

Nakusp snowboarders headed to Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse

by AARON ORLANDO

Arrow Lakes News

NSS students Jesse McDonald, 16, and Alex Thorp, 15, will be heading to the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse in the Yukon on Feb. 22 to represent Team BC in the Parallel Giant Slalom snowboarding event.

They will be joined at the games by Alex's sister Carly Thorp, who graduated from NSS last year and is currently studying at Thompson Rivers University.

The three Nakusp natives make up 75 per cent of the four-person B.C. Parallel Giant Slalom snowboarding team, an event that will be debuting as a demonstration sport at the games this year.

The multi-sport event runs every two years, alternating between summer and winter, and this year is expected to host 2700 athletes representing 13 teams from all the Provinces and Territories competing in 22 different sports. The Canada Winter Games in

Whitehorse runs from Feb. 23 to Mar. 10.

Alex Thorp says he's going to "give it my all" in the Parallel Giant Slalom event, which sees two competitors race alongside each other in an event that lasts for about one minute per race.

Thorp is more accustomed to snowboard cross racing, an event that sees groups of four racers go race down a course together. He says the slalom event has a different skill set and different equipment but he's there to do his best.

McDonald says she's also more relaxed about the event and is looking to have some fun, too. She's expecting, "a good fun race and to have some fun."

Both of the NSS students say the trip to Whitehorse, which includes a charter flight with the rest of the B.C. team, will be an opportunity to compete, but also to enjoy the multi-sport event. They say it will be a little less stressful that the races they

compete in almost every weekend of the snowboard season.

There are no FIS points issued at the Canada Winter Games. The FIS



Jesse McDonald (left) and Alex Thorp display the Team BC uniforms. Together with Carly Thorp, Nakusp boarders make up 75 per cent of the B.C. Giant Slalom team.

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is the international body that regulates rankings in all skiing and snowboarding events, and each event plays a part in their national and international rankings, something that is vital for the young snowboarders who are looking towards cracking the national team in the hopes making the 2014 Olympics.

Carly Thorp is ranked 13th in Canada and 74th in the world, just ahead of Jesse McDonald, who is ranked 14th in the country and 80th in the world. Alex Thorp just cracked the international rankings on the latest points list released by the FIS with a world ranking of 337.

So, the trip to Whitehorse means they have a chance to compete in a race that doesn't have such major implications for their future in the sport, and a chance to get out and see some of the other events at the games. "The races we usually go to are at a very high competitive level," says McDonald, "[so] my goal is to have fun at this one."

"We want to put Nakusp on the map more and be good representatives of Nakusp and B.C.," she says. Thorp is also out to represent the sport and the area regardless of the outcome. "[I want] to show good sportsmanship whether it goes well for us or doesn't - be nice and have a good time - that's what it's all about."

They're not sure about the rest of the field, since some of the provinces haven't announced their final teams yet, but since they already compete against national team members from Canada and other countries, they're not too worried about who shows up.

A recent race at Copper Mountain, Colorado had the Nakusp racers up against national team members from about eight different countries.

As to why Nakusp accounts for three-quarters of the B.C. team, they say it is due to growing up together and constantly pushing and helping each other.