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Inviting All Ontario Cross Country Ski Clubs to Become Founding Members of the Southern Ontario Training Centre (SOTC)

Dear Fellow Ontario Cross Country Ski Club,

I am writing to announce an exciting new initiative being undertaken by the Hardwood Hills Nordic Development Centre (HHNDC), aka “Team Hardwood,” and to invite your club to participate. This spring HHNDC will launch the Southern Ontario Training Centre (SOTC), a year-round high performance training centre for Ontario cross country skiers who have graduated high school and who wish to combine competitive skiing and post-secondary education, or to train on a full-time basis.

At the present time, developing high performance athletes in Ontario have limited access to high level coaching, unless they gain entry to a national development centre (e.g. NDC-TB, CNEPH, AWCA). Many athletes take one to two years to qualify for a training centre after finishing high school, and more often than not must train on their own without the benefit of a high performance coach or competitive peers to challenge and motivate them. Meanwhile, athletes who wish to ski competitively while pursuing post-secondary education have a limited number of Ontario schools with strong cross country ski programs to choose from. For many Ontario athletes, this means having to leave friends and family in order to find coaches and training partners elsewhere in or even outside the province. With its proximity to numerous post-secondary institutions in Barrie, Orillia, and the greater Toronto area, SOTC will fill this gap, providing athletes with a centrally located option through which to pursue both their academic as well as athletic goals. SOTC will also serve as a bridge to the national high performance system, preparing athletes for entry into national training centres.

SOTC will be led by a full-time professional high performance coach, who will supervise athletes on a year-round basis and lead them on a variety of training camps and racing trips across Canada and abroad. We are in the process of recruiting a head coach and expect to hire one by April, 2011. SOTC athletes will train on a year-round basis with their peers from across Ontario while continuing to represent their home clubs at races. SOTC will be hosted by HHNDC and will operate from the outstanding training facilities of Hardwood Ski and Bike, one of Ontario’s premier full-service cross country ski and mountain bike centres.

While the SOTC initiative will benefit clubs across Ontario by providing their athletes with an additional high performance coaching and training venue, I would like to invite all clubs to become a Founding Club of SOTC. Founding Clubs and their athletes will be entitled to a

number of additional benefits, including reduced SOTC coaching fees for athletes from Founding Clubs, and eligibility to participate in special SOTC outreach initiatives, training camps and coaching development workshops (for additional details, see attached brochure). SOTC Founding Clubs pay a one-time fee of \$1000.

Please inform the members of your club about the launch of the Southern Ontario Training Centre and pass along copies of our brochure to any interested athletes. In addition, I hope that you and your fellow club members will accept our invitation to become a Founding Club of SOTC. If you have any additional questions or concerns, need additional brochures, or would like to become a Founding Club, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

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