



# 2025 *Invictus Games*

*Cross Country & Biathlon Events*

*at Whistler Olympic Park*

This winter, the very first winter edition of the Invictus Games will be hosted in British Columbia and based in Vancouver and Whistler. Founded as a summer event, the first Invictus Games was hosted in 2014 as an international sporting event for wounded, injured, and sick servicemen and women, both serving and veterans. The Games use the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation, and generate a wider understanding and respect of all those who serve their country. Much like an Olympics, it unites athletes from multiple countries and multiple sports, creating an exciting atmosphere and a sense of community among participants.

This edition of the Invictus Games will feature for the first time snow and ice sports such as alpine and cross country skiing, biathlon, snowboarding, skeleton, and wheelchair curling, and also indoor sports such as wheelchair basketball, swimming, sitting volleyball, indoor rowing, and wheelchair rugby.

The cross-country skiing and biathlon competitions will be hosted at Whistler Olympic Park on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 and will be broadcast live.

Numerous Cross Country BC members will assist in delivering the cross-country skiing and biathlon events, which means that BC will leave an indelible mark on the Invictus Games: they are responsible for decisions like competition distances and degree of difficulty, waxing and equipment protocols, and rules, not to mention creating an exciting event that leaves the competitors and spectators with positive memories.

For the BC nordic sports community and the athletic community more generally, the event builds on the recent 2024 World Para Biathlon Championships and Para

Nordic World Cup Finals hosted by the Caledonia Nordic Ski Club of Prince George, and should increase expertise and interest in adaptive sports.

Jake Weaver (Hollyburn Cross Country Ski Club) is serving as the Chief of Nordic Competitions, with assistance from Chelsea Little (Nordic Racers) as Chief Cross Country Official, Rob Schnider (Vancouver Island Biathlon Club) as Chief Biathlon Official, and Dirk Rohde (Hollyburn Cross Country Ski Club) as Assistant Chief of Biathlon and Cross Country. Dozens of officials from clubs in the Sea to Sky region will be contributing their skills, many of whom gained international event experience when the Black Tusk Nordic Events Society hosted 2023 FIS World Junior and U23 Championships at Whistler Olympic Park. Biathlon BC and Nordiq Canada are also supporting the event, with Nordiq Canada's Para Biathlon Coach, Menno Arendz, playing an important role in planning for the biathlon competitions.

Other key contributions from Cross Country BC include Chris Manhard leading administration of a waxing protocol to standardize all competitors' skis. Maria Lundgren will coordinate forerunners so that some of the province's racers get to experience a taste of a big-event atmosphere and to ensure that the course is in the best shape for the competitors.

The Invictus Games will be a great showcase of our province's love of skiing and commitment to building cross country ski access and enthusiasm through a broad cross-section of the community. We hope you'll come watch in person, or tune in!

*By Chelsea Little, Nordic Racers*