

For Immediate Release
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Ski Orienteering finding its way to the Canmore Nordic Centre

Ski orienteering is a fun mix of nordic skiing with navigation and route finding. The Canmore Nordic Centre is hosting a ski orienteering event on March 15. It will be a fun opportunity for skiers to explore their favorite trails in new ways and for orienteers to enjoy their favourite sport in skis. The event is a "come and try it" event that is open to all levels of skiing ability, fitness and orienteering experience.

Orienteering on foot is the most common type of orienteering, but both nordic ski and mountain bike orienteering are gaining in popularity. In ski orienteering, participants use a detailed map and navigate by either classic or skate skis to find the various checkpoints marked on the map. "The Canmore Nordic Centre is a perfect venue for ski orienteering because of the dense trail network", explains Canadian Orienteering Federation President Charlotte MacNaughton. "Even Canmore locals who have skied at the Nordic Centre many times will enjoy the extra challenge of making quick navigational decisions while skiing the trails."

There will be four different race lengths. The easiest will be about 1 km with easier navigation. This race is ideally suited to kids under 9. The longest race will be 10 kilometres with trickier navigational challenges.

The event on March 15th begins with a free clinic about ski orienteering in the day lodge at 9:00 am. There will be a practice race at 10:00 and a short kid's race at 10:30. The adults will start shortly after 11:00 am. The awards will be at 1:00 pm.

The participants need to provide their own classic or skate ski equipment and trail pass. The organizers will provide the instruction and orienteering map. The entry fee is \$10 before March 8 and \$15 after that date. All participants must be members of the Foothills Wanders Orienteering Club. Annual club memberships are \$10 for individuals and \$20 for families. Further information is available at www.barebones.ca/canmore and registration is at www.zone4.ca.

The World Ski-Orienteering Championships are held every second year. The World championships are currently underway in Japan and Canada is represented by Marie-Catherine Bruno of SilverStar, BC. (high resolution action shot of Marie-Catherine Bruno is available. Email charlotte@barebones.ca)

For more information
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www.barebones.ca/Canmore

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.

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, biking or skiing 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 larger (100+ participants) races yearly, with an even greater number of smaller races and training events.

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