

Athlete to demonstrate Northern sports

Gymnast will showcase activities unique to the North at Winter Olympics

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services

Stacie Bengts will get to live out an Olympic dream, albeit in a demonstration format.

Bengts will be performing Arctic sports and Dene games during the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics. She is one of 16 delegates chosen by the Department of Municipal and

Community Affairs to travel to Vancouver to show off the uniquely Northern activities to people who will be coming to Vancouver from around the world. Bengts said she is "ridiculously excited" about going to Vancouver.

"Things like this never happen to us here in the North, unless you're someone like Michael Gilday," she said. "It's going to be amazing."

Just like everyone else who is going, Bengts had to go through an application process in order to be considered. She said the decision to apply was only made after someone brought it to her attention.

"It was a total fluke," she said. "I signed up with about three days to go, so I had to run around and get reference letters from people and thankfully, they all came through on one day, so I pulled it out. After that, it was off to Inuvik for the Circumpolar Northern Games (this past August) to try things out."

Bengts will be departing with her teammates for Vancouver in February.

Her scheduled time will be between Feb. 17 and March 10 and she said the group will be kept busy.

"We've been told we could be doing two shows a day," she said. "We'll also be teaching kids in some of the big schools how to do the activities, but we'll be doing something every day and I hope we can just promote the North as best as we can."

Bengts, whose background is in gymnastics, didn't have the experience of some of the others who tried out, but Gary Schauerte, the acting director of the Sport, Recreation and Youth division of MACA, said her hard work and positive attitude was what got her included.

Blessing

"She received the blessing from elders in the area, even though she hasn't done a lot of Arctic sports before," he said. "They obviously had a lot of confidence in her to do

these games and she left a big impression on them. It's a big thing for her to be endorsed by them."

Schauerte said the schedule will include trips to various locations around the lower mainland area of the Greater Vancouver Region.

"Our focal point will be Northern House," he said. "We've also been in discussion with the city of West Vancouver to host some camps there. We're also talking with the city of Richmond, which is a cultural execution site, but that has yet to be confirmed."

Bengts, who attends school in St. Catharines, Ont., gave her roommates a sneak peek at some of the games she will be performing before going to Vancouver. She said the response was positive.

"They were very receptive when I showed them and they wanted to know more about what they are," she said.

"I hope the same will happen when I'm in Vancouver. My school (Brock University) doesn't know why I'm going, but they do know where I'm going and everyone's been very supportive."



James McCarthy/NSL photo

Stacie Bengts takes a break from the back push during a practice session at Mildred Hall School on Nov. 29. Bengts will be on her way to the 2010 Olympics and Paralympics in Vancouver as one of 16 delegates.



CASSIE MOONEY

SPORTS CARD SWIMMING

AGE: 16

Cassie chose swimming over hockey because she's been doing it for a long time. "I've been doing it for much longer and hockey's still new to me," she said.



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Special Meeting

The Bathurst Inlet Caribou are reported to have declined from 472,000 animals in 1985 to 31,000 animals in 2009. Drastic measures are proposed to deal with this decline.

Please attend the meeting to express your concerns and to listen to the proposed actions.

ENR will be presenting on current caribou census.

7 PM • Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009

Champagne Room 5004 50th Ave.
(formerly Our Place Restaurant)

Anyone concerned with the future of our caribou should attend!

New members welcome

Contact Martin Knutson 920-4120 or matrix01@ssimicro.com