



Editor - Terry Frey

Megan Imrie leads Team Manitoba at Canada Games

World-class biathlete Megan Imrie of Falcon Lake will carry the flag for Team Manitoba in the Opening Ceremonies at the Canada Winter Games, which get underway Friday at Whitehorse, Yukon, as the Games run from February 23 to March 10.

Imrie, who just turned 21 years old on Valentine's Day, was named as the Team Manitoba flag-bearer at a Winnipeg press conference last week where it was also announced Olympic champion hockey player Jennifer Botterill would be the Honourary Team Manitoba Captain.

"I am extremely proud to be chosen to bear the flag for Manitoba in Whitehorse. It is a huge honour," said Imrie via telephone early last week from the Czech Republic, where she was competing on the European Cup circuit. I understand the commitment, sacrifice and dedication that goes into competing as a Manitoba athlete. I hope I can lead a successful team into the 2007 Canada Games."

Biathlete Megan Imrie of Falcon Lake will be the Team Manitoba flag-bearer at the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse. Photo by Alex Giesbrecht Photography

Imrie, a 2003 graduate of the SRSS in Steinbach, a member of the Junior National Team since 2001 is one of the top biathletes in the country, and has been selected to represent Canada at the World Youth/Junior Championships four times.

She achieved her best-ever international result at this year's World Junior Championships in Martell, Italy, when she surpassed her goal of a top-16 finish, placing 10th in the Individual Event. At those same championships, she was also 16th in the Sprint, 20th in the Pursuit and seventh in the Relay.

An all-round athlete, she was a two-time Manitoba High School Cross Country Champion competing for the SRSS Sabres and won back-to-back titles in 2003 and 2004 in the Manitoba Marathon for athletes under 18.

Imrie won a bronze medal as a member of the women's relay team at the 2003 Canada Winter Games in New Brunswick, and is considered a gold medal favourite in Whitehorse.

The Manitoba team is comprised of 325 athletes, coaches, managers and mission staff.

Growing up in Falcon Lake, where her parents own Falcon Beach Ranch, her passion for the biathlon began at age six when the Canadian Biathlon Championships were held in Falcon Lake. Two other athletes from Falcon Lake, Gabrielle Lord and Brooke Christie are joining Imrie in Whitehorse as members of the Manitoba biathlon team.

Reached at her home in Canmore on Monday, where she lives year-round, training with the national team, Imrie said her 10th place finish at the recent World Junior Championships in Italy was the highlight for her biathlete, "it has inspired me to do better."

The 2010 Winter Olympics are on the horizon and a very real possibility, "it is something I think about every day, it is my goal, it is my dream." There are a total of 33 athletes and coaches from Eastman competing in the Games in archery, biathlon, boxing, figure skating, men's and women's hockey, judo, ringette, snowboard, wheelchair basketball and synchronized swimming.

Week one sports at the Canada Games (February 23 to March 10) includes archery, badminton, biathlon, women's curling, men's hockey, judo, ringette, shooting, freestyle ski, snowboarding, speed skating and synchronize swimming. Week two sports (March 3 to March 10), includes artistic gymnastics, boxing, men's curling, fencing, figure skating, women's hockey, alpine ski, cross country ski, squash, table tennis and wheelchair basketball.

Manitoba has finished fifth overall at the last two Canada Winter Games winning 35 medals in 2003.