

HANGIN' WITH HARRIS: THE CLA'S NEW VP OF OLYMPIC LUGE



In Stephen Harris' eyes, the sport of luge in Canada has never been in a better position over the last two decades than it is today. The same can be said for his role within the national program.

Harris was appointed to vice-president of Olympic luge following the Canadian Luge Association's 2008 Annual General Meeting last month in Calgary.

"This is a tremendous opportunity and an exciting challenge to play a role in continuing to build this program beyond 2010," said Harris during a

telephone interview from his Calgary home which overlooks the track at Canada Olympic Park. "Right now all systems are in place, but I think this is a critical role within the organization to ensure the program's pyramid is working at all levels beyond 2010. We need to work hard and make sure we have a good team heading into 2014, with a solid base at the grassroots level to continue getting stronger."

Harris' 20 years of experience in all facets of the sport makes him a perfect candidate to help drive the future of the program.

His passion for the slick sport took shape during a ski break at Canada Olympic Park in 1987 when he decided to walk to the west side of the new facility, and check out the first test runs at the luge venue constructed for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games.

"I always loved sports with speed like alpine skiing, and was immediately hooked on trying luge," said Harris, who enrolled in the Calgary Luge Club shortly after his inaugural visit to the track and also has a strong passion for the sport of triathlon.

Harris wasted no time in speeding his way down the icy track and through the national program. Specializing in doubles luge with Harry Salmon, he made his way onto the national team in 1989. An alternate on the 1992 Olympic Luge Team, Harris competed until 1994 where he switched his focus to coaching athletes at the novice and junior levels, while spending time serving on the Board of the Calgary Luge Club. Since the turn of the century, Harris has enjoyed his time on the officiating side of the sport after receiving his FIL certification and was selected as start leader for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.

"I think my new role is the next natural progression for me," said Harris, who has a doubles team at home of his own - son's Carson, 3, and Mitchell, 1, - with wife Sharlyn. "I believe my experience as an athlete, coach, and official will help me in making good decisions in my new role as vice-president of Olympic luge."

When not patrolling the world's top luge athletes, Harris has been putting his other badge on as a detective with the Calgary Police Service, protecting the community since 1996.

And whether it is representing the Calgary Police Service or Canadian Luge Association, giving back to the community is really what drives him each day which contributes to the leadership, tenacity and communications skills that he uses in all aspects of his life.

"Luge has such a tight community compared to other sports and that is really the key enjoyment for me is working and being around these people," said Harris. "But our goal is to use the momentum of the 2010 Games to build that community outside of Calgary and across the country, and develop programs and athletes into British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec. That is my major goal and biggest challenge."

Judging by the natural progression of the sport in Canada since 1988, along with Harris' involvement within that growth, the future of luge in Canada is extremely bright.

ATHLETES AND SPORT LEADERS INSPIRED FOR SUCCESS IN 2010

Jeff Christie and Regan Lauscher were amongst more than 70 of the nation's top winter-sport athletes who gathered in Whistler, B.C. last month for the 2008 Vancouver Olympic Excellence Series conducted by the Canadian Olympic Committee.

The purpose of the Olympic Excellence Series is to bring together athletes who have demonstrated podium potential for the next Olympic Winter Games, along with coaches, team leaders and support staff who will accompany them to the Games. The primary goal of the Olympic Excellence Series is to help prepare the athletes, coaches and support staff for medal performances by providing them with the practical skills and strategies they can use to prepare for podium success. The weekend seminar is also used as an inspirational and motivational tool to instill a sense of confidence and drive in the team's quest for the international podium.

Christie, Lauscher and the rest of Canada's high-performance athletes spent extensive hours listening to the success stories of their Olympic heroes who formed the athlete steering committee including: Beckie Scott; Brian Orser; Catriona Le May Doan, David Pelletier; and Marnie McBean. The accomplished Olympians participated in interactive workshops and engaging activities with the athletes, while sharing their personal stories of how they prepared for Olympic success.

The event was used for sport administrators to share preparation ideas and strategies, while gaining additional familiarity on 2010 Olympic preparations.

The Canadian Olympic Committee will hold another Olympic Excellence Series in the spring of 2009.



**CANADIAN LUGE ASSOCIATION
ROLLS OUT SUMMER
RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE**

The Canadian Luge Association is targeting its next generation of luge athletes by conducting a series of recruitment camps in Alberta and British Columbia over the next four months. In addition to four dates scheduled throughout the summer and fall in Calgary that will be conducted by Mike Lane, the CLA's Nicole Simon, program coordinator, will also lead camps in Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton.

An annual recruitment initiative, the Canadian Luge Association targets Canadian youth who demonstrate athletic ability to the sport. Athletes will receive an introduction to the sport and equipment, while gaining experience wheel sliding. The young athletes will learn the mechanics of the sled and basic movements of the sport while maneuvering around pylons on the wheel luge sleds.

Camp coaches will be looking for athletes ages 10-14, with strong overall fitness, those who demonstrate a keen interest in sport and a willingness to learn.

A registration fee of \$25 is required to participate in one of the following camps:

Calgary Camps (Times TBC)

Saturday, June 28, 2008
Saturday, July 26, 2008
Saturday, August 23, 2008
September 13, 2008

Whistler, B.C. Camps

Sunday, July 6, 2008 2-5 p.m.
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, July 6, 2008 2-5 p.m.
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.



**LUGING
IN
BEIJING
WITH
CANADA'S
2008
OLYMPIC
TEAM**

While luge is not part of the Olympic Summer Games curriculum, the sport's presence will definitely be felt on the Canadian team when the Olympic flame is lit at the Bird's Nest Stadium in Beijing this summer. Tim Farstad, executive director, along with Chris Dornan, communications manager, for the Canadian Luge Association have been selected by the Canadian Olympic Committee to join the Canadian mission team heading to Beijing.

Farstad will provide support to eight of Canada's national sport organizations while serving the role of team services officer. Farstad will assist with team management and lend support in liaising with a number of areas including village operations, transportation, and outfitting. Dornan will join the Canadian Olympic Committee's communications team as a media attaché for the sports of triathlon, boxing and badminton.

The 125 members of the mission team is a group of professionals across the country that provides all necessary support services to the Canadian team in Beijing. The mission team's main objective is to create an optimal environment that contributes to podium success.

"We have worked very hard to select dedicated and experienced individuals for our mission team," said Sylvie Bernier, 2008 Chef de Mission and 1984 diving Olympic gold medallist. "We want the athletes and coaches to be able to fully concentrate on their training and competition while in Beijing, while our mission team members take care of all the other details." Bernier will be assisted by Assistant Chef de Mission Peter Giles of Halifax.

The two representatives from the Canadian Luge Association, who will gain valuable additional Olympic experience to bring with them on the road to the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, were among the 170 members of the mission team who attended an Olympic familiarization seminar in Beijing at the end of April.

Following four days of preparation and touring the Olympic venues, a team building session was held at the Great Wall of China. After marveling at one of the world's seven wonders, the mission team was introduced to the sport of luge at the Great Wall. Members of the Canadian team hopped on a wheel luge sled and bolted their way down the metal track which spiraled its way down from the Great Wall to the main parking lot.

The Olympic Summer Games take place August 8-24, 2008.



COACH CONNELLY SLIDES TO THE ALTAR

CANADA PREPARES TO HOST ITS FIRST EVER FIL CONGRESS



The Canadian Luge Association will host more than 100 athletes, coaches and administrators representing each of the national luge federations from around the world at the 56th annual FIL Congress, June 27-28 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Calgary.

The two-day agenda will include congress motions predominantly concerning rules, regulations and statutes. Elections will also be held for role of chairman of the sport commission (artificial track), along with two members of the control commission, and for an additional member on the FIL Court of Arbitration.

Canada's Jeff Christie, who was selected by the world's elite luge athletes to represent them on the International Luge Federation (FIL) - Sport Commission in 2007, will also represent his peers and the CLA to weigh-in on issues and discussions surrounding the luge community.

Christie joins Tim Farstad, executive director of the Canadian Luge Association, as the second Canuck on the FIL – Sport Commission. Farstad was named to the Commission in 2002.

The International Luge Federation's Sport Commission consists of 10 bodies made up of an athlete representative, coaches and luge executives. The role of the Commission is to discuss rules of the sport at international and Olympic competitions, along with race procedures and formats, and to continue find ways to improve it around the world.

The Canadian Luge Association will host evening functions at Fort Calgary on June 27 and Rafter 6 following Saturday's meetings on June 28.



Kyle Connelly, one of Canada's most successful Olympic luge athletes, changed tracks from the podium to the altar last month when he got married to his new wife Jennifer in front of nearly 100 friends and family members.

Current and former athletes, coaches and administrators from the Canadian Luge Association joined together for the memorable service and celebration that continued into the night at the Strathcona Community Centre.

Connelly met his new bride while studying athletic therapy at the University of Calgary. After tying the knot, the newlyweds have had a unique honeymoon period – studying for their final exams in athletic therapy, which will be held in Winnipeg in mid-June.

Connelly, who has coached the national junior team over the last two years, enjoyed a successful junior luge career of his own where he racked up seven Junior World Cup podium finishes and three Junior World Championship medals. His strong start in the sport set the stage for a successful stint on the senior team where he posted Canada's best Olympic finish ever to date when he finished in 11th spot at the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City.

Connelly retired from the sport following the 2002 Olympic Winter Games to focus on school.

Good luck on your exams, and enjoy a life of happiness together Kyle and Jenn.