

For Immediate Release
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Upcoming Orienteering Events in the Bow Valley

Over 100 runners from across Western Canada and the North-western USA will be in Canmore August 30th – September 1st to take part in the 2008 Barebones Orienteering weekend. The annual Barebones Orienteering festival (first held in 1996) is renowned for its high quality events and its relaxed atmosphere - it is a great event for beginners and novices to enjoy a couple of orienteering races and improve their navigational skills and strategies.

Orienteering is a cross-country running sport that involves route-finding by map reading. Like adventure racing, orienteering involves navigating between checkpoints in the wilderness, but compared to adventure races, orienteering events are fast and short with winning times depending on the race format: 15 minutes for "Sprint distance" races, 35 minutes for "Middle distance" races, and 90 minutes for "Long distance" races.

Following up on well-attended orienteering clinic held in May at the Canmore Nordic Centre, the organizers are making a special offer to residents of the Bow Valley to encourage locals to participate in Barebones and experience the fun of orienteering in their own backyard. On Saturday August 30th there will be two races at the Canmore Nordic Centre. The first race is "The Prologue" - a short distance event with a staggered start and lots of controls on a short and very fast course. The second race is "The Pursuit" - a longer distance event with a chasing start and somewhat more technical navigation.

Bow Valley residents can take advantage of the Canmore Pursuit Special. For \$40 (adults) or \$20 (juniors – under 20), participants receive entry to the two races at the Canmore Nordic Centre, free rental of the electronic timing card, a pre-race instructional clinic, post-race coaching, and a membership to the orienteering club (www.orienteeringcalgary.ca) which will be valid to the end of 2009. Groups (of 2-3) and families will be charged \$40 + \$5 for each additional adult.

Other races on the Barebones weekend include a race at the base of Mount Yamnuska on the morning of Sunday Aug 31; a night orienteering race (bring your headlamp) at the Rocky Mountain YMCA on Sunday Aug 31; and a relay race on Monday September 1 at the Rocky Mountain YMCA. Entry to these race is \$20 each.

The races have categories which are suitable for newcomer to the sport. The Recreational category is designed for adults looking for a gentle introduction to the sport. The Family category is designed for families with young children and the Sport category is geared for beginner/intermediate adults looking for a more challenging course or for families with older children.

To sign up for the Canmore Pursuit Special and/or the other Barebones events, visit www.barebones.ca/Canmore. Pre-registration is preferred so that the organizers can properly prepare by printing adequate number of maps. Only a very limited number of spots will be available for entry on the day.

For more information
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Backgrounder

What is Orienteering?

Originally developed over 100 years ago in Scandinavia, orienteering has grown as a sport to the point where races are held in over 60 countries worldwide every year, and the International Orienteering Federation has expanded to include some 70 member nations, and is actively developing the possibility of orienteering being added as an Olympic event. The sport itself requires competitors to navigate to designated checkpoints using map and compass through unknown terrain. While most races involve high-speed cross-country running, other popular variations include orienteering on mountain bikes or on Nordic skis. With recent increases in Adventure Racing, orienteering has gained popularity amongst adventure racers looking for an opportunity to enhance their navigational skills.

Orienteering appeals to outdoor-oriented athletes – people who enjoy being active in the fresh, clean air. It features a very low environmental impact, and encourages participants to respect and appreciate nature. It is a non-violent sport, and is free from doping scandals and other controversies.

At the elite level, Canada has been regularly represented at the World Championships for more than 35 years. This year, members of the Canadian Team will be competing at World Championships, Junior World Championships, World Cup series, as well as numerous regional and national races across North America. These races will include over 40,000 competitors and spectators, as well as multi-format media coverage.

At the recreational level, orienteering is a good way for all members of the family to enjoy the outdoors while learning navigational skills and developing comfort in the wilderness. Weekend warriors enjoy the physical challenge of running off-trail through the forest while solving the mental challenges of navigation and route choice presented by the course planner. All orienteering events have a variety of courses available for participants to choose from, ranging from short and technically easy courses for the youngsters, to long and technically challenging for the elites.

While the core of the international racing season lasts from May-September, most regions are active and conduct orienteering events year-round. Major races are typically held between April and November each year. The North American racing schedule includes dozens of significant (100+ participants) races yearly, with an even greater number of smaller races.

For more information, try:

Orienteering Events in Canmore www.barebones.ca/Canmore

Barebones Orienteering www.barebones.ca

Foothills Wanderers Orienteering Club www.orienteeringCalgary.ca

Alberta Orienteering Association www.orienteeringAlberta.ca

Canadian Orienteering Federation www.orienteering.ca

International Orienteering Federation www.orienteering.org