

SOMPPI NAMED TO SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM



Michael Somppi of the National Development Centre - Thunder Bay was recently named to the Senior National Cross Country Ski Team. The 23 year old native of Thunder Bay represented Canada at a World Cup and the World Under 23 Championships this past season. Somppi said of this accomplishment, " I am so proud and honoured to be a part of this team. This is another step in the right direction towards qualifying to represent Canada at the 2013 World Ski Championships and the 2014 Winter Olympics.

However, being a member of the National Ski Team is not only good for me, it's good for the National Development Centre in Thunder Bay (which I am still a part of), it's good for local competitive skiing in Thunder Bay, and it's good for competitive skiing in Ontario."

Somppi credits much of his success to being inspired by other local Thunder Bay athletes who raced internationally as members of the Canadian Ski team, while training out of the NDC-Thunder Bay. Looking up to and seeing these athletes succeed made Somppi 's decision to live in Thunder Bay a lot easier and proved that this city and this program is one of the best in the country for skiing excellence. "A few years ago I saw skiers like Chris Butler, Sean Crooks and Becky Puiras on the National Team and thought, they trained in Thunder Bay and they made it, why can't I do the same?. Now that I have made the step from Development Centre athlete to National Team athlete, others will hopefully look to me and think similar thoughts. It's much easier to believe in something when someone you can easily relate to has already been successful at it."

Somppi will reside in Thunder Bay for this upcoming season as he will be skiing with the NDC-Thunder Bay and will be coached under Eric Bailey. Bailey, entering into his 8th season as Head Coach with the NDC has also been named as one of the coaches of the Senior National Team. Bailey is very excited about his and Michael's nomination, "It is an honour for me to be named as a National Team Coach alongside Michael. As a team, we have proven to be capable of producing top international results. At NDC-Thunder Bay, we are able to provide World-class support that will allow him to continue his progress towards the World Cup and Olympics."

For the official announcement by Cross Country Canada please see <http://www.cccski.com/dbfiles/2358.pdf>

