

CNS September Newsletter

Fall Comp Information

Fall senior season competitions are coming up! Below are the dates and locations for the Senior Boulder series competitions.

A reminder that individuals wishing to be ranked for higher-level competitions must have a CNS membership before competing in the NS/NB local series:

Fit Rocks Saint John, N.B. – Nov. 14
(unconfirmed)

FBC Fredericton, N.B. – Nov. 28

Seven Bays Bouldering – Dec. 5
(location TBD)

For recreational competitions, Rope League is taking place at Eastpeak, ending Nov. 7. Progression Sessions at Seven Bays ends Oct. 31.

Email Pso@climbnovascotia.com with any question



Canada Games Seclction team

By Dominique Hurst.

Our Canada Games selection team, the Training Squad, has been working hard this summer! Eight athletes were selected in the spring to take part in Nova Scotia's first-ever high-performance program. In November, four will be selected to attend the 2027 Canada Games in Quebec City. This will be the first time climbing is included in the Games — a big step for our competition scene!

The summer kicked off with weekly practices in June, followed by independent training throughout July and August with individualized

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Athletes: Isaac Fillmore, Thea Wirkus, Ava Cox, Sadie Parks, Neorah Ip, Logan Walsh, Daniel Schindeler, and Hawksley McKinnon. Head Coach: Dominique Hurst, Team Manager/Coach: Ian Downing, Apprentice Coach: Kenzie Morrison.

training programs. The team came back together in August for a weeklong training camp, during which athletes tested themselves in simulated boulder and lead competitions. The camp also included workshops on mental and tactical strategies.

Their training resumes this fall with the local competition circuit in sight. We're proud of the consistency, resilience, and heart these athletes have shown so far. We are grateful to have such great ambassadors for Nova Scotia climbing, and we thank our local gyms — East Peak Climbing and Seven Bays Bouldering — for providing space and resources.

Interested in Coaching Climbers? Here's the Scoop

By: Heather Reynolds

A reflection on the NCCP coaching certification.

If you have ever wondered why coach certification matters, here is the big picture: a coach's impact can inspire an athlete's lifelong participation — or, if handled poorly, can contribute to an athlete leaving the sport and never returning.

That is a meaningful responsibility, and one worth taking seriously. A formal training and certification pathway helps reduce the risk of athlete harm while supporting the goals of Long-Term Athlete Development, the Canadian sport philosophy that guides sport delivery and encourages lifelong engagement in sport.

With a master's degree in kinesiology and a career rooted in the climbing industry, I am passionate

about building strong training and certification pathways for people who want to instruct, coach, or route set in climbing gyms and outdoor environments. Coaching climbing takes more than climbing well or climbing hard — it requires a thoughtful skill set, strong judgment, and a deeper understanding of athlete development. A knowledgeable coach brings experience in areas such as:

- Understanding principles of skill assessment
- Understanding key performance indicators and using a toolbox of drills and activities to develop strength, mobility, mental and emotional skills, and tactical skills
- Progressing athlete development appropriately and at the right pace
- Finding effective ways to engage each athlete, recognizing that no two athletes are alike.



In 2018, I was excited to be one of a dozen or so volunteers working with Climbing Escalade Canada (CEC) to develop the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) for climbing, creating and editing resources, and shaping the delivery model. In March 2026, Climb Nova Scotia employed me to deliver the first Competition Introduction coach training in Halifax. **In August 2026, Dominique Hurst, Kenzie Morrison, and I became the first NCCP-certified climbing coaches in Canada.** I also completed the Coach Evaluator training, which means I can help CEC certify climbing coaches.

For many years, climbing coaching has been largely unregulated, with many coaches learning through personal experience, books, videos and informal mentorship. Climbing continues to grow, joining the Olympics and the Canada Games. This is an exciting time for the sport — and for competitive climbing coaching.

Coaches supporting athletes at the February 2027 Canada Games must be certified through the NCCP, which is governed by Sport Canada. CEC began preparing for this shift many years ago with initial volunteers, and the work continues to expand for coaches interested in working with higher levels of competitive athletes. The goal will be to have coaches certified with the CEC before they are eligible to attend competitions sanctioned by CEC.

If you are interested in becoming a climbing coach through the NCCP pathway, here are the key steps to help you get started:

- Sign up for The Locker: thelocker.coach.ca
- Select Climbing as your sport of interest under PATHWAY.
- Determine the coach pathway that is right for you. Community coaches work in a recreational capacity. Competition Introduction coaches work in the competitive pathway and support



athletes in the Learn to Train stage. Competition Development and High Performance coach training is still in development.

Start taking the modules required for climbing coaches. Community coaches complete fewer required modules, including the first three listed below. Competition Introduction coaches complete additional modules. In The Locker, select the eLearning tab or the Calendar tab to view module availability. Many modules are free or low-cost:

- Climbing Risk Management
- Making Ethical Decisions
- Safe Sport & the Rule of Two
- Planning a Practice

Register for and complete the Coach Training module offered through your provincial sport organization. In Nova Scotia, that organization is Climb Nova Scotia. To be evaluated for certification, complete the following steps:

- Book an evaluation with a Master Coach Evaluator.
- Complete a practice plan and Emergency Action Plan for review.
- Be evaluated.

Additional multisport modules for competition introduction coaches include

- NCCP Design a Basic Sport Program
- NCCP Manage a Sport Program
- NCCP Basic Mental Skills
- NCCP Managing Conflict

To attend CEC events as a coach and access isolation with your athletes, you do not need to be NCCP certified; however you do need to register with CEC as a coach through their website (climbingcanada.ca) and complete steps and required courses for registration. If you want to find ways to increase your coaching knowledge, you can also download and review the many resources on the CEC website for coaches, consider working as a coach in a local climbing facility or contact psa@climbnovascotia.com for more information about the pathways described in this article.

A Boulderfest Reflection

By Michael Simmie.

Joining the board of CNS, I had one major goal: to make sure Boulderfest was brought back to life. I had the pleasure of attending the event in 2024 and quickly recognized that it was one of the most iconic climbing events in all of Atlantic Canada. From the boat ride with Rod to the whale watching to exploring Dover Island itself – the atmosphere has a paradise feel for climbers of all levels. Boulderfest is more than just climbing cool rocks – it is a community gathering of climbers from across Canada. It is worth noting that there are plenty of cool rocks to climb, which also inspired the winning design for this year's T-shirt.



It was a team effort to bring this legendary event back to life. Chris and Christie put in a tremendous amount of time behind the scenes, handling travel logistics, food planning, volunteer coordination, setting up toilet stations, organizing information sessions and more. Without their hard work, CNS could have easily lost one of its most significant events.

I had the pleasure of collaborating with some of our incredible sponsors. We had a mix of sponsors who not only provided prizes for the climbers but also made monetary donations to help with our supply runs, boat rides, and snacks. Without the generous support of the sponsors listed below, the event would not have been nearly as successful.

Thanks to our **Presenting Sponsor: Arc'teryx**

Our Silver Sponsors: Cruel Shoes Aerobics
First Chouinard Bouldering Co Static Holds
Propeller

Our Gold Sponsors: Seven Bays Bouldering,
East Peak Indoor Climbing

See you all out there next year!

Membership Renewal

The CNS Membership year has ended, meaning it is time to renew! A reminder that this date is for folks who bought memberships BEFORE May 1, 2026. If you have any questions or confusion around your membership, please email us at membership@climbnovascotia

Community Feedback/ Local Stories!

If you have a story or community event that you'd like to share on the CNS newsletter or social media, contact us at communications@climbnovascotia.com or our instagram @climbnovascotia.