

EDNEY DETERMINED TO ACHIEVE ATHLETIC AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

For Sam Edney, the past six years of his adult life has been very much of a routine.

"I was really doing the same thing every day since graduating from high school," said the 2006 Olympian and six-year veteran of the Canadian Luge Team. "I would train and compete at the same times

every day, and it was the same thing throughout the year balancing the two. You start to question is this what I really want to do?"

This winter, the Calgaryan reached a checkpoint in his career path, and after a thorough evaluation with his family and coach, he decided to return to school. Edney enrolled in a year-round liberal arts and science program at Quest University Canada in Squamish, B.C., and has been taking courses throughout the spring and summer months to prepare him for life after sport.

Just weeks removed from his 24th birthday, life is now anything but routine for the gifted athlete.

Edney now balances his days following the national team's summer training program independently while chasing a post-secondary education. And pursuing excellence in both academics and athletics is anything but simple.

"I usually start my day with a workout before classes which run from 9 a.m. to 12 noon each day. After school, I head back to the gym for more training and then find time in the evening to do school work," said Edney, who adds he splits his time training at the Squamish Athletic Club and Pacific Sport Training Centre in Whistler. "The school was very appealing because it has block programming where I focus on one course for three weeks straight. It is flexible learning and that makes it doable."

Flexible learning is something Edney is comfortable with, having graduated from high school at the National Sport School in Calgary where young athletes complete the bulk of their education through a flexible curriculum on the road while competing for Canada internationally.

Heading back to school is one thing, but training to be an Olympic champion independently presents its own set of challenges.

"It certainly teaches self-determination," said Edney, who posted his best-ever international finish this season where he placed ninth at the World Championships. "I definitely have days where I need Jeff (Christie) and Ian (Cockerline) beside me pushing me to lift more and strive harder, but being in Whistler I have realized how bad I want to be at the Olympics in 2010 and that keeps me going."

While he keeps in touch with his own teammates by phone and e-mail, many Canadian athletes and Olympians are near-by. Edney regularly shares training time in the gym with Canada's freestyle aerial and moguls skiers, and bumps into several athletes based on the west coast.

Edney will continue to work with his coaches on his school and training schedule for the fall, but will definitely return to Squamish to continue his education next spring. And judging by his successful experience this summer, he may be surrounded by more athletes in the classroom next year.

Recognizing Edney's unique lifestyle as a student-athlete, the school has created an elite athlete program to give more athletes like Edney the opportunity to complete an education while pursuing their Olympic dream.

"We already have one young alpine and cross-country skier enrolled in classes, and hopefully more athletes can take advantage of this opportunity," said Edney. "It is not easy being alone, but it has made me stronger, I know competing in luge is what I want to do, I am now extremely determined and very proud of how I've motivated myself to train while going to school."

And Canada is too!



CANADA HOSTS BEST EVER FIL CONGRESS

Thanks to an army of dedicated luge volunteers and support staff, the 56th Annual FIL Congress will go down as the best ever according to FIL officials.

The Canadian Luge Association hosted more than 100 delegates from 29 national federations for the event at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Calgary, June 27-28. The two-day event was used to pass motions regarding rules and regulations. Elections were also held around for the chairman of the sport commission and awards were presented.

A special thank you goes out to Jeannie Godfrey, vice-president of marketing for the Canadian Luge Association, for her effort in making this such a successful and memorable event.

It was the first time in more than 50 years the FIL held its annual Congress outside of Europe and the first time it was held in Canada.



CLA SALUTES 1988 OLYMPIC LUGE ATHLETES

The Canadian Luge Association honoured 14 luge athletes that competed in the 1988 Olympic Winter Games in Calgary during a special dinner hosted at Fort Calgary during the 2008 FIL Congress last month.

With many of the 1988 athletes still heavily involved in the sport internationally as coaches, administrators, broadcasters and volunteers, the CLA celebrated the 20th anniversary of their participation in the Calgary Games by hosting a dinner in their honour with athletes, coaches and the FIL.

The following 1988 Olympians were in attendance:

(*Note Finish in Brackets)

Women's Singles:

Marie-Claude Doyon Canada (7)
Anne Abernathy US Virgin Islands (16)
Kathy Salmon Canada (19)

Men's Doubles:

Thomas Schwab Germany (3)
Wolfgang Staudinger Germany (3)
Robert Manzenreiter Austria (5)
Kurt Brugger Italy (7)
Bob Gasper Canada (10)
Andre Benoit Canada (10)
Harry Salmon Canada (17)
Dan Doll Canada (17)

Men's Singles:

Kurt Brugger Italy (15)
Harington Telford Canada (19)
Chris Wightman Canada (24)
Nils Labrecque Canada (27)



FIL HONOURS CANUCK TRIO WITH SILVER MEDALLIONS



The International Luge Federation honoured three Canadian sport leaders for their dedication and leadership in the sport of luge since the 1988 Olympic Winter Games were held in Calgary during the FIL Congress in June.

FIL president, Josef Fendt, awarded silver medallions to Doug Hansen, race chairman of the 1988 Olympic luge competition, Roger Eddy, race director of the 1988 Olympic luge competition, and Uncle Luge - Dennis Kadatz - who was former president and longtime director of CODA.

Congratulations to each of you.

COACH DANFORTH BECOMES A MOM

Novice luge coach and national team alumni, Lindsay Danforth, will have another member in her troops to guide this winter.

Danforth and her fiance, Braden Forsberg, are the proud new parents of a beautiful baby girl. Ashtynn Arial was born on May 30 at 7:58 p.m weighing a whopping 9 lbs, 1 oz.

Congratulations Lindsay and Braden. We look forward to seeing baby Ashtynn at the track!



NEW RECRUITS BEGIN TRACK TO FULFILLING OLYMPIC DREAM

Nearly two dozen youngsters in Calgary and British Columbia took their first steps towards achieving their Olympic dream by participating in one of the Canadian Luge Association's recruitment camps earlier this month.

The successful camps on the west coast were held in the village of Pemberton where the community blocked off a road that was ideal for the newcomers, ages 10-to-14, to build familiarity on the sleds.

The Whistler camp was held for the first time out of the Whistler Sliding Centre where two boys and 12 girls had registered. All of the kids were immediately hooked on luge and excited about the opportunity to try the sport.

Each of the participants in the 2008 Sea to Sky Summer Recruitment Camps will be invited to a special on-ice camp in the fall.



Other Summer Camps:

Calgary Camps (Times TBC)

Saturday, July 26, 2008
Saturday, August 23, 2008
September 13, 2008

Whistler, B.C. Camps

Sunday, July 20, 2008 9 a.m. - 12 noon
Sunday, August 24, 2008 2-5 p.m.

Squamish B.C. Camps

Sunday, July 20, 2008 2-5 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 21, 2008 9 a.m. - 12 noon

Pemberton, B.C. Camps

Sunday, August 24, 2008 9 a.m. - 12 noon

Please pass on camp details to friends and family members with young children. For more information, please contact Nicole Simon at 604-964-2478