

Canada's Great Gough



Alex Gough had a season many athletes can only dream about.

The 23-year-old rewrote the Canadian luge history books becoming the first Canadian to win a World Cup race, the first Canadian to reach the podium multiple times on the World Cup and the first Canadian to win a medal at the World Championships when she was third.

"It has been an incredible year and I just feel like so much of the hard work over the last six years really paid off," said Gough. "This was a huge season, and incredible for not only me, but our program in Canada. We have to keep building and growing from this."

After racking up a trio of third-place finishes on the World Cup, Gough became the first Canadian to win a World Championship medal when she was third in Cesana, Italy. The two-time Olympian followed up that feat by becoming the first Canadian to win a World Cup race and end the longest winning streak in sport at 105 wins for the Germans (dating back to November 29, 1997) when she posted the fastest time in Paramonovo, Russia.

"You cannot even imagine what it was like around the finish line when a Canadian finally ended this streak," said Wolfgang Staudinger, head coach, Canadian Luge Team. "This is not just history in Canada, but this is luge history in the world."

Much of the Canadian team's success can be attributed to the generous financial support by Own the Podium, who have been the financial lifeline of the national program. The Canadian Luge Association also welcomed its first-ever corporate partner, Fast Track Capital, two years ago, which has helped position them on the podium. Two years ago the team put For Sale stickers on their helmets while sliding at World Cups in Canada, which attracted the additional support from the Alberta-based corporation. Increased funding has equaled medal-winning results.

OC Welcomes Luge Team Relay into Olympic Line-Up



Luge will have a fourth discipline at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia as the IOC announced the Team Relay will be a part of the Olympic program.

"This is a wonderful present by the IOC, since the FIL will have a special anniversary during the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi: Carried out for the first time at the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck, in 2014 the sport luge will celebrate its 50th anniversary of being part of the Olympic programme", said FIL President Josef Fendt (Berchtesgaden) in London. One of six new sports introduced to the Olympic line-up, the addition of the luge relay could mean more medals for Canada as the national team has achieved success in the discipline since its introduction to the World Cup four years ago.

The FIL Team Relay Event came into being on January 7, 2007 on the artificially-iced track in Königssee, Germany. Already in 2008, at the 40th FIL Luge World Championships in Oberhof, Germany, the first titles in this new discipline were awarded. Prior to the 2010-2011 season the Team Relay Event then received its World Cup status. Due to technical problems during the 42nd FIL Luge World Championships in Cesana (ITA), however, the Team Relay Event had to be cancelled.

Youth and Junior National Champions Crowned



Canada's next generation of elite luge athletes competed for the national youth and junior titles at the Fast Track Canadian Championships on the Olympic Track at the Whistler Sliding Centre in February.

More than 40 athletes from Alberta and British Columbia, between the ages of 7-16, competed for the national title. The following is a list of winners.

- Youth A Men - Mitchel Malyk (Alberta)
- Youth B Boys - Evan Wildman (Alberta)
- Youth C Boys - Adam Shippit (British Columbia)
- Youth D Boys - Brendan Shippit (British Columbia)
- Youth A Women - Tara Disturnal (Alberta)
- Youth B Girls - Nicole Pidperyhora (British Columbia)
- Youth C Girls - Elainah Andrew (British Columbia)
- Youth Open - Veronica Ravenna (British Columbia)

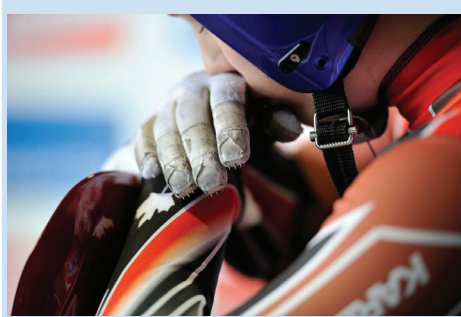
- Junior Men - Mitchel Malyk (Alberta)
- Junior Women - Jordan Smith (Alberta)
- Junior Doubles - Devin Corrigan/Taylor Donegan (Alberta)

Congratulations to medallists and participants in all categories.

Quotes of the Year

"I am so excited for our sport and what this means to all of us. It is pretty cool to become the first Canadian to win a medal at Worlds, but I'm more happy for everyone involved. A lot of people have worked very hard to help get me to this point."

...Alex Gough after stepping on the podium at World Championships



"This result was shaping up over the last two years. It is a long process and everything needed to match for it to come together. It isn't just coaching, or just technology. It is everything. With all of the proper resources in place, suddenly the system works. That was history this year!"

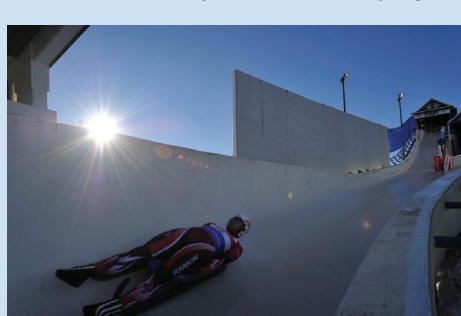
...Wolfgang Staudinger on Canada's medal-winning season

"We finished as expected this year at Junior Worlds. We need to focus on our starts through the summer to make sure we come out of the handles with more speed. We are able to compete down the track, but being behind on the start is too much to make up by the finish."

...Kyle Connelly, coach of Canada's Junior Luge Team

"It has been a frustrating start to the season, but things definitely feel like they are coming together. I have been feeling better on my sled. I have to continue working hard and I know it will come."

...Sam Edney, two-time Olympian



"Medals in luge are won and lost in thousandths of a second; that time can be made up through the sled technology, proper sled set-up, and plain old track experience. The Germans have dominated the sport thanks to their access and expertise in technology and knowledge of the tracks for decades. The recruitment of a winning coaching staff like Bernie Glass and Wolfgang Staudinger is a key component within our strategy of building the Canadian program so we too can climb onto the international podium."

...Tim Farstad, executive director, Canadian Luge Association

Canadians get First Taste of Russia



photograph by Brendan Hauptman

While the 2014 Olympic track is not yet complete, Canada's luge athletes got their first taste of what life is like in Russia while competing at the Paramonovo World Cup in March.

Battling regular foreign issues of getting adjusted to communication, food, accommodation and traveling around, the Canadians used the first-ever Russian stop on the World Cup as an opportunity to prepare and discover what to expect for the 2014 Games.

"I think it was good for us to experience Russian culture and understand some of the challenges we may face," said Wolfgang Staudinger. "Things will be very different at Sochi. The track is currently being constructed and homologation will be in March 2012 so we hope to get an invite to that."

Culture aside, Canada left Russia with a great taste in their mouth. Alex Gough won the nation's first-ever World Cup gold medal at the inaugural World Cup event on the track in Paramonovo.

Searching for the Next Canadian Luger

The Canadian Luge Association is targeting its next generation of luge athletes with Recruitment Camps in Calgary and Whistler over the spring and summer months.

Athletes will receive an introduction to the sport of luge, and its equipment, prior to participating in a series of dry-land physical testing exercises to showcase agility, flexibility and all-around athletic ability. The day will culminate with a wheel luge sliding session to build a familiarity on the luge sled.

Camp coaches will be looking for athletes ages 8-14, with strong overall fitness, and who demonstrate a keen interest in sport and a willingness to learn.

Cost: \$30/person

Register at www.luge.ca

Summer 2011 Recruitment Camp Dates:

Calgary:	
May 14	10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
June 11	10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
June 25	10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
August 13	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
August 27	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 10	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Whistler:	
June 18	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
July 16	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
August 27	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 17	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.



Sliding into the Future... 2011 AGM Set for Whistler

With the hopes of launching a new era for the sport of luge on Canada's west coast, the Canadian Luge Association will host its 2011 Annual General Meeting in Whistler, B.C., June 10-12.

Themed "Sliding into the Future" the weekend festivities will include a media and community celebration for young school-aged kids on the Sea-to-Sky Highway, and a gala dinner in addition to our corporate and governance responsibilities with the scheduled meetings.

The Whistler Sliding Centre will be a featured stop on the elite luge circuit's calendar over the next year. The 2010 Olympic venue is slated to host a World Cup in 2011, followed by the 2013 World Championships.

A committee is currently being assembled to finalize details for the Annual General Meeting celebration.