

Famous People

We grow more than just great wheat in Saskatchewan. We've also produced a whole crop of talented and determined athletes who have made their mark on the world stage. Saskatchewan winter Olympians have enjoyed great success, and have left an indelible impression beyond our borders. Sure, it gets cold in Saskatchewan in the winter. We don't deny it. But that doesn't mean we all huddle up indoors either. The cold weather heralds the opening of local ice rinks, and the start of the next hockey, curling or skating season, full of possibility and anticipation. For many communities, the rink becomes the focal point during the winter season and the hub of their social network. You'd think that all the ice and snow would mean tough-sledding for people in Saskatchewan, but for the most part, it opens up a whole realm of possibilities for outdoor adventure – sledding, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing and ice-fishing. It's no wonder Saskatchewan athletes excel at winter sports – it's so much a part of what defines us, an inherent toughness which taunts winter to "bring it on".

The sheer number of Saskatchewan-born players who have played in the National Hockey League (NHL) is a testament to our rich hockey culture. Hockey legend Gordie Howe (Floral), Wendel Clark (Kelvington), Brian Trottier (Val Marie), Bernie Federko (Foam Lake), Clark Gillies (Moose Jaw), Glen Hall (Humboldt), Brian Propp (Lanigan), Tiger Williams (Weyburn) and Cam Ward (Saskatoon) are just a sampling of the hundreds of NHL players who got their start in Saskatchewan, honing their skills on frozen ponds and in minor hockey leagues. Saskatchewan is well represented on the men's and women's Olympic hockey teams. Ryan Getzlaf (Regina), Patrick Marleau (Aneroid) and Brendan Morrow (Carlyle) will all don the maple leaf jerseys for Canada. Behind the bench, Saskatoon-born Mike Babcock will lead the team as Head Coach. Three-time Olympic medalist Hayley Wickenheiser (Shaunavon) and two-time Olympic medalist Colleen Sostorics (Kennedy) are part of the women's squad.

Saskatoon-born Catriona Le May Doan, who was the fastest woman on ice, lit up the world's speed skating ovals, winning gold in the 500m events at the 1998 and 2002 Olympic Games. Regina rookie Lucas Makowsy will compete in his first Olympic Games in the 1500m, 5000m and team pursuit competitions.

Our love of ice doesn't stop there. Curling is so much a part of the fabric of our province, that it's our official provincial sport. Sandra Schmirler, dubbed "Schmirler the Curler", skipped her tight-knit team composed of Jan Betker (third), Joan McCusker (second) and Marcia Gudereit (lead) to the 1998 gold medal in Nagano, Japan – the year curling debuted as an official Olympic sport. The team also captured three world titles. Both the men's and women's Olympic curling teams will have Saskatchewan representation in Vancouver. Ben Hebert, born in Regina, SK plays lead for Team Martin, while Lanigan-raised Cori Bartel is the lead for Team Bernard. Follow an entertaining day in the life of Ben Hebert on the Saskatchewan Pavilion site: <http://www.saskpavilion.ca>.

Saskatchewan people also have a penchant for hurtling down icy tracks at break-neck speeds. This is self-evident by the throngs of people who flock to local tobogganing hills on clear winter days for some old-fashioned winter fun. Yes, Saskatchewan has hills, despite the popular misconception that the province is flat as a pancake. Three Saskatchewan athletes will be doing the very same during the Winter Games. Humboldt's Lyndon Rush will be piloting Canada 1 in the two- and four-man bobsleigh events. A former middle linebacker for the University of Saskatchewan Huskies football team, Rush only took up the sport in 2004, but is heading into the Winter Games with some recent World Cup wins under his belt. Regina-born Meaghan Simister, and Regan Lauscher who was born in Saskatoon, will represent Canada in the women's single luge events in their second and third Olympic Games respectively.

It seems like Saskatchewan was made for cross-country skiing. Hundreds of kilometers of groomed and un-groomed trails wind their way through parks, pristine forest and across wide-open prairie expanses blanketed in snow. Porcupine Plain's Colette Bourgonje will compete in her sixth Paralympic Winter Games in Para-Nordic. Bourgonje isn't just fast on snow; she's also competed in three

Paralympic Summer Games in wheel-chair racing, with eight Paralympic medals to her credit in sit-ski and wheelchair racing. If you're driving near the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, where Bourgonje was the first student in a wheelchair to graduate from the physical education program, you might find yourself on Bourgonje Crescent, named in her honour.

If you're visiting Saskatchewan in the winter months, check out some of these great attractions:

Meewasin Rink, Saskatoon, SK – The Meewasin Rink, located next door to Saskatoon's historic Delta Bessborough Hotel, was voted Canada's best outdoor skating rink by *Reader's Digest*. <http://www.meewasin.com/facilities/rink/>

Prince Albert National Park - Enjoy a host of winter activities like skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing amidst the breathtaking beauty of Saskatchewan's largest protected area. <http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/sk/princealbert/index.aspx>

Turner Curling Museum, Weyburn, SK – The Turner Curling Museum is a must-see for curling enthusiasts. The museum boasts the largest collection of curling memorabilia in the world. <http://www.weyburn.ca/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=374>

Saskatchewan Science Centre, Regina, SK – The Science of Hockey exhibit explores the mathematics, physics, biology and psychology behind our beloved national sport. <http://www.sasksciencecentre.com/>

For more information about the Saskatchewan Pavilion at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Games, visit www.saskpavilion.ca. For Saskatchewan travel information, visit www.sasktourism.com.

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