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Canada's Four Nordic Sports Sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to Explore Joint Opportunities to Achieve Performance and Operational Goals
New Steering Committee to guide Nordic Strategy research focused on evaluating opportunities to do more together

CANMORE, Alta.—Canada's four Nordic sports have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to begin exploring ways they can work together to achieve their ultimate goals of putting more Canadian athletes on podiums and increasing participation in each of their sports.

Biathlon Canada, Nordic Combined Ski Canada, Nordiq Canada and Ski Jumping Canada will work together to lead the Nordic Sports Strategy process that will evaluate opportunities of having a more unified approach to developing and operating Nordic sports in Canada.

Each of the four sports have designated up to two representatives, along with a representative from the Canadian Olympic Committee, to sit on the Nordic Strategy Steering Committee. Over the next 10 months, the Steering Committee will be focused on forming and directing working groups to analyze key functional areas of each national sport organization, including: administration; participation at the grassroots levels; membership; high performance/athlete development/coaching development; revenue generation; and governance.

Each working group will be charged with making recommendations and proposing solutions to the Steering Committee that will enable the goals to be reached: more Canadians on the international podium as well as putting more Canadians on skis, in the air and on the shooting range across the country.

"All four sports face challenges, some are unique to our individual sports, but we also see that many are shared. As leaders of our respective organizations, we believe we can meet many of these challenges through more cooperation and coordination," said Heather Ambery, General Manager, Biathlon Canada. "The Nordic Strategy Steering Committee will explore and test the opportunities that we believe exist to make our sports stronger."

To improve Team Canada's performance in the overall standings at the Olympic Winter Games, it must deliver in the medal-rich Nordic sports which boast 93 medals across 31 events. Canada's Nordic athletes have only won six medals since the 1924 Olympic Winter Games, and none since the 2006 Olympics in Turin, Italy.

"Our sports represent nearly 30 per cent of the Olympic medals available so we know that if Canada wants to be a world-leading winter sport nation, we need to consistently see the Maple Leaf raised above the podium multiple times at the Nordic venue," said Jennifer Tomlinson, Chair, Nordiq Canada. "This MOU is the first critical step taken to investigate how we might grow Nordic sports in Canada both in profile and in participation. We need to have a deeper look at our development pathways, talent identification and overall high-performance programs to see how we might deliver more podium performances for Canada.

The clear objective of this joint initiative is to evaluate what framework is best-suited to maximize efficiency and resources to attract new participants into the Nordic sports and developing medal

hopefuls within the Canadian sport system. The Steering Committee will examine the full spectrum of options to achieve this, from simple alignment of resources through to formation of a unified sport organization and will recommend the best way forward.

“Participating in this valuable exercise is extremely important for our community if we want to take our program to the next level,” said Todd Stretch, Chairman, Ski Jumping Canada. “Researching the potential opportunities for ski jumping in Canada to better align itself with each of Canada’s Nordic sports is a healthy learning process that is sure to benefit our organization regardless of the outcome. The key is the final recommendations need to work for all of us in Canada.”

Over the coming weeks, the Nordic Strategy Steering Committee will establish working groups of community experts who will produce reports back to the Steering Committee. Findings of the exploration will be reviewed by the Committee and reported back to their respective Board of Directors. Any recommendation or decision made by the Steering Committee will not be binding on any of the national sport organizations.

“I believe Nordic sport participation is an untapped market across the country due to our current limitation in resources,” said outgoing Chairman, Andy Mah, Nordic Combined Ski Canada. “It is exciting to think about the potential of creating healthier and more active lives for a greater number of Canadians who discover the enjoyment of Nordic sports in conjunction with striving for excellence in our Nordic Sports.”

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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