

NZ talents to represent Ice Hockey at Youth Winter Olympics 2012

The first ever Winter Youth Olympic Games will be held from January 13 to 22, 2012 in Innsbruck, Austria.

In order to qualify for the skills competition (see competition explanation below) NZ selected a male & female player in an internal qualification round. The male winner of this was Callum Burns from Queenstown and the female winner was Libby Jean Hay from Auckland. On Saturday, both athletes took part in the world wide qualification in Vierumäki, Finland.

Our ice hockey youth rose to the challenge and while not a surprise to their coaches was a surprise internationally by achieving places in the top four. Callum achieved 2nd place in the competition and Libby Jean Hay, despite a fall in one of the skating challenges and losing valuable time still managed 4th place. This means NZ will have a representative in ice hockey in Innsbruck in both the male and female categories.

This is a huge achievement for the local ice hockey programme and results like this confirms the excellent work that is being done by coaches and administrators involved in the sport. During the last few years the NZ Senior Men (Ice Blacks) and Senior Women (Ice Fernz) have been punching above their weights and with talents like Callum and Libby Jean on the horizon the future is looking bright.

For any questions contact

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Youth Olympics Programme

The Ice hockey program will consist of two separate activities in both the male and female events. The first is a tournament program consisting of five Men's national teams and five Women's national teams. Austria, as the host nation will be awarded one male team and one female team to participate in each of the tournaments. The remaining eight teams will be awarded to the top eight nations, whose joint Men's and Women's 2011 IIHF World Rankings qualifies them for participation in the tournament program. Each qualified nation will be allowed to select only one team to participate in either the Men's or Women's tournament. NZ is not eligible to enter either team.

The second event will be a Skills Challenge that will form the individual program. The Skills Challenge consists of a series of individual skill tests that have been designed by the IIHF. This program will consist of the top 15 male and 15 female athletes who have qualified from a global qualification program.

The players that will be eligible for competing in the 2012 Skills Challenge are male athletes born in 1996 and female athletes born in 1994; from nations not competing in the team's tournament competition.

Further info can be found on <http://www.innsbruck2012.com/en/sports/disciplines/eishockey>