



2011 Special Olympics BC Winter Sport Championships coming soon

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In February and March, more than 650 athletes and volunteer coaches from all over BC will experience the joy of competing in the 2011 Special Olympics BC Winter Sport Championships. In the three host communities – Coquitlam, Vancouver and West Kelowna – spectators will find themselves inspired by the action and achievements on display.

This year, the three communities are playing host to the events of the 2011 Special Olympics BC (SOBC) Winter Sport Championships as follows:

- The **2011 SOBC Ice Sport Championships**, featuring curling, figure skating and speed skating events, will be held at Coquitlam's Poirier Sport & Leisure Complex on **Feb. 11 and 12**.
- The **2011 SOBC Floor Hockey Championship** will run on **Feb. 18 and 19** at the UBC Student Recreation Centre in Vancouver.
- The **2011 SOBC Snow Sport Championships**, featuring alpine skiing, Nordic skiing and snowshoeing action, will be held on **March 4 and 5** in West Kelowna.

Part of the four-year cycle of Special Olympics competitions, the SOBC provincial championships draw together athletes with intellectual disabilities from all corners of BC to go for gold in seven sports. At stake is the exciting opportunity to compete in national and international Special Olympics Games: top performers in Coquitlam, Vancouver and West Kelowna will earn the right to advance to the 2012 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Alberta, where they'll compete for the chance to move on to the 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games in South Korea.

Matthew Williams, an 18-year-old SOBC athlete from Langley, has been training hard and is keen to race in the speed skating events in Coquitlam. Matt says SOBC's provincial championships are an inspiring opportunity for athletes to achieve great things, forge friendships with people from around the province and enjoy life-changing experiences. For some competitors, their journeys to Special Olympics Games are their first-ever trips away from home.

"It's a very neat and positive experience for athletes," Matt says.

"Around this time last year, we were all eagerly awaiting the start of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games. While those Games may be over, there is still great sports action to come for local spectators. The 2011 SOBC Winter Sport Championships will showcase inspirational athletes who are ready to go for gold, and they'll demonstrate the power of Special Olympics sports programs to truly change lives," says Dan Howe, Special Olympics BC President and CEO.

Spectators will be welcome to come out and watch the free events and cheer on the inspiring athletes!

About Special Olympics BC:

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to providing individuals with intellectual disabilities opportunities to enrich their lives and celebrate personal achievement through positive sport

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Special Olympics
British Columbia

experiences. In 55 communities around the province, we provide year-round training and competitive opportunities in 18 different sports to more than 3,700 athletes of all ages and abilities, thanks to the hard work of over 2,600 volunteers. For more information, please visit specialolympics.bc.ca.

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