



January 26, 2011

NR11012

News Release

Contact:

Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 760-1101
jparent@nmcc.edu

Biathlon World Cup and related activity provides enriching educational experience for NMCC EMS students

Aroostook County - Aside from the great economic boon and other obvious benefits the coming Biathlon World Cup events will bring to northern Maine, the activity will enhance the educational experience of emergency medical service students at Northern Maine Community College.

Instructors Daryl Boucher and Scott Michaud are working alongside and coordinating the efforts of 17 of their paramedic and intermediate emergency medical technician (EMT) students on two aspects of the coming E.ON IBU Biathlon World Cup #7 at the Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle. The seven second year paramedic students will provide medical coverage at the venue for both athletes and spectators. The ten EMT students will play a critical role in the doping control aspect of the competition.

“Participating in events, such as the upcoming Biathlon World Cup, provide our students opportunities to enhance what they are learning in the classroom and clinical components of our program in several ways,” said Boucher. “This is a fully volunteer effort on the part of the students. It provides an opportunity to meet the requirement for community service component of our program. It also provides a cultural experience that these students would not otherwise get in the clinical opportunities afforded to them locally, in that they get to interact with people from all over the world, including many medical professionals. Also, in the case of our paramedic-level students, they actually get to assist Crown Ambulance in the transport of athletes or spectators with injuries.”

The World Cup will not mark the first time NMCC EMS students and instructors have played a key role in supporting the medical efforts behind a major winter sports activity held in The County. In 2006, they worked side-by-side with medical professionals and students from the University of Maine at Presque Isle, and just last March, worked collaboratively to support the USSA Junior Olympics hosted by the Star City in the same capacity. Students and instructors in the EMS program have also assisted in medical and emergency assistance volunteer capacities for smaller regional and state hosted events in the area in the intervening years.

“The participation of Daryl, Scott, and the NMCC EMS students is invaluable,” said Jim McKenney, medical chair for the World Cup competition in Presque Isle. “They are always a professional group to work with and always willing to adapt to get the job done. As an emergency medical services professional in The County, I can attest to the value of NMCC’s EMS program and the clear benefit that those of us who hire graduates get as a result. The volunteer spirit and professionalism the students demonstrate when they volunteer for such activity is commendable and a great opportunity for those of us who might be in a position to employ them in the future to see how capable they are.”

In years past Boucher says that his students assigned to work with the team providing medical coverage at events received hands on opportunity in several areas, most notably orthopedic injuries of athletes and in responding to incidents where spectators fell or otherwise injured themselves. Although he expects the experience will be similar for the group working on the Biathlon World Cup, he is quick to point out that this event will also be different from the past activities.

“I didn’t realize, until we got into this, how different the competitions for senior athletes are compared to the past events we have held for juniors. Most of the teams are coming with their own physicians. That will add a new dynamic for our students who will now have the opportunity to work with doctors and other medical professionals from Russia, France, Germany and elsewhere,” said Boucher.

The NMCC EMS instructor is working with McKenney and other medical team volunteers to provide coverage in various areas throughout the competition course and assisting Crown Ambulance with emergency transport and spectator medical services. Susan Rabe of Caswell is one of the NMCC EMS students who will work at the venue during the event.

“I did this last year for the Junior Olympics, and it was such a wonderful experience. I met some really great people and had the chance to work hand and hand with them. I’m really looking forward to doing it again at the Biathlon,” said Rabe. In addition to her work in assisting with medical coverage and doping control, she will be helping to prepare the course and set up the venue. “To me, it’s more about volunteering than the clinical experience.”

That’s a sentiment echoed by classmate David Shemkovitz of Presque Isle, who has already completed his required clinical volunteer hours but still looks forward to volunteering at this event. “Giving back to the community is important, especially since this is the community I plan to stay and work in,” he said.

Shemkovitz and Rabe, both seniors in the paramedic program, hope to work for Crown Ambulance after graduation.

In addition to the volunteer efforts of EMS students and instructors, numerous other NMCC students and employees are volunteering in various capacities with the World Cup. The Edmunds Conference Center at the College will also be the host site for the official competition meetings for the coaches and team leaders on February 2 and 3.

#####