

For Immediate Release
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Launch of Permanent Orienteering at the Canmore Nordic Centre

The Canmore Nordic Center has installed a set of world-class, state of the art permanent orienteering courses.

"The permanent courses give people who enjoy outdoor activity another reason to visit the Canmore Nordic Center", says Magi Scallion, Event Coordinator at the Nordic Center. "Groups and individuals can develop their navigation and map reading skills".

There are three courses of increasing difficulty (Green, Blue, and Black) for runners, walkers and hikers. In addition there is a fourth course for mountain bikers. The courses will change three times each year – in the spring, summer, and fall – to give people new challenges and to take them into different parts of the park.

"I have designed the courses to provide a series of stepping stones for people to improve their orienteering skills, starting from the basics of simple map reading along trails, to more technical navigation requiring shortcuts through the forest and with checkpoints off the trails" says course designer Adrian Zissos.

The permanent orienteering courses are expected to be popular with a wide range of groups including adventure racers wanting to improve their navigation skills, school groups, families, running groups, mountain bike clubs, hiking groups, tourists, and corporate team building groups.

"The great thing about the permanent courses is that they allow individuals and groups to learn and enjoy orienteering on their own schedule – the courses are always available. We hope that this ease of access will attract more people to take part in the sport and develop more orienteering skills. The permanent courses are a great way to learn the fundamentals of orienteering", say Charlotte MacNaughton, President of the Canadian Orienteering Federation and former national team member.

This project is a partnership between the Canmore Nordic Center, Trail Sports, and the Foothills Wanderers Orienteering Club, with financial support from the Alberta Government.

To try the permanent orienteering courses, people need to visit Trail Sports at the Canmore Nordic Centre and for \$5, will receive an orienteering map (to keep) and the rental of an electronic timing chip and compass. "When you have completed the course your time will be recorded by Trail Sports. The fastest times will be shown on the web – so we encourage people to return to try and beat their fastest time", says John Gallagher of Trail Sports.

The permanent courses are changed three times each year – in the spring, summer, and fall. A special race will be held on the opening day of each course. The Grand Opening of the 2009 Spring courses takes place on May 9th, with an introduction to orienteering clinic at 10am, a Kids' race at 11am, and an adults race at 11:30am. Entry fee is \$10 and includes introductory clinic, race, map, compass and timing chip rental, and BBQ.

For more information and to register please visit www.barebones.ca/Canmore

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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.

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
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