



Robin McKeever, National Ski Team

Photo: Alec Pytlowany

The Sprints Are Coming!

Based on 1999 International Ski Federation (FIS) meetings, Sprints are the way of the future.

This opens the door to considerable development opportunities for cross country skiing in Canada. Sprints require little snow to host successfully and they are great for sport promotion! They are a made-for-TV event with the potential to attract large numbers of new athletes to cross country skiing.

Three formats are officially recognized by the FIS at this time: **Knock Out Sprints**, **Heat Sprints** and **Sprint Relays**.

Sprints will have full World Cup points status at three out of six selected sites in 1999-00. There will be Sprint events at the World Junior Championships in 2000 and the World Championships in 2001, and they have been proposed by the FIS for the Winter Olympic Games in 2002. At the international level course norms for sprints have been established at 800 - 1800 meters total length, 400 - 1800 meters for laps, and 10 - 60 meters total climb. For the three events mentioned above the format will be the **Heat Sprint**, the distance will be 1500 meters, and the technique will be free technique.

Accordingly there will be a Sprint race at the 2000 World Junior Championship Trials as well as the National Junior & Senior Championships and the Western Canadian Championships. For all these events the Heat Sprint format will likely be used and the technique will be free technique. The distances will be adapted to be age appropriate. The Sprint events at the Westerns will be included in the selection criteria for determining the BC Ski Team for the 2000 National Junior Championships, a male and female sprint specialist will likely be named to the World Junior Championship Team this winter, and it is possible that National Junior and Senior Sprint Teams will be named at the end of the year.

Let's get prepared for an exciting new development in our sport – one that should fit the North American culture like a glove.

Updates will be posted on the CCBC Web Site throughout the winter, along with guidelines for organizing Sprint events in your community.