

# VELOCITY

v é l o c i t é

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www.luge.ca

## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - TIM FARSTAD



On behalf of the Canadian Luge Team, I hope you all enjoyed your spring, and recovery time, from another busy winter season.

As we slide into summer, and get anxious for vacation plans, Canada's luge athletes are in full training mode in preparation for another competitive season while the track edges closer to 2010.

With the Vancouver Games now just over two years away, the action is picking up speed in the Canadian sport world, including the Canadian Luge Association. This past month, Walter Corey, Ian Cockerline and I attended the annual Own the Podium meetings in Banff with representatives from each of the other national sport organizations. There are a number of positive outcomes of the meeting, of which I was most delighted to hear that funding plans are already in the works for post-2010. Sport Canada has already confirmed its commitment of 55-million past 2010, while the Canadian Olympic Committee is currently brainstorming a number of

funding strategies to support Canada's winter sport athletes beyond Vancouver.

The support of our partners, including Own the Podium and CODA, has given us the opportunity to gain access to new technology for training and testing, increase our support staff, and provide our athletes with the facilities and resources they need to compete with the best in the world.

As a result, in this edition of Velocity, you will learn about a number of positive developments for our national senior and junior team athletes that will help them prepare for international competition, which includes changes to training techniques in the Ice House, and a new key addition to the coaching staff.

Leading up to the Games in 2010, we fully intend to be a world-leader in luge racing. Working with our sport partners, it is our commitment to provide Canada's luge athletes with the resources to achieve our goal of winning the nation's first Olympic medal in the sport. This success starts at the grassroots level, and we are heading in the right direction with a deep pool of athletes now in the system, and recruitment camps we are holding throughout the summer in Western Canada to find the next generation of luge racers.

Our entire team is excited for the final two competitive seasons before the world comes to Canada in 2010. It is a great time to be involved in sport. It is going to be a great ride, and we encourage you to follow our advancements along the way.

Here's to an enjoyable summer of training and relaxation.

Tim Farstad  
Executive Director

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# STEFFEN SKELL TO LEAD NEXT GENERATION OF LUGE ATHLETES



Skell, 35, was born and resides in Germany where he accumulated nearly two decades of experience on the strongest luge team in the world as an athlete, coach and trainer. A three-time Olympic doubles luge athlete, Skell's best finish came at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games where he finished fourth in Salt Lake City. Skell finished his career as one of the most accomplished German doubles luge athletes, having racked up a total of five World Championship medals, four Overall World Cup medals and six European Championship medals throughout his career with partner Steffen Wöller.

Since retiring as an athlete, Skell has spent the last two years as head coach for the German doubles team of Schmidt/Forker, who finished second at the European Championships this year.

Skell brings his wealth of international ex-

perience from Germany to the Canadian program as the new coach of the Junior Luge Team, while also helping to support the senior men's doubles teams.

"There is so much potential for this program, and my goals are completely clear," said Skell, who adds his experience in the German system and knowledge of the most up-to-date scientific research and technology of the sport will help the Canadian squad. "We are going to work hard, instill teamwork and continue to get better each day together leading towards Vancouver. As a group of coaches, we will stand behind our athletes to accomplish these goals."

Steffen and his wife, 2004 World Champion skeleton athlete Diana Sartor, will arrive to Canada with their daughter Malin July 2, to begin working with the team.

Welcome to Canada!

Canada's luge athletes will have another key player behind their sleds when they hit the start house this winter. The Canadian Luge Association welcomed the addition of Steffen Skell, of Germany, to the national program in June.

## REGAN LAUSCHER IS BACK ON TRACK



to compete on a modified competition schedule. She missed the first World Cup, but continued her training in Calgary with her eye on the upcoming World Championships. Regan returned to competition in Europe after setting a track record home in Calgary and then went on to Japan, consistently placing in the top-10. Regan was getting excited about the upcoming World Championships and the opportunity of sliding on good ice.

It was at the Altenberg World Cup in Germany where sport's reality hit. Regan was at the top of her game and, as she describes it, "It was a normal mistake that had a really bad consequence." Regan crashed and suffered serious head trauma that kept her hospitalized for three days.

It did, admittedly, take a while to get over the disappointment of this, especially the fact that she was to miss her first World Championships since joining the senior team eight years ago.

When she was ready though, Regan accepted this new challenge and has dedicated the last few months to weekly doctor and physio appointments. She knew emotionally and physically it

had to be right. She was working with a great team of experts and trusted their plan.

"I completely feel fine now, I feel myself . . . I am training again full-time with everyone and am very motivated," she says. "Yes, there are good days and bad, but it is only realistic to accept the roadblocks along the way."

"You know, after the Olympics I did contemplate retirement, as many athletes do. The rush and excitement is over. But this experience has made me realize where I really want to be is on my sled."

Yes, Vancouver 2010 is three seasons away and nothing should be taken for granted, but Regan cannot help but express her feelings about the upcoming Games. She does feel blessed to have another opportunity to compete in an Olympics, the world's ultimate sporting event that will be held in her home country, in front of friends and family. All the pieces leading up to February 2010 in Vancouver will be very important, and be assured that this determined athlete, is ready to close the gap and get back onto the international podium.

Regan Lauscher has already experienced much of what many national team athletes aspire to each day. She has been to two Olympic Winter Games, stood atop the podium in international competition a handful of times and travelled the world, honing her skill on the toughest tracks that each country offers. But one of the most important things she has probably learned in her years of experience came as a result of a devastating crash last season.

"Patience and acceptance is the biggest lesson that I have learned," said Lauscher. "The first couple of weeks were very difficult, but once I had accepted I was not going back, I was able to set a new goal."

That new goal was to come back to the World Cup even stronger - both physically and mentally - than ever before. Getting to where she is today has been a long road for the veteran athlete.

Following a 10th-place finish at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games, the plan was for Regan

"Patience and acceptance is

## JUNIOR LUGE ATHLETE STEFAN RATH TAKES ON THE WORLD...IN THE BOARDROOM



The Canadian Junior Team's, Stefan Rath, is quickly working his way up to the top of the international podium – in the business world.

The 16-year-old Rath, along with 28 other youngsters from across Canada, have been selected to attend the Junior Team Canada International Mission going to Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore this summer. Rath, a Grade 11 student at the National Sport School who is the youngest of the team members, will gain valuable, real world business experience on this unique three-week trip in August. He plans to aggressively portray Calgary, Alberta and Canada as a destination of choice in Asia-Pacific.

The students' agenda's will include meetings with world leaders and other delegates to learn about their perspective on various issues that are important to

the Asia-Pacific region and to also share their ideas, proposals and knowledge about Canada's future economic growth. Upon their return, they will also be tasked with writing a follow-up report on their recommendations about how to gain further business, and which sectors to target.

More than 800 applications were reviewed for the 29-member team, following Global Vision's 14-stop cross-Canada visit. Stefan is one of only two students from Calgary.

Although not entirely clear of his career path, Stefan knows he would like to end up in mechanical engineering with an MBA from the University of Calgary.

He feels this summer's experience will give him a clearer definition of where he wants to go with his schooling, and will help him establish an important business network.

In addition to achieving excellence in the classroom, Stefan is also cognizant of his summer training and has already spoken with his coach about the plan. He will focus on bio-metrics while away, a routine that he can essentially do anywhere at anytime. Stefan's goal this season is to finish in the top-10 at the Junior World Championships in Lake Placid.

Congratulations Stefan and best of luck!

## ICE HOUSE SERVES AS KEY INGREDIENT TO SUMMER TRAINING FOR NATIONAL TEAM

The temperatures may be rising with the arrival of summer, but Canada's senior and junior luge athletes are heading into the frozen confines of the Ice House to take advantage of some world-leading equipment and indoor tracks in hopes of continuing to perfect their starts.

The entire national program is benefiting from new force handles that were installed in the Ice House this spring, thanks to research money provided by Own the Podium. The handles measure the force of the left and right arms, while providing solid video data. Coaches can also do video analysis with athletes, matching their starts in training with the ideal start put down by another athlete. Junior coaches can also match their athletes up against the stronger starts of the senior team.

"The starts are so crucial in our sport and this will hopefully give us more insight into improving each of our starts, and ultimately provide a competitive advantage," said Walter Corey, head coach of the Canadian Luge Team. "The force handles will be very



advantageous in allowing us to work with the athletes to make quick changes and see first-hand the adjustments that need to be made in their starts."

In addition to the force handles, the coaching squad is also implementing a new technique on the bobsleigh and skeleton track in the Ice House. A training program which was originally piloted following the 2002 Olympics, the senior team athletes are working specifically on paddling on this track each week.

"The bob ramp allows us to work on resis-

tance training which is very demanding and helps to build a solid strength base while combining it with weight training," said Corey, who adds the athletes are coming off a period of high volume training and strong intensity training sessions and will be in full sliding shape in July/August period. "The team is really starting to fully recover after a long season, and many of the athletes are in very good shape right now which is exciting to see."

While the senior team will continue to build core strength and perfect the start this summer in the Ice House, the junior and development athletes spend a great deal of their time in the world-leading facility, establishing coordination on the sled and basic start work.

"With the younger athletes, it is not healthy to do intense weights at their age so we work with them to build core muscle strength by doing repetitions," said Corey.

And if the past is any indication of the future, Canada's luge athletes are well on their way to leading the world out of the start house once again.

## CANADIAN LUGE ASSOCIATION SEARCHES FOR NEXT GENERATION OF ATHLETES

The Canadian Luge Association is on a push to recruit its next up-and-coming stars. Three recruitment camps were scheduled for Western Canada this month in Whistler, Squamish area and Calgary.

This aggressive recruitment initiative will of-

fer the young athletes, ages 10 to 14, an introduction to the sport of luge, its equipment and dryland physical testing, prior to a wheel sliding session to build familiarity on the sled.

Camp coaches will be looking for athletes

with strong overall fitness, those who demonstrate a keen interest in sport and a willingness to learn.

For more information on the recruitment camps, please visit the Canadian Luge Association website at [www.luge.ca](http://www.luge.ca).