Company X is proud to support **Athlete Example** on their journey to Milano Cortina 2026.



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This is likely to mislead the public to believe Company X (a Non-Olympic Partner) has a direct association with the Olympic Games.



Company X

@companyx
16 February 2026

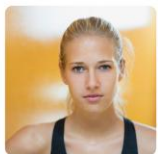
Going for the win!
#KoTatouKatoa #MilanoCortina2026



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Company X does not have the rights to use Games imagery or protected words, even in the form of hashtags.

UNACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
16 February 2026

Thank you to **Company X** for all your support.



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

This is creating an association between Games environment imagery and company X. Athlete Example is shown in the Athlete's Village wearing Olympic sunglasses.



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
16 February 2026

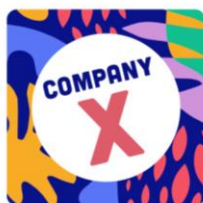
Thanks **Company X** for supporting me in my training for #MilanoCortina2026



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Though the training is the focus of this post, the public could be misled to believe Company X has a connection with the Games themselves.

UNACCEPTABLE BRANDED CONTENT



Company X

@companyx
8 February 2026

Are you watching the Winter Olympic Games tonight!



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

'Olympic' and 'Games' in combination are words protected by MEMA. The public may think Company X has a connection with the Olympic Games.



Company X

@companyx
8 February 2026

Our **Athlete Example**, going for gold tonight!

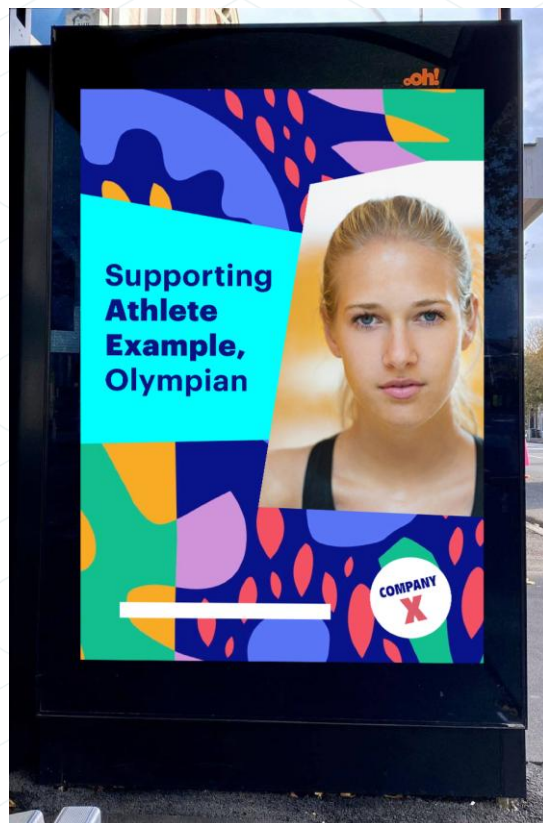


UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Passing off on the fact that the Olympic Games are occurring. A Games Commercial waiver would also not be granted for this (posted during the Protected Period).

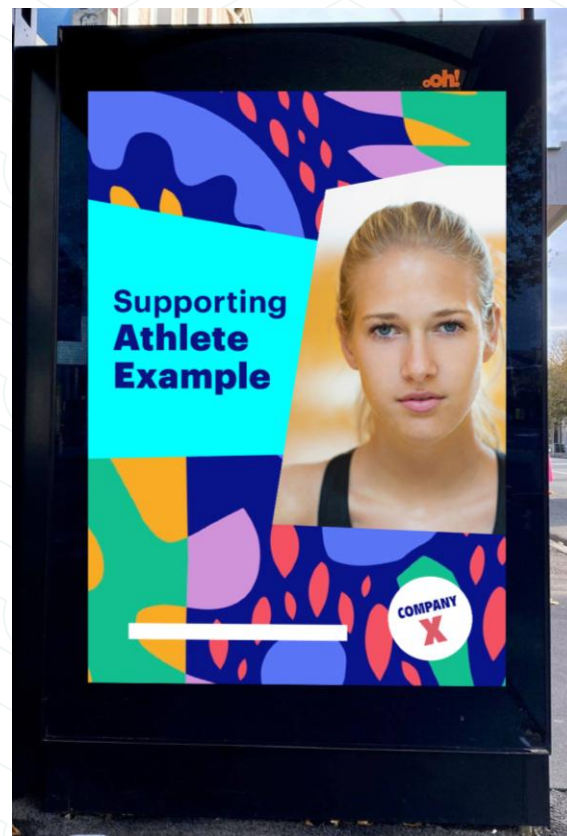
NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

ATHLETE DESCRIPTORS



UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

Focus on Olympic achievements by a brand that is not an Olympic Partner.



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

No Olympic reference, though would require a Commercial Waiver to run throughout the Protected Period.

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

THANKING SPONSORS



Under a recent update to Rule 40 of the Olympic Charter, athletes may now thank your personal sponsors:

- This may be done during the Protected Period via their social media account and is limited to one thank you message per sponsor.
- It must not use any Olympic properties or references (including medal or team uniform), or suggest a commercial connection between the IOC, Olympic Games, the NZOC or Games Team and the personal sponsor.
- If posted on multiple social media channels and/or personal website it must be published at one time.
- Cannot be boosted with paid spend or amplified / shared by personal sponsors.



Athlete Example

@Athlete_Example_NZ
8 February 2026

Thanks **Company X** for your support throughout my career!



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

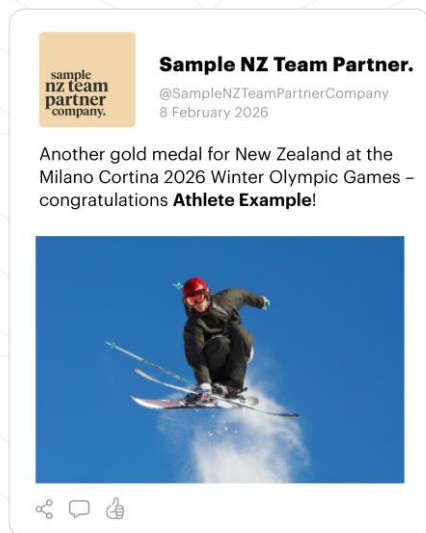
NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGING



Congratulatory messaging is now reserved for NZ TEAM PARTNERS ONLY:

- Historically, athlete personal sponsors have been able to congratulate athletes on their Games achievements, on the basis that no Games imagery was used, and no direct reference to the Games was made.
- NZ Team partners may congratulate athletes based on their selection to the Team, and their Games achievements, in the context of a wider team message.
- Personal sponsors can wish an athlete the best outside of the Protected Period provided the focus of the caption is not on the Games.



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE



ACCEPTABLE EXAMPLE

NZ TEAM COMMERCIAL GUIDELINES – MILANO CORTINA 2026

QUESTIONS?



We're here to help!

Please contact brand@olympic.org.nz for further information.