

Dec 9, 2009
For Immediate Release

Olympic Trials to be held at Sovereign

Sovereign Lake, B.C. – Cross country skiers vying for a chance to compete at the Olympics will be racing at Sovereign Lake this weekend. The Haywood/Teck NorAm event will act as an Olympic qualifier for athletes who are still aiming for a spot on the Olympic team.

Close to 300 participants including our best Canadian skiers, will be joined by top American skiers to race in the Haywood/Teck NorAm. The NorAm Canada Cup Race Series are to assist in athlete development at the elite level and to promote cross-country ski racing to the public.

Sovereign Lake skiers will be taking advantage of home snow to compete amongst the high level of competition arriving, including the US Development team who will be using this race for Olympic Selection.

Vernon's Skeets Morel will be racing this weekend as a warm up race for the Sprint Qualifier's held in Canmore the following weekend.

A number of 2006 Olympic team members will headline the field competing on the nation's premier development race series over the next two weeks including: Drew Goldsack, of Red Deer, Alta.; Sean Crooks, of Thunder Bay, Ont.; along with Phil Widmer and Dasha Gaiazova, both of Banff, Alta.

Sean Crooks, who raced in the New Zealand winter in August, has had some third place results in the US Super Tour leading up to the NorAm event. Having competed in the 2006 Olympics, Crooks hopes to medal in 2010.

Shayla Swanson and Brittany Webster are prepared for the NorAm race having earned top ten results in the US Super Tour in West Yellowstone and in New Zealand.

Brian McKeever returning from a World Cup race in Europe will be a strong competitor in the para-nordic division, along with Canadian para-nordic senior development team member Lou Gibson.

Legally blind with Stargardt's disease, which is a form of macular degeneration that affects central vision, Brian McKeever is continuing his quest to become the first winter-sport athlete to compete at both the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2010. If he meets his goal, it will make him only the second athlete ever in the history of the Olympic and Paralympic Games to accomplish the feat. Three years ago, Brian finished 21st in an able-bodied men's 15-kilometre skate-ski race at the World Championships.

Sovereign Lake, located 22km from Vernon is well practiced at hosting the Haywood/Teck NorAm event. Last year it hosted two NorAm races last year due to the cancellation of the second NorAm in Callaghan Valley. This year's early season snow conditions have been exceptional, which has provided a good base of snow for the race. Over 100 volunteers will be on hand to help the race run smoothly.

Sovereign Lake will be open to the public for skiing while the event is on. Spectators are invited to watch the races.

-30-

Schedule:

Saturday, December 12, 2009

Women's Haywood NorAm 10 km (Skate)

Men's Haywood NorAm 15 km (Skate)

For further information:

Julie Melanson

julie@juliemelanson.com

SLNC: 250 558 3036

Cell: 250 307 3863