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Story script

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**Story Headline: Reece Howden claims gold at Lillehammer 2016 in the Men's Freestyle Skiing Ski Cross for Canada**

Event: Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games

Date: 15 February

Place: Hafjell, Norway

### **STORY SCRIPT**

Canada's Reece Howden has won gold in the Men's Freestyle Skiing Ski Cross at the Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games.

The Okanagan Ski Team member finished first throughout the Group Heats and Semi-Final before crossing the line ahead of Belgium's Xander Vercammen and Louis Muhlen from Australia in the Big Final.

Gold in Lillehammer will only boost the reputation of Howden who has already been targeted for future Games by Own the Podium, a Canadian organisation who supports potential Olympic athletes.

In total, 1100 athletes from 71 nations are competing at the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Lillehammer Norway for a total of 70 Gold medals.

The 2nd Winter YOG is taking place between Friday 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2016.

### **Freestyle Skiing explained.**

**Age Group: Born between 1 January 1998 and 31 December 1999**

**Number of Athletes: 40**

**Venue: Hafjell Alpine Centre**

### **Men's Ski Cross**



The event consists of qualification and finals (finals consisting of group heats, semifinals, the small final and big final.)

The specially designed cross course is set up on a natural terrain with artificial features including turns, roller sections, jumps and banked turns.

In the qualification, the competitors take a timed run, and the top 16 ranked competitors go through to the finals. In the finals, competitors are divided into group heats of four competitors. There are 20 group heats in the “round robin” format. All competitors eventually compete against each other and based upon the ranking of each heat are awarded points (1st=4 pts, 2nd=3 pts, 3rd=2 pts, 4th=1 pt.). After the group heats, the top eight ranked competitors advance to the semifinals. The top two ranked competitors from each semifinal advance to the big final, while the remaining competitors move to the small final

The top three competitors in the big final are awarded YOG medals, the remaining competitors are ranked according to results of the big final, small final, group heats and qualification.

### **What are the YOG?**

The Youth Olympic Games are essentially about competing, learning and sharing. They are a celebration of sport, youth diversity and the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect. They also exemplify the Fundamental Principles of Olympism, blending sport with culture and education. The vision of the Youth Olympic Games is to inspire young people around the world to participate in sport and live by the Olympic values.

### **YOG Key Facts**

- Hosted from 12 to 21 February 2016 in Lillehammer, Hamar, Gjøvik, Øyer and Oslo — demonstrating the use of a fantastic legacy of Olympic venues and the flexibility of the YOG.
- 71 NOCs and 1,100 athletes aged 15 to 18 will compete in 70 medal events at Lillehammer 2016.
- Lillehammer 2016 is the second winter edition of the YOG following Innsbruck 2012. The first summer edition took place in Singapore in 2010, followed by Nanjing in 2014.
- The YOG have been used as an incubator for innovation in sport and education. Lillehammer 2016 will feature Olympic debuts for a number of disciplines, including cross-country cross, snowboard cross, ski slopestyle, biathlon super sprint and monobob.
- With regard to education, the Coaches’ Corner will be a pioneering YOG first in Lillehammer, featuring dedicated workshops and talks by experts and Virtual



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Reality (VR) technology to explore and explain how new advances in technology can be applied to the science of coaching.

- The YOG have acted as a springboard to further Olympic glory for many alumni. Some 64 YOG athletes from Innsbruck 2012, for example, went on to compete at the Olympic Winter Games Sochi 2014, winning 6 medals in total. In addition, 200 YOG alumni from Singapore 2010 competed at London 2012, of whom 25 medalled.

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