

# The Gazette

## Keeping our athletes aloft Health-care records available online. Montreal firm provides software to help Canadian team deal with injuries that arise

**HANNAH HOAG**

Freelance

*Monday, February 13, 2006*

In Turin, Canadian athletes are going digital. When Canadian ski racer Erik Guay pulled out of the men's Olympic downhill race last week, the details of his injury were entered into a health management database designed by Montreal-based software developer Presagia.

The Canadian Olympic Committee is one of hundreds of sports organizations using Presagia's Internet-based software to manage the health of their athletes, said Rick Bercuvitz, Presagia's chief operating officer. This is the first time the health of Canadian Olympic athletes will be tracked digitally.

"It allows them to more precisely track injuries and the sources of those injuries.

It's highly relevant for any athletics organization," Bercuvitz said.

Presagia Sports is an online database that allows physicians, trainers, nutritionists and coaches - anyone involved in an athlete's health and training - to record data about injuries, treatments and test results into a central system.

Medical images, such as an MRI scan, can also be attached to an athlete's file.

"I feel this is an important way to improve the care of our athletes and lead to better performance," said Bob McCormack, chief medical officer for Team Canada in Turin.

The team is using the Presagia Sports software as part of their Canadian Athlete Monitoring Program, or CAMP.

"They are connecting to and transferring information about the injuries. It is available to the physicians no matter where they are at the Olympic sites," said Bob Potter, director of product development at Presagia.

When athletes move around the world from competition to competition, they are not always monitored by the same physician. Because the system is online, it can be accessed anywhere there is an Internet link. The results of tests done in Italy can be seen by physicians back at home.

CREDIT: PIERRE OBENDRAUF



Dave Glickman, Peter Rorlick and Rick Bercuvitz of Presagia, which sells software that allows athletes' training, treatment and testing data to be entered in an online database.

"There is the risk that their medical care can get a little disjointed. We wanted to get a system that would allow the co-ordinating physician - wherever they are in the world - to be able to know what is happening with the athlete, make sure things don't fall between the cracks, and that things are followed up when they get back home," McCormack said.

The system is still in the pilot phase for the Canadian Olympic team. Turin may be a test, but McCormack hopes Presagia Sports will be a valuable tool by the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The system will also allow team physicians to identify injury trends, improve athlete care and optimize athletic performance. "To use the analogy of a race car, you want it to be tuned optimally and all the mechanics to be on the same page," he said.

But can a software system help Canadian athletes bring home more medals?

"To be honest, that is our goal," McCormack said. "The way we get better performance is by having a co-ordinated support system, which includes the physician, the therapist, the sports nutritionist, the sports psychologist, working with the coach and the sports scientist."

"We're trying to use this technology to be more effective," he said. "If we can get better support in those health and performance-related areas, then that can translate into better athletes who are less injured and better trained, so they can succeed."

- - -

Presagia was founded in 1987 under the name Montreal Business Software Inc. by David Glickman, chief executive officer, and Peter Rorlick, chief technical officer. In the early years, the company focused on selling computer hardware and on developing custom-designed software for medical customers.

By the late 1990s, Presagia's management team realized it had a winning concept that could be sold to a larger audience. Their sports injury management tracker, initially known as InjuryTracker, was further developed in 2002 into InjuryZone. Today, it bears the name Presagia Sports.

About 150 universities, professional sports teams and national and international organizations, including McGill University, Concordia University, the Alouettes, UK Sport and the New York Rangers, use the injury software. The potential market size for athlete health management is \$50 million U.S. annually.

A second system, called RadioLogic, had over 10,000 users in hospitals and digital imaging centres in Canada, the U.S., Australia and Britain by 2004. Presagia sold the radiology arm of its business for an undisclosed amount to Eclipsys Corp., based in Boca Raton, Fla., in 2004.

Presagia continues to develop medical management software based on the technology used in the InjuryZone platform.

ADAMS, a Web-based database, allows national federations, anti-doping organizations and event organizers to manage the drug testing activities of the World Anti-Doping Agency, known as WADA.

"The system addresses the protocols and requirements of the World Anti-Doping Code," Bercuvitz said. "Eventually, all top-level amateur athletics organizations will be on that system."

WADA, led by Montrealer Richard Pound, began rolling out the system in 2005. Representatives of various athletic federations and organizations are currently being trained in Lausanne to use the system.

"It's a truly global system designed to keep track of athletes' whereabouts and their random substance testing all over the world," Bercuvitz said.

Presagia also is developing an employee health management system, called Presagia Enterprise, that will allow large companies to ensure that employees' healthcare use is efficient, and to track workplace injuries and absenteeism.

"Large companies are spending huge sums on employee health care, particularly in the U.S." he said. "They're spending up to \$15,000 U.S. per employee per year, and the costs are growing at a rapid rate. It's a huge pain point for large companies."

Presagia estimates that the market for employee health management systems is greater than \$1 billion U.S. annually.

The company has annual revenue under \$5 million. Its annual licences range from \$3,000 to \$250,000 per year.

"We took the technical platform and combined it with our knowledge of software and put it into the medical context, where to date, the large software vendors have not been active, because they have been focused on the hospitals," Bercuvitz said.

"It's an emerging market, and we're in the right place at the right time with the right knowledge."