



Speed Skaters Smash Records

January 27, 2011, Charlottetown – PEI's short-track speed skaters returned recently from meets in Quebec and New Brunswick where they broke long-time Island records and picked up new hardware for their efforts. In Drummondville Quebec, a trio of PEI's best Juvenile aged skaters took on top level skaters from Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario, re-writing parts of PEI's record books in the process. In Fredericton, eleven PEI skaters competed in the Eastern Canadian Championships, bringing home four medals.

Jack Connell and Niall Burnett, both of Charlottetown, set new PEI records during a meet in Drummondville, QC. Connell obliterated a seven year old record for Juvenile boys in the 777 metre distance, bettering the previous time by nearly two seconds. Racing in the same division, Niall Burnett knocked off a six year old PEI record, improving on the former standard for 1000 metres by nearly a second.

Burnett also set new personal best times in his other two distances on his way to an impressive 17th place finish in the high calibre field. Connell placed 19th in points, after having to battle through a very tough draw in his 500 metre distance. Carly Connell also offered strong representation for PEI on the Juvenile girls side, notching personal bests in two of three distances and placing 13th.

In Fredericton, 115 skaters from nine Maritime clubs competed, with Evan Brideau of the host Fredericton club taking gold in the top "open" male division. Anouk English, a double Olympic medalist in short-track in Torino, now skating in Saint John, skated to top division gold for females.



1Fredericton Action!

Rebecca MacLean took home the lone gold medal for the Island contingent, winning the 12 year old female division after two personal best times. Dan Cottreau, a member of PEI's 2011 Canada Games team, had the fastest times among all PEI skaters and grabbed a silver medal in the Junior A and Open male category. Zach Moran won the silver medal for 12 year old boys after a personal best in his 100 metre pursuit race, while Michaela MacLean nabbed a bronze for PEI in division 11 female.

"The Easterns are a unique chance in our competition calendar for many of our older skaters to skate directly against their age class peers," said PEI coach Randy Francis. "It gives them a taste of the format that some of them will see at Nationals and other top level competitions toward the end of the season, so it was great to see them put up some good times and perform well in the age class format."

Other skaters competing for PEI in Fredericton were Nathan Cudmore, Thomas Trotter, Ellen Burnett, Clare Cullen, Taylor Johnston, Michael Rogers and Miriam Burnett. The PEI contingent combined for seven personal best times, along with two seasonal bests.

Next on the calendar for PEI speed skaters is a meet in Dieppe, NB, hosted by the Codiac Cyclones club on February 5th and 6th. Twenty-five Island skaters are expected to compete in Dieppe, the last meet prior to February's Canada Games in Halifax.

More information on Speed Skate PEI and its programs can be found on the club's website at www.speedskatepei.com.