

**New curling rink
takes top prize**
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Sports & Recreation

SPORTS HOTLINE • JAMES MCCARTHY
Phone: (867) 873-4031 • E-mail: sports@nnsi.com • Fax: (867) 873-8507

**Olympic skier
set to make history**
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Hay River biathlete going for gold

Brendan Green makes 2010 Olympic men's biathlon team

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services
Hay River

Brendan Green, the 24-year-old Hay River biathlete, will live his Olympic dream when he represents Canada in Vancouver this month.

The athlete was officially named to the men's roster for the Canadian Olympic biathlon team by the Canadian Olympic Committee on Jan. 28. Green, who was training in Germany as of last week, said it's an incredible feeling.

"It's been a dream of mine ever since I was a child and it's taken many years to get there, but it's just an awesome feeling," he said. Green was nominated to the roster by Biathlon Canada following the third World Cup stop in Pokljuka, Slovenia, in December, the cut-off for qualifica-

tion. Green said it came down to the wire as to whether he would be nominated. Until it was confirmed, plans were in a holding pattern.

"The Canadian Olympic Committee had to approve the nominations and they had to wait until the appeals process had passed before making it official," he said.

The Olympian will be racing in the men's relay after the International Olympic Committee decided to allow Canada a team in the event. He did not have enough international experience to be considered for the solo events.

Green will join teammates Jean-Philippe Le Guellec, Marc-Andre Bedard, and former NWT resident Robin Clegg in the hopes of hitting the podium in Vancouver,

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photo courtesy of Christian Manzoni

Hay River's Brendan Green, seen during a World Cup event in Whistler, B.C., last season, has officially been selected to Canada's men's biathlon team for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

SPORTS Check

with James McCarthy

e-mail: sports@nnsi.com



Bonspiel in the works

Lli Goline/Norman Wells

On the heels of the successful Oil Person's Bonspiel, the Norman Wells Curling Club is looking to host another bonspiel this month. Club member Barry Harley said the hope is to have the event sponsored by Canadian North.

"It will probably be around the last weekend of February," he said.

Harley said the bonspiel will feature the same set-up as the last one, with three divisions and all teams beginning in the A division. If a team loses, they drop down to the B division, and so on until a loss in the C division, when the team will be eliminated.

Merchants Mixed curling

Liidlii Kue/Fort Simpson

The annual Merchants Mixed Bonspiel was scheduled to take place at the Fort Simpson Curling Club from Jan. 29 to 31. Action was to begin on Friday evening and continue until Sunday. Recreation co-ordinator Nathan McPherson said all teams were to start in the A division and would drop to the next division below after losing a game.

Also, the Moosehide Mamas women's hockey tournament is in jeopardy for 2010. McPherson said as of right now, there are no teams who have signed up to play. The tournament is scheduled to go off between Feb. 5 to 7, but if there are no teams registered, the tournament will likely have to be cancelled.

Handgames tournament

Deline/Fort Franklin

Plans are in place for the annual handgames tournament in Deline, to take place Feb. 19 to 21. Recreation co-ordinator Felix Karkegie said the tournament this year will be featured at two locations.

"We'll be at the cultural centre and the arena hall," said Karkegie, adding that at least eight teams from Deline have signed up to play so far in this year's event. It's still too early to say how many teams from outside the community will attend, he said last week.

One thing Karkegie does know is the prize pot, which is expected to be in the neighbourhood of \$75,000.

\$25,000 will go to the winning team, he said.

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Newbies prove they're top contenders

New curling foursome wins annual Oil Person's Bonspiel in Norman Wells



Norman Wells resident Patti Lennie lines up a shot during curling practice a few days before the town's Oil Persons' Bonspiel on Jan. 22-24.

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services
Lil Golline/Norman Wells

If people in Norman Wells didn't know Trevor Yachimac before, they certainly do now.

Yachimac skipped his team, appropriately called The Newbies, to victory at the Oil Person's Bonspiel in Norman Wells on Jan. 24. The inaugural rink beat The Hogliners, skipped by Jim Klein, by a score of 9-7 in the championship game. Yachimac said winning just wasn't even a thought when his team hit the ice.

"We just went out to have a little bit of fun," he said.

The team name described the length of time Yachimac has been in town, less than a year, but it also described the length of time it had been since Yachimac and his team, including his wife, Chris Yachimac, Rick Irwin and Cindy Irwin, had been on the ice. Yachimac, originally from Rocky Mountain House, Alta., said he had been nearly 14 years away from a curling sheet.

"There were lots of sore muscles afterwards for all of us," he said.

The Newbies were one of 13 teams that lined up to begin play on Jan. 22 at the Norman Wells Curling Club. Every team began in the A division and stayed there until a loss, which brought a demotion to

the B division. Another loss meant relegation to the C division and one more loss meant elimination. Yachimac's crew managed to avoid dropping down, meaning an unbeaten weekend for the foursome. Yachimac said he found the style of play very easy-going.

"No one was overly competitive," he said. "Everyone was fun to curl against and I think everyone was just out to have fun."

The tournament this year saw an increase of teams, especially from outside the community. Drawmaster Barry Harley said Fort Good Hope and Deline each made their presence known.

"Usually it's just Fort Good Hope that sends teams, but Deline sent three teams this time and Fort Good Hope had two," he said. "It's getting pretty popular now."

Harley said the tournament used to draw in up to 24 teams, but just having the tournament is good enough for the teams that take part.

"Everyone seems to really enjoy playing," he said. "We always have a good supper for them here at the club and I think we put on a good show."

As for a defence of his title in 2011, Yachimac said it all depends on his teammates.

"We will enter if we can, but it's hard to say right now," he said.

NWT Olympian to compete in men's relay

Hay River, from page 31

something Green said isn't too far-fetched.

"Our best finish was a seventh-place finish last season," he said. "I think that showed when we put together a good race, we can be right in there with the rest of the world, but you never know. It certainly isn't out of the question."

The Hay River resident's appointment to the Olympic team was based on results from international events over the past four years, but the biathlete has only competed at international ranking races since 2008. In the 2008 and 2009 season, he was made a full member of the world cup team and in the past year his results have steadily improved.

Green warmed up for his Olympic adventure with his best finish to date on the World Cup circuit, when came in 14th – the top Canadian in the race – in the 12.5 km pursuit event in Antholz, Italy, on Jan. 24. Green said his success in the solo events might translate into success in the relay.

"It shows my preparation is working and it's the perfect way to end things before Vancouver," he said. "I'm confident heading there."

Green has already proven on more than one occasion that he is an asset in the relay event. In December, competing in Sweden, he was Canada's top gun in the relay. Green shot near perfect, needing only one extra round to clear his targets and advanced

the team to 14th from 16th.

As a junior, Green anchored Canada to two major podium finishes: a silver medal at the World Youth Championships in 2005 and a bronze medal at the World Junior Championships in 2007, earning him the title of "anchor-man."

Skiing since age 3

The athlete's father, Bruce Green, said Brendan's Olympic story began at the age of three, and is the product of years of dedication and hard work.

"He started skiing then, and he had his first race at 8 years old in the local Ptub races," said Bruce. "He went to his first Arctic Winter Games in 1998 in Yellowknife and won a silver ulu in the relay event. He went again in 2000 and won a gold ulu in the skate event."

With territorial success already in the bag for Brendan, it was time to take on the rest of the country and Bruce said 2001 was the big breakthrough.

"It was his first Canadian Championship and he won gold in his age category," said

Bruce. "That got some attention from Geret Coyne (national team coach) and he figured if the kids were given a proper program, they could make the Olympics in 2010."

Coyne's idea bloomed into the 2010 Olympic Development Program and Brendan was one of the first 20 athletes invited to take part, Bruce said.

"They put together a summer training program and they also took them to European events to expose them to competition there," he said.

Bruce also paid tribute to Brendan's former coach, Pat Bobinski, who, he said, was a major factor in Brendan's success.

"Without him, there is no Brendan Green the biathlete," Bruce said. "We got him (Bobinski) a ticket and he'll be coming with us."

Brendan said there are plenty of people to thank for getting him to Vancouver.

"I just want to thank my family and everyone in Hay River for their support over the years," the new Olympian said. "Without them, I wouldn't be here and I want them to know that."

Thank You

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