

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 6, 2022

Nordiq Canada Names Robin McKeever New Head Coach of National Ski Team's Olympic Program
Olympian Chris Jeffries transitions into full-time High Performance Director role focused on strengthening athlete pathway to deliver podium performances

CANMORE, Alta.—Canada's high-performance cross-country ski athletes will begin their four-year march to the 2026 Olympic Winter Games and beyond with a new head coach focused on guiding the program back to the international podium.

Following 12 years of coaching Canada's highly decorated Para-Nordic skiers, Robin McKeever will take the head coaching reigns of the National Ski Team's Olympic stream program, Nordiq Canada announced on Wednesday.

A 1998 Olympian who went on to guide his brother Brian McKeever to 10 of his record-setting 20 Paralympic medals before transitioning into the coaching ranks with Canada's Para-Nordic squad in 2011, Robin McKeever has played a key role in leading one of Canada's most successful para programs. With McKeever at the coaching helm over the last three quadrennials, Canada's Para-Nordic athletes have combined to win 36 Paralympic medals, 29 World Championship medals, and have celebrated countless World Cup podium results.

"It has been an absolutely incredible run over the last decade working with a world-class team of athletes, coaches, and staff who have all bought into the vision for our Para-Nordic program that continuously delivered results on the ultimate stage," said McKeever. "I look forward to working with our team of coaches and staff to develop a similar supportive culture of excellence that is athlete-centred while taking my coaching career in a new direction with Canada's Olympic cross-country ski program."

In his new role, McKeever will be responsible for leading all aspects of program delivery for the National Ski Team's Olympic program: from coordinating the daily training environment with the athletes' personal coaches to managing training camps and competing on the World Cup where he will **ensure optimal mentoring for the nation's best athletes while working with coaches and training centres across the country to align the training and preparation of elite-level athletes.**

"This is an exciting opportunity for me to build on the program's significant progress made to date, and lead this strong, cohesive pool of talented athletes, fantastic wax team, and established sport science program that is already in place," added McKeever. "We know from our own history that Canadian cross-country skiers can compete, and win, against the best in the world. Working with the high-performance staff and coaches across the country, it will be my goal to create a belief in the system for this new generation of athletes and coaches that they, too, can achieve podium results at the elite level if we all work together towards a common goal."

McKeever is the final piece of Nordiq Canada's newly created coaching puzzle that has been designed to build a development pathway that is accountable, reliable and dependable with a clear focus on creating a medal-winning program at all levels of the sport.

Last summer, Nordiq Canada welcomed the return of Eric de Nys to the program as its NextGen coach where he is counted on to lead development-level athletes. In October, the governing body for cross-

country skiing in Canada strengthened the athlete development pathway by welcoming Matt Smider as the organization's first ever Development Coach to work with athletes in the U16-U20- age group.

"Providing our athletes with world-leading coaching and access to a strong support team throughout the Podium Pathway are core to Nordiq Canada's goals to not only build depth in the system, but to strengthen the high-performance environment across the country," said Chris Jeffries, high-performance director, Nordiq Canada.

"Robin knows what it takes to win – both as an athlete and coach. I believe his knowledge and experience over the last 30 years will contribute significantly to the development of Canada's athletes and coaches. Working with Eric and Matt, Robin will play an important role in ensuring there is strong coaching collaboration across the country, expertise in development and program alignment."

Jeffries will also transition into his new full-time role as Nordiq Canada's high-performance director.

Jeffries brings more than two decades of experience with him to the national program as a high-performance athlete and coach working at all levels in the athlete pathway and as a national training centre program director. Originally from Chelsea, Que., Jeffries' intimate knowledge of the high-performance system, divisions and club systems in Canada runs deep.

After retiring from competitive skiing where he represented Canada at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games and two World Championships (2005, 2003), Jeffries began his coaching career with Foothills Nordic Ski Club where he managed all athlete planning, coached and managed the track attack and learn-to-train programs. He also co-created, planned and executed the first Ski at School program.

In an effort to minimize distraction to Canada's cross-country ski athletes in their final preparation for Beijing 2022, Jeffries split his time over the last year at Nordiq Canada while continuing his role as high performance program director at the Alberta World Cup Academy.

The Para-Nordic program will finalize its coaching and support staff structure later in the spring.

Nordiq Canada is the governing body of para-nordic and cross-country skiing in Canada, which is the nation's optimal sport and recreational activity with more than one million Canadians participating annually. Its 60,000 members include athletes, coaches, officials and skiers of all ages and abilities. With the support of its valued corporate partners – Swix and Lanctôt Sports – along with the Government of Canada, Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Own the Podium and B2Ten, Nordiq Canada develops Olympic, Paralympic and world champions. For more information on Nordiq Canada, please visit us at <https://nordiqcanada.ca>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Chris Dornan

Media and Public Relations

Nordiq Canada

T: 403-620-8731