

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 19, 2011

Eric Bailey Announces Retirement as Head Coach of NDC-Thunder Bay

At the end of this competitive season, Eric Bailey will retire from his position as Head Coach of the National Development Centre in Thunder Bay.

Eric has served as Head Coach for the past 8 years and has led the team to some of its most productive seasons in the organizations history. He has been an invaluable leader and has played a large part in many of the centre's most recent successes including last year when the team qualified 3 of its members for World Championship teams and 6 of its members to the Canada Winter Games. Director of High Performance for Cross Country Canada, Thomas Holland stated, "Eric has worked productively over several years to transform the T-Bay NDC into a credible program as was witnessed by the performance achievements in the 2010-11 season. Eric has done this by believing in the program, learning from experience, patience and getting the most out of minimal resources. Eric has been an exemplary athlete advocate with an exceptional passion for developing our athletes and our sport."

This choice for Eric comes after much personal deliberation. "This has been a very difficult decision for me. Coaching at NDC in Thunder Bay has been such a tremendous part of my life. I have worked with so many amazing athletes over the years; people that never cease to amaze me; people that have inspired me daily and motivate me to match their efforts in our combined pursuit of excellence. I hope that I have served the system well and that all the athletes I have worked with feel as good as I do about our efforts and accomplishments. "

The NDC Board of Directors wishes Eric every success in the next steps along his career path as he plans to remain involved in the sport, "Eric will be greatly missed by the athletes and by the board of directors as his passion, high energy, professionalism, and effectiveness have been key elements in the success that the NDC – Thunder Bay enjoys today."

NDC-Thunder Bay is committed to replacing Eric with a strong, qualified, passionate Head Coach who will build on Eric's successes as the team moves forward. Immediate search for his replacement is under way - official job notice to be posted on Wednesday.

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Statement from Eric:

This has been a very difficult decision for me. Coaching at NDC in Thunder Bay has been such a tremendous part of my life. I have worked with so many amazing athletes over the years; people that never cease to amaze me; people that have inspired me daily and motivate me to match their efforts in our combined pursuit of excellence. I hope that I have served the system well and that all the athletes I have worked with feel as good as I do about our efforts and accomplishments.

For the past few years, we have had exceptionally positive team dynamics. This atmosphere is not always easy to create, but it is something I feel is critical for the long-term success of a program and something I have worked extremely hard to foster and to develop. And now, I know the program is ready for me to move on. It will be successful because of what it has become. The athletes are second to none in terms of work-ethic, motivation, sport-knowledge, and ability.

The program that has been built in Thunder Bay is something I am extremely proud of. We have very strong team values and philosophies that we do not stray from. They are at the core of how we operate as a team, and I am certain that this will continue.

Coaching cross-country skiing in Canada is something I have always been very passionate about. This has not changed, and I plan to stay involved in the sport. But as the saying goes, the only constant in life is constant change. I am excited for change in my life and I am looking forward to whatever will transpire.

I am really looking forward to a strong season this winter, building even further on what was accomplished last year. Nothing will change for our team until after the racing season is complete and a new Head Coach is hired. I am extremely confident that the program will continue to grow and thrive for many years to come!

Happy Holidays,

See you on the trails,

Eric