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OUTDOORS

B4

Telemark Nordic Club hires new full-time GM



J. P. SQUIRE
Making Tracks

Change is in the air at the Telemark Nordic Centre.

The Telemark Nordic Club, based in West Kelowna, has long been a big part of the Central Okanagan community offering cross-country skiing and snowshoeing at the Telemark Nordic Centre on Glenrosa Road near Crystal Mountain.

The club also offers cross-country ski instruction programs for skiers of all ages and abilities. With 1,300 members, it is one of the largest cross-country ski clubs in Canada. And with many more day-users throughout the winter, it also operates one of the largest not-for-profit run Nordic centres in Canada.

The club and Nordic centre have grown and improved over the years, but the board of directors decided that Telemark needed some changes to keep up with the growing demand for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. "The current board of directors saw that the Telemark Nordic Club needed an injection of new energy to make sure that the Central Okanagan would continue to have the best cross-country skiing and snowshoeing possible," says outgoing club president Barry Allen.

The first step was hiring a new full-time, year-round general manager.

"This is a big step for us. We have had a part-time manager for many years, but that did not give us enough capacity to meet growing needs. The board of directors wanted to hire someone who had experience in all aspects of running a larger ski area and developing a club," he said.

That someone is Mike Edwards, who was hired in September as the new general manager. In the process, he moved to West Kelowna from Canmore, Alta., with his wife and two children.

Since then, Edwards has been busy preparing for winter as well as getting to know the club, its members, the Telemark Nordic Centre and the Central Okanagan community.

Edwards has a 25-year career of working in the cross-country skiing business. He was the manager at Sovereign Lake Nordic Centre in the North Okanagan during its growth phase from 2000 to 2007.

He went on to involvement in the Olympics as the assistant operations manager at Whistler Olympic Park during the 2010 Games. Most recently, he was the director of the successful National Team Para-Nordic Program, which saw a record 16-medal haul at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympics.

"I couldn't pass up the opportunity to work for the Telemark Nordic Club. The club is on the cusp of great things and I wanted to be a part of that. I love building and wanted to help build this club and its facility to the next level," Edwards said.

"My goals are to operate the Nordic Centre as a business while making sure it always has a friendly club atmosphere and to manage growth for the benefit of all skiers and snowshoers," he added.

"The club is excited to have Mike," says incoming club president Brent Hobbs. "He brings a wealth of experience with proven results. He has become a big part of our community in the short time he has been here."



Photos contributed

Telemark Nordic Club had a great season last year with some of the best snow in many years and skiing continuing into April out of the busy chalet (above). All day fees and rental equipment rates are the same as last year. Season pass prices were tweaked to make them more consistent. Telemark will host the Western Canadian Championships on Feb. 8-10, 2019, bringing more than 600 cross-country ski athletes to West Kelowna from across Canada and the U.S. It is one of the largest cross-country races in North America.



Special to The Okanagan Weekend

Mike Edwards was hired in September as the new general manager of the Telemark Nordic Club. He moved to West Kelowna from Canmore, Alta., with his wife and two kids after serving as director of the successful National Team Para-Nordic Program, which saw a record 16-medal haul at the 2018 PyeongChang Paralympics.

Skiers will notice a few changes this season, including new staff, renovations to add new tables and counter space to the chalet, night lighting repairs, updated snowshoe trail signs, and a new season pass and ticketing system.

All day fees and rental equipment rates are the same as last year. Season pass prices were tweaked to make them more consistent, so that some categories went up by a small amount while others went down by a small amount.

Telemark had a great season last year with some of the best snow in many years and skiing continuing into April.

In other exciting developments, Emily Young, a multi-medalist at the 2018 Paralympics, is moving back to Kelowna to ski at Telemark while continuing to train and compete with the National Paralympic Team. Telemark played a big part in developing Young into a successful Paralympian.

In addition, Gareth Williams, a Telemark athlete, is in his second year on the Senior National Team.

Telemark will host the Western Canadian



Special to The Okanagan Weekend

Telemark Nordic Club skiers and snowshoers will notice a few changes this season such as renovations to add new tables and counter space to the chalet. Nigel Duxbury worked on the new counter space in the Telemark Chalet.

There are approximately 1.2 million people across Canada who regularly cross-country ski. That's about four per cent of the Canadian population.

Looking at club numbers in the Kelowna area, only about two per cent of the population regularly participates in cross-country skiing.

The Telemark Nordic Club's board of directors has the lofty goals of enticing that extra two per cent and doubling its membership in the next few years. Edwards thinks that's doable.

The club hosted a successful B.C. championships last year in preparation for the Western Canadian Championships.

Some trails have been widened with new cut-offs constructed to give more options for skiing, to prepare for the Western Canadian Championships, and to qualify for international certification of the trails.

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OLYMPICS

Paul Henderson says IOC should give 2030 Games to Calgary

TORONTO (CP) — Two-time Olympic and former International Olympic Committee member Paul Henderson would like to see the IOC follow its own lead when it comes to the selection of host cities for the Games.

The IOC recently broke from tradition by transforming the bid process for the Summer Games by declaring two hosts — Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028 —

at the same time. Speaking on the heels of a plebiscite that essentially scuttled Calgary's bid plans for 2026, Henderson would like to see winter host announcements handled in a similar fashion.

"I believe what they should do now is give the Winter Games for 2026 to a winter city in Europe and tell Calgary you're going to get the 2030 Games with no bid," Henderson said.

Stockholm and a joint Italian bid from Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo remain in the mix for 2026. The IOC will accept bids in January and the election of the host city is set for June.

Henderson, 83, has been an Olympic regular over his long sporting career. The Toronto native first competed at the Games in 1964

at Tokyo, was an IOC member from 2000-04, served as a longtime technical delegate for sailing and has held several international board positions and federation executive roles.

Henderson said the 1988 Calgary Games were "terrific," thanks in part to the great leadership in place at the time.

"In my opinion, it was the best-run Olympic Games ever," he said. "Although I thought Lillehammer (1994) and Vancouver (2010) were outstanding too."

The venues from the 1988 Games formed the foundation of a 2026 bid, but 56.4 per cent of Calgarians cast a dissenting vote in a non-binding plebiscite on Tuesday.

"As a Canadian, it's a huge opportunity that's been missed," said Owen The Podium chief executive officer Anne Merklinger. "Sport matters so much to me as a Canadian and my role as Owen The Podium because of its ability to inspire and unite and motivate Canadians."

A cost-sharing agreement between the

three levels of government was supposed to be ready in August but wasn't clear until late October, hampering Calgary 2026 efforts. Three other cities withdrew from the 2026 race earlier this year — Sapporo, Japan; Sion, Switzerland and Graz, Austria —

and Turkey's Erzurum was eliminated last month by the IOC.

"The bottom line is that the International Olympic Committee needs Calgary more than Calgary needs the International Olympic Committee," Henderson said. "So you stand up (for 2030)."

Canadian Olympic Committee president Tricia Smith has said she remained hopeful that Canada will one day host another Winter Games.

Meanwhile, 2026 board chair Scott Hutcheson said he thinks Calgary needs time to decompress before considering future Olympic plans.

Pyeongchang, South Korea, hosted the Winter Games this year, the first of three straight Asian hosts. The Summer Games return to Tokyo in 2020 and Beijing will host the Winter Games in 2022.



Henderson

