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**Young Guns Target 2010 Olympic Winter Games for Canadian Biathlon Team
—Canadian biathletes head to Vancouver after posting career-best results—**

CANMORE, Alta.—Canada will field one of the youngest biathlon teams in the world, armed with a wealth of international experience, for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games at Whistler Olympic Park in February.

Biathlon Canada has nominated four women and four men to the Canadian Olympic Committee for the Olympic Team.

Olympians Zina Kocher and Jean-Philippe Le Guellec, who are leading the resurgence of the Canadian biathlon program, will headline the eight-member roster. Each of the four women named to the team will compete in all of the events on the Olympic slate. Le Guellec will be the only Canadian male to compete in the individual competitions, and will join three other Canadians for the men's relay event.

"Over the last quadrennial Zina and Jean-Philippe have helped put our sport in Canada back on the Olympic radar," said Joanne Thomson, executive director, Biathlon Canada, who added Kocher won a World Cup bronze medal three years ago, while Le Guellec is posting some of the best results ever for a Canadian male. "There is no question we have one of the youngest teams in the world, but with these two athletes leading the way, our team now believes anything is possible and we have a bright future for our sport."

After missing the 2007 season with mono, Kocher heads into the 2010 Games having fought her way back to the top of the international standings. The 27-year-old Red Deer, Alta. native finished fourth this year at an individual World Cup competition and is regularly in the top-15.

Kocher will be joined by three Olympic rookies on the women's team. Megan Imrie, 22, of Falcon Lake, Man., who has progressed on the World Cup over the last two years into the top-half of the pack is anxious for her first taste of Olympic competition. Megan Tandy, 21, of Prince George, B.C., will be the lone British Columbia athlete putting on the Canadian uniform, while Rosanna Crawford, of Canmore, Alta., will round out the women's squad. The 21-year-old Crawford, who is the sister to Olympic gold medallist in cross-country skiing Chandra, grabbed the final spot on the team during Biathlon Canada's Olympic Trials three weeks ago.

"As a team we have certainly come a long way since the 2006 Games, and with some of the strong results we've had over the last four years, we now believe that Canadian biathletes can contend with the world's best," said Zina Kocher. "Our team dreams and visualizes about the Olympics everyday. I know we are determined to do our best, and hope this experience will be another building block on the road to putting Canada back on the Olympic biathlon podium."

Kocher and her fellow women's Olympic teammates put Cindy Ady, Alberta's Olympic Ambassador and Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation, through an introductory biathlon lesson at the Canmore Nordic Centre prior to the team receiving their official Olympic jackets.

Meanwhile, the men's team who are spread throughout Europe and Quebec this week, also celebrated their Olympic dream coming true on Thursday. The nation's hopes for a medal in the men's competitions will rest on the shoulders of Jean-Philippe Le Guellec, of Shannon, Que.

The 24-year-old Olympian, who continues to knock on the door of the international podium after regularly cracking into the elite top 10 on the World Cup over the last two years, will hunt for Canada's first-ever Olympic medal in men's biathlon. Le Guellec will be joined on the men's relay team by two-time Olympian Robin Clegg, of Ottawa, who races out of Quebec, along with Marc-André Bédard, of Valcartier, Que.,

and Brendan Green, of Hay River, N.W.T. The two 23-year-olds both had career-best results last week on the World Cup where Bédard placed 20th, and Green had a 14th and 19th-place finish.

Canada's biathletes will head to Mt. Washington, B.C. for a pre-Olympic training camp, February 1-8, 2010.

Biathlon Canada, the governing body for biathlon in the country, oversees the Canadian Championships, Eastern and Western Canadian Championships, and the North American Cups held in Canada. The organization's mandate is to provide national level programs for the continuous development of biathlon athletes from the grassroots to the elite level. For more information on Biathlon Canada, please visit their Web site at www.biathloncanada.ca.

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