



## Aiming for Excellence

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### President's Report – Game on!

Hello everyone! Seems like a long time ago since I've seen you out at a biathlon event!! I hope that changes this season. While we may not have been able to host any formal competitions this past season, I know a lot of you have been very busy keeping athletes engaged in training, so that when we are able to get back to competition, they are ready to go!

Likewise, we on the board have also been busy and moving a number of initiatives forward. These initiatives include:

- Range upgrades throughout the province
- Advancing transition to Ecoaims rifles from air rifles
- Exploring collaboration opportunities with other Nordic sports
- Looking at ways to expand participation for indigenous and para athletes in biathlon
- Adopting a Safe Sport Policy

The first on this list is the work that was done to complete much overdue range upgrades in Camrose, Edmonton and Hinton. Thanks to the work of many people giving countless hours, a CIP grant to pay for the equipment and installation, we now have improved ranges at these key facilities! A huge thank you to everyone involved in these projects – I can't wait to see these ranges in action this season.

You may recall in my report last year, that we had been planning to expand the use of Ecoaims camera based rifles to augment and eventually replace air rifles for our youngest athletes as a means to grow our sport. Moving this initiative forward, Biathlon Alberta purchased five Ecoaims rifles this summer for use in demonstrations and school programs to attract new athletes to the sport, and it is my understanding that approximately 25 other rifles have also been purchased by several other Alberta clubs, bringing the Alberta fleet of Ecoaims rifles to approximately 50!

Another initiative we've been advancing this past year, is exploring possible ways in which we might better align biathlon with the other Nordic sports, cross country skiing, ski jumping and Nordic combined. While it is still unclear how this may evolve, it has been an interesting journey and a worthwhile endeavor. We have already seen improvement in how a closer relationship with Nordiq Alberta has resulted in fewer conflicts in our respective competition schedules – excellent work Elmar, thank you!



Looking forward to 2021/22 work has begun to team up with Spirit North to incorporate biathlon as part of their mission to empower indigenous youth through sport and play. This season, the plan is to include biathlon as part of their sport offering in 5 schools throughout Alberta: Tsuut'ina Middle School, Mother Earth Charter School, Edmonton inner-city programs, Nipisihkopahk Secondary School and at the Canmore Nordic Centre.

Alberta is also home to some of Canada's most internationally decorated para biathletes! We would like to see more para athletes involved in biathlon and we are planning to be more proactive about the development and promotion of our sport to this group. The challenge (opportunity) here lies in the fact that Para Nordic skiing (and biathlon) is governed by Nordiq Canada and Nordiq Alberta. Clearly, this is another opportunity for our two organizations to collaborate more closely to grow the sport.

Finally, closing on a high note, there have been several developments across the province that indicate there is growing interest in our great sport! I am happy to report that Edmonton Nordic has hired a new full-time biathlon coach, some of you may have heard of him before?? Please join me in welcoming Roddy Ward – we look forward to seeing you back on the local circuits Roddy. Red Deer Nordic is working on launching a full-time biathlon program this season, taking advantage of the beautiful range that was built for the Canada Winter Games in 2019. Also, Elmar has had several communities in northern Alberta reaching out and looking for information on how to get a biathlon program up and running! This is truly exciting and we hope that interest will only increase further this year since its an Olympic year! I can't wait to cheer on our National team in Beijing next February.

As always, I thank you for your support and feedback and look forward to seeing everyone out for our first events currently scheduled in Canmore in November! In the meantime, be kind to others and let's have fun! I am always keen to hear from you, especially if you have any ideas about how we might improve and grow the sport of biathlon in Alberta!

Sincerely,  
Clayton Paradis  
President, Biathlon Alberta

