

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## [VENUES]

### Shaw Centre gets a fancy ride

Mark Motors of Ottawa is the new official vehicle sponsor of Ottawa's Shaw Centre. The deal will run for five years. The Shaw Centre is Ottawa's downtown convention centre.

Mark Motors is a Porsche and Audi dealership. Mark Motors will have the right to display up to four of the latest Audi and Porsche vehicles in the Shaw Centre.

The deal was brokered by Toronto's Wakeham & Associates Marketing Inc.

**Contact: Hugh Wakeham, 760-832-7563, sponsorshipmarketing-group@gmail.com.**

## [SPORTS]

### CP clears the rails

Jump Canada, a division of Equine Canada, has named Canadian Pacific show jumping's Sponsor of the Year for 2014 in recognition of the railroad's renewed commitment to the sport of show jumping in Canada.

In 2014 CP took the reins at Spruce Meadows in Calgary, securing title sponsorship of the Grand Prix at the Continental and the \$1.5 million CP International. The \$1.5 million CP International in September represented the largest prize money ever offered for a single-day event in show jumping history.

CP is also a presenting sponsor of the International Bromont, held in Bromont, Quebec, and the railroad has partnered with Ian Millar, Canada's most most decorated and renowned equestrian.

## [SPORTS]

### Mackenzie goes downhill

Mackenzie Investments, one of the early sponsors of Snow Sports Canada, is the newest sponsor of three-time Olympic downhill racer Manny Osborne-Paradis. He will wear the Mackenzie Investments logo on his helmet.

Osborne-Paradis' best finish this season was a second place at FIS World Cup race at Lake Louise in November. He is currently ranked number 14 in the world.

Mackenzie has opened a new online destination to celebrate stories around its snow sports partnerships, [www.PoweringPerformance.ca](http://www.PoweringPerformance.ca). Fans can engage with each other, access unique content and contribute to the discussion through Mackenzie's Powering Performance (@pwr\_perform) Twitter feed.

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## [SPORTS]

### Pan Am names print, online media sponsors

Star Media Group, which includes the Toronto Star, and Metroland Media Group have been named the Official Print and Online Media Supplier for the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am games in Toronto.

The agreement calls for Star Media Group and Metroland to provide organizers with promotional space in the Toronto Star, Metro, Metroland community newspapers and other publications and online properties, plus value-in-kind allocations of printing and distribution services related to the 2015 games



Brian Burke (pictured) and Ritch Winter, co-founders Business of Hockey Institute, identified a need for graduate-level executive education in the off-ice aspects of the hockey business.

## To the hockey nut, a balm for a mid-life crisis

HOCKEY FANS IN mid-career crisis take note: redemption and fulfillment may be only a few mouse clicks away. That, \$80,000 and close to three years of hard work.

Ah, but the potential reward . . .

Athabasca University, a Canadian pioneer in the field of online learning, has launched the world's first hockey-centred executive MBA program. At this very moment, it is considering applicants for its first intake of students. In three years' time, those who make the grade will hit the sports business marketplace not only with a unique diploma to hang on their wall, but also a Hockey Management Certificate from Athabasca U and designation as a Professional Hockey Manager from the Business of Hockey Institute, Athabasca's partner in the development of MBA program.

If the program delivers on its promise, graduates will be among the most sought-after hockey business managers in the world.

Chris McLeod, Director of Marketing and Communications at Athabasca University's Faculty of Business, credits the idea for the program to Brian Burke, President of Hockey Operations with the Calgary Flames, and Ritch Winter, Managing Director (North America) with 4sports & Entertainment AG. The two are co-founders of the Calgary-based Business of Hockey Institute whose mission, according to its website, is "to improve the economic viability of professional and amateur hockey through education, research, consulting, and advocacy." Burke and Winter had come to the conclusion that there was a great deal of emphasis placed on the improvement of the on-ice product in hockey, but very little available in the way of professional development that addressed the off-ice components. McLeod calls it "skates vs. suits," and up till now, nobody was paying attention to the suits. Burke and Winter brought the challenge to Athabasca.

"Right from the very first conversation we were interested," says McLeod. In partnership with the Business of Hockey Institute, Atha-

basca came up with a curriculum that is half generic MBA, and half hockey-specific MBA.

It's an executive MBA program, McLeod stresses, aimed at students with a solid grounding in the business world.

"We're not looking for kids," he says.

Students will begin with core MBA classes that are part of the Athabasca University MBA program. They will benefit from what McLeod holds out as Athabasca's unique advantage: as an online university, its student body is truly global, and students are free to shape their class time to suit their work needs.

"Our MBA was the first in the world to be delivered online," says McLeod. "We've really figured that part of it out."

Beyond that basic foundation, though, the courses are hockey specific and the students are hockey MBA only. By keeping the focus so narrowly on one sport, McLeod says Athabasca was able to interest partners from hockey leagues, teams, broadcasters and sponsors who have helped shape and will help deliver the program.

"The ability to bring in partners is much more limited when [the program] is broad," says McLeod.

Sponsorship and marketing, being so important to the business of hockey, are woven into the program throughout, says McLeod.

The program will accept only 32 students, so McLeod stresses that it will be competitive. A background in hockey or in sport management is not necessary, but he concedes that it may give a candidate an advantage given the demand he expects the program will generate. More important than the number, however, is the quality of the applicants. The program will accept fewer than 32 if that's what it takes to make up a first-rate class.

"They've got to have a management background and a desire to make a difference in the game," he says.

The application deadline for this first incoming class is March 15. Learn more at <http://business.athabascau.ca/mba/online-executive-mba-hockey/>. ■

## Frisch approach: Canadian skier secures own sponsors with international Team Westberg

AS JULIE LANGEVIN TELLS IT, skiing may be the only sport where a competitor can be ranked in the world's top 30 competitors and still fail to make the cut representing the national team at the World Cup. Langevin is the Canadian manager of Team Westberg, a multinational ski team aiming to give high-ranking skiers around the world a second chance at the World Cup. The partner of 30-year-old Canadian World Cup downhiller Jeffrey Frisch, a team Westberg founder, she's also a former Canadian ski team racer, and was the regional development manager with Ski Quebec Alpin.

"The governing body of skiing in this country is Alpine Canada and at the end of the day they get to decide on who races in the World Cup," says Langevin. "If you're in the top 15 you don't have to pay your own way to various competitions, but if you fall out of the top, you can lose training support and can expect to finance travel out of your own pocket. Even if you rank highly, you can be passed over for a younger team member they're developing for the future. Ultimately, they need to answer to sponsors, to board members and even to parents of team members, so their hands are often

## BMO Vancouver Marathon

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lenge is another. Chevron sponsors marathons in Houston and in Perth, Australia, and its tagline is "the power of human energy." It had previously sponsored the Vancouver Sun Run, explains Chevron spokesperson Adrien Byrne. More important, however, was an identified gap in community engagement in Vancouver, a city where Chevron has operated for more than 80 years.

The marathon snakes through 12 Vancouver neighbourhoods. This year, Chevron is challenging them to out-do each other with community spirit and involvement – lining the race route, decorating home- and store-fronts, cheering on the runners. Chevron will set up 12 locations, one per neighbourhood, along the route to serve as focal points for community involvement. There are also several Chevron retailers along the marathon route, says Byrne, and he expects they will pull out all the stops. Chevron is putting up some modest prizes – \$7,000 in total – but it's not about the money but about community involvement and pride, and Chevron's place at the centre of it.

The thing is, says Krepiakovich, it's not new. "We have been doing that, going out to neighbourhoods and encouraging them to cheer. Now, it's a great opportunity for Chevron to support that." ■

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tied. It comes down to politics and it's a similar situation in other countries."

Frisch injured his anterior cruciate ligament on the eve of the 2010 Olympics, preventing him from skiing for the Canadian team. Despite strong subsequent finishes in some important events, he was cut from the Alpine Canada program at the end of the 2013-14 season after being squeezed out of the top 30 men in World Cup rankings.

Frisch and Alexander Koell, an Austrian skier who races for Sweden, put their heads together to pursue the idea of fielding an independent professional team for the 2014-15 season. The idea would follow the model of independent Formula 1 race teams, although it's also been successfully applied in skiing. American Bode Miller established the short-lived Team America in 2007. After being dropped from the Canadian ski team in 2013, Canadian Larisa Yurkiw pursued sponsors for the single-member Team Larisa, qualifying for and competing in the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014.

"Jeff approached Alpine Canada and asked them whether he might be allowed to qualify for the team if he achieved some impressive results," says Langevin. "There were no promises from Alpine Canada, but they said they would consider it. However, it takes some guts to go out on your own. Finding sponsors for skiing isn't as easy as finding them for biking, or hockey or other professional sports where you get more exposure. A skier typically gets two minutes worth of screen time in a major competitive event shown on TV."

Frisch, Koell and Yuki Harata from Japan approached Westberg, an Austrian sport health and nutrition company based in Innsbruck, to sponsor the team. Westberg jumped on team naming rights, despite the fact that its health products aren't currently available in Canada.

"That wasn't an issue for Westberg," says Langevin. "They see skiing primarily as a European sport, so from a sponsor's perspective, the sales of their product in Canada weren't a consideration."

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