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February 12, 2008

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM SENDS FEMALE COACHES TO ATTEND BC WINTER GAMES

Kimberley-Cranbrook, BC The first participants in the Coaching Mentor/Apprenticeship program for female coaches will be putting their skills to work at the 2008 BC Winter Games in Kimberley-Cranbrook February 21-24.

A joint initiative of ProMOTION Plus, the Coaches Association of BC, and the BC Games Society, the program is designed to assist and support women coaches in their pursuit of higher levels of coaching certification. The apprentice coaches from Cowichan Bay, Victoria, Kelowna, Prince George, Fort St. James, Kamloops, Burnaby, and Aldergrove have been guided by their mentors for the last 10 months in preparation for the Games. Besides working directly with the athletes in competition, the coaches will participate in a coaching female athletes panel discussion open to the public on Saturday, February 23, entitled "Attitude is Everything – Absolutely Everything".

"It is an exciting time for sport as we build capacity," said Beverley Siver, Executive Director of ProMOTION Plus. "We will be seeing more female coaches at all levels of competition as a direct result of this program."

Gordon May, Executive Director of the Coaches Association of BC (CABC), noted that it is important to create opportunities for female coaches to develop their skills. "The coach training and guidance they receive through this program bodes well for other female coaches," he said. "Only by providing opportunities to access coach education in various forms, including mentorships, will we improve the quality of coaching available for our athletes."

The female coaches will also be meeting at the BC Winter Games to discuss their successes and give their evaluation of the program, which will provide important input for the next phase of the program. Participants have been selected for the second phase, which will culminate at the 2008 BC Summer Games in Kelowna in July. The coaches are in the process of meeting with their mentors and formulating a learning program.

Kelly Mann, President and CEO of the BC Games Society said, "The BC Games provide a perfect training situation for these female coaches to put their new skills to practice in a multisport environment. The BC Games are not only about developing athletes towards higher levels of competition but also building the experience base of coaches.

The Mentorship program pairs up experienced coaches (male or female) with women apprentices who are interested in pursuing a career in coaching and/or in developing their training to a higher level. One of the foremost goals of the program is to address the inequity in the number of female coaches in the sport system by increasing the number of qualified female coaches starting at the club and provincial level and moving toward the national and international level.

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