

# Dickson loads up for Canada Games

**Ted CLARKE** *Citizen staff*

After waxing the competition Saturday in Quesnel at a Teck B.C. Cup biathlon race, Emily Dickson put down her rifle Sunday for the RHB Schmitz De Grace Teck B.C. Cup cross-country freestyle race at Otway Nordic Centre and slid to a silver-medal finish.

It was the 17-year-old Caledonia Nordic Ski Club racer's last chance to race on her home track before she lines up as part of Team B.C. in the Canada Winter Games biathlon competition, Feb. 15-21.

"I'm happy with how it went, it was fast and I had great skis, it was a really fun day out there," said Dickson, a native of Burns Lake, after warming her bones during the medal ceremony Sunday at Rotary Lodge.

"I'm getting excited about Canada Games, I can tell that it's really building in the community. Prince George is well-represented so it's going to be fun. It's going to be exciting to have all my supporters from Prince George and Burns Lake who will come out to watch. I travel a lot with biathlon and I don't always have those people there."

Dickson and her Caledonia clubmates Arthur Roots, Claire Lapointe and Bobby Kreitz also qualified for the provincial team for Canada Games.

The Arctic blast that swept into the city on the weekend prevented the younger skiers from racing. The start time temperature at Otway was -17 C, too cold to allow the atom, peewee and bantam racers on the course, but it was within the -20 C cutoff for the older ones.

Dickson was 53.1 seconds off the winning pace of 16-year-old Hannah Mehain of Vernon, who also won Saturday's junior girls sprint. Erica Kreitz of Caledonia was third.

In Saturday's biathlon in Quesnel, Dickson completed the 10 km youth women's course in 42:58, 4:32 ahead of second-place finisher Jennah Smailes of West Kelowna, who is also on the Canada Games team. Dickson missed two of her five shots in her first bout and had one miss in each of the next three. Her shooting is much improved over the past year and Dickson credits the new range at Otway and its easily-accessible location for turning her into a sharpshooter.

"This facility has made an enor-



**DICKSON**

mous impact, it's world-class," said Dickson. "It's going to be a gamechanger."

Dickson plans to compete in a B.C. Cup biathlon race at Callaghan Valley near Whistler Jan. 17-18, then will head to Otepää, Estonia for the European biathlon championships, Jan. 28-Feb. 3.

Kaia Andal, 15, was the only Caledonia skier to win gold in the weekend races at Otway. She captured the juvenile girls crown Sunday in a 7.5 km race, finishing in 22:09.1, 57.7 seconds ahead of Anna Goodwin of Hollyburn Ski Club. Benita Peiffer of Whistler was third.

"It was pretty cold going down the hills and around the corners," said Andal. "This was my first race [of the season] and it was pretty fast. It was a little bit icy down on the corners and some people snowplowed down the hills but it was nice and hard-packed. We know the trails pretty well here."

In other Caledonia results Sunday, Sadie Bialuski won silver in the midget girls division and was eight overall in the midget standings, Danika Fiala was sixth in midget girls, Pippa Roots and Saige Bialuski were seventh and 10th respectively in junior girls, while Scott Forrest was tops in the masters men 50-59-year-old class.

Other category winners in Sunday's freestyle were: Mila Wittenberg, Whistler, midget girls; Joe Davies, Whistler, midget boys; Bronte Viznaugh, Revelstoke, junior women; Laura Hepburn, Salmon Arm, masters women; Remi Drolet, Rossland, juvenile boys; Gareth Williams, Kelowna, junior boys; Adam Elliot, Kelowna, open open; and Brian May, Salmon Arm, masters men.