



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2024

### Emotion and Unity Light Up the Opening Ceremonies of the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships in Prince George

PRINCE GEORGE, BC – The Prince George Conference and Civic Centre was a beacon of celebration and unity yesterday evening, as the opening ceremonies for the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships unfolded in a captivating display of culture, resilience, and athletic spirit. Athletes from around the globe were welcomed with open arms, marking the commencement of an event that promises to highlight the best of Para sports on the international stage.

The ceremonies were elevated by a moving parade of athletes, symbolizing the global nature of the championships and the shared journey of all competitors. As nations' representatives marched, the sense of pride and excitement was palpable, setting an inspiring tone for the competitions ahead.

Emotionally charged performances touched the hearts of everyone present. The Prince George Tapestry Singers led by Carolyn Duerksen delivered a breathtaking rendition of Canada's national anthem, performed in English, French and Dakelh, the language of the Lheidli T'enneh and was a profound tribute to the land's heritage and the spirit of inclusivity.

The evening was illuminated by the mesmerizing performance of "Fly Baby Fly," an original masterpiece co-created by Kym Gouchie and Elijah Quinn Larsen for the Opening Ceremonies. Echoing through the Civic Centre, the piece was brought to life by Kym Gouchie's beautiful voice, the musical talent of Larsen and the interpretive contemporary dance of the Method Dance Society, with special guest Grant West adding a dynamic layer of storytelling through movement.

Max Cobb, Secretary General of the International Biathlon Union, expressed his admiration for the ceremonies, stating, "The opening night was a powerful reminder of the unique blend of cultural richness and competitive excellence that defines these championships. The performances, particularly the poignant rendition of Canada's national anthem in multiple languages and Kym Gouchie's breathtaking original score 'Fly Baby Fly,' perfectly captured the essence of our collective endeavour – to celebrate the indomitable spirit of Para athletes and the communities that support them."

We respectfully acknowledge that this event takes place on the unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation. We thank them for allowing us the opportunity to gather and celebrate on their ancestral lands.

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The night concluded with "First Encounters," a powerful piece created by Shayla Dyble and Derek Carlson and performed by Shayla Dyble and was followed by a spectacular fireworks display in the Civic Plaza that lit up the skies and signified the start of the 2024 Para Biathlon World Championships and the Para Nordic World Cup Finals.

Kevin Pettersen, Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, reflected on the significance of the ceremonies: "Hosting the parade of athletes and witnessing the unity of nations in Prince George was a moment of immense pride. The ceremonies not only celebrated the athletes' pathways to these championships but also set a precedent for the level of sportsmanship and camaraderie we expect in the days to come."

Competition officially starts today; March 6 and the atmosphere is charged with anticipation. The following week will see the transition to the Para Nordic World Cup Finals starting March 12, continuing the celebration of Para athletic accomplishment.

The Local Organizing Committee urges the community and visitors to support these remarkable athletes. Free to the public, this event offers an unparalleled opportunity to witness the determination, skill, and unity of Para competitors from across the globe.

Event details can be found at <https://caledoniacompetitions.com>

For more information, contact:

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