



Nathan Savage can be seen rounding the corner with other nordic ski racers in Whistler this winter. Photo Submitted

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Fernie nordic ski racer makes provincial development squad

Nathan Savage has been training for years for the opportunity to represent B.C. [SORANNE FLOAREA](#) / Apr. 28, 2020 2:30 a.m. / [LOCAL NEWS](#) / [NEWS](#)

Seventeen-year-old Fernie local Nathan Savage is no doubt thrilled after making the Cross Country BC 2020-21 Provincial Team Development Squad. The highly regarded accomplishment required years of dedicated skiing, training, and community volunteering.

Savage started Nordic skiing at the age of nine and joined the Fernie Nordic Race Team when he was only 13. By his third year on the team, he made it through to the B final of a sprint race at the BC Cup in Revelstoke. A pivotal and rewarding moment for the young skier, he has since set his sights on racing for the provincial team.

This upcoming year's provincial team development squad is made up of a minimum of 10 male and 10 female athletes born between the years of 2003 and 2005. The development squad team members were selected based off their performances at the Western Canadian Championships and BC Cup competitions. Being a part of the development squad will allow Savage to attend monthly training camps throughout western Canada and train at an elite athletic level while receiving support from provincial team coaches.

“It is a great achievement for the Fernie Nordic Society and more specifically the Fernie Nordic Racers to have an athlete make the development squad,” said Jeff Williams, head coach for the Fernie Nordic Racers. “Our team is made up of volunteer coaches who dedicate a lot of time coaching the athletes and teaching them the skills to cross country ski. So it is great to see the efforts we have all put into coaching have an amazing outcome like an athlete making a provincial squad. Furthermore, it is great for the younger athletes on the Fernie team to see that they can also make the talent or development squad if they want to focus on skiing and train hard.”

A dedicated and focused athlete, Savage made the squad as a result of his best four outcomes this past season, competing in the Junior Boys U18 level. Savage placed tenth in skate technique and eighth in classic sprint at the BC Cup in Salmon Arm as well as sixth in classic technique and eighth in skate technique at the BC Championship in Kelowna. He also placed ninth in skate sprint and eleventh in classic technique at the Western Canada Cup in Whistler.

According to Williams, Savage was relentless in pursuing his goal of making the development squad, a dream he has been ambitiously training for since the spring of 2019. A highly motivated young athlete, Savage zealously trains throughout the year, roller skiing, biking, double poling on a SkiErg, and running during the off season. Once able to ski on snow, Savage trains as often as six times a week.

“I love the feeling of gliding on the snow and how technical and challenging it can be. You can always keep improving on your technique. I love how fun the steep hills are and going at high speeds around corners, and I love how light I feel when I sprint up a hill as fast as I can,” said Savage. “Most of all I love the races. Meeting new people, hanging out with teammates, prizes, and pushing myself as hard as I can and seeing how much I keep improving the more I race. I also love this sport because anyone can do it, and it is a sport for life.”

On top of his busy training schedule, Savage also volunteered as a coach for the Fernie Nordic Society Skill Development Program this past winter, coaching athletes ranging from nine to 11 years of age. Striving to share his love for the sport, Savage fullheartedly embraced the opportunity to act as a role model for younger skiers.

“I am proud at his determination which has enabled him to access other opportunities. By making the B.C. development team he will be able to meet other athletes his age at camps, train at the Haig Glacier, and have access to more support,” said Savage’s mother, Susan Rohn. “The nordic ski community is a warm inclusive environment that I am happy that my family is a part of.”

Proud of her son’s achievements, Rohn would like to extend thanks to the Fernie Nordic Society and race team, including all the coaches, groomers, board members, and other volunteers who have helped develop the sport that her son is passionate about.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, not only do some of Savage’s camps risk cancellation, but he says he might have to do most of his summer training alone. Despite this setback, with the proper equipment Savage hopes to make the most of the off season while still maintaining a full time training schedule.

In either case, no dream is too big for Savage as he has his goals lasered in on placing within the top five at next year’s nationals, and finishing first at the upcoming BC Championship.



Nordic skier Nathan Savage came in second place during this race in Whistler earlier this season. Photo Submitted