

For Immediate Release
January 26th, 2012

Somppi to Represent Canada on European Tour

Michael Somppi of the National Development Centre - Thunder Bay is one of seven cross country skiers selected to represent Canada at the OPA and Scandinavian Cup races in early February. Somppi and the Canadian Team heading to Europe will be competing in 7 races over 10 days against some of the top racers from across Europe. The team kick's off the tour on February 3rd in Switzerland and will then travel to Latvia and Estonia. The schedule is as follows:

Feb. 3-5 Campra, SUI OPA Cup
Feb. 8,9 Madonna, LAT Scandinavian Cup
Feb. 11,12 Albu, EST Scandinavian Cup

Somppi's performances in the distance races at the Haywood Noram in Whistler BC earlier this month earned him a spot to be a part of the Canadian contingent heading to Europe. Somppi will gain great international experience and is very happy to be racing in Europe this winter, " I'm very excited to have an opportunity to compete in Europe this season. Qualifying for this trip was a goal for me and accomplishing it feels great. A big thank you to our hard working staff as I couldn't have done it without them. With the Western Canadian Championships over, my focus is now shifting to performing well overseas. It's a short turnaround as we will be departing already on Sunday so there isn't much time to do specific preparations. However, I feel my racing is improving as the season progresses and I am really looking forward to the mini-tour event in Switzerland as well as the free technique events in Latvia."

Eric Bailey, Head Coach of the NDC-Thunder Bay is very proud of Somppi, "I'm very proud of Mike for accomplishing one of his major goals of the season. In a year without an Olympics or World Championships, this is an important step for Mike in order to maintain his presence on the International racing circuit." Bailey will also be heading to Europe with Mike as the team leader.

Bailey, Somppi and the Canadian Team leave for Europe this Sunday, January 29th

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