



DAVE BUSTON FOR NATIONAL POST

Canadian luge team member Regan Lauscher replaces the “For Sale” decal on her helmet with a new Fast Track Capital decal at a news conference in Calgary.

Fast Track to podium

BY MARY TERESA BITTI

It was the For Sale decals on the Olympians’ helmets that did it for Darren Weeks, founder and chief executive of Fast Track Capital, the investment arm of financial-education company Fast Track to Cash Flow based in St. Albert, Alta. “I appreciate good marketing—and that was good marketing,” says Mr. Weeks.

Back in February, the cash-strapped Canadian Luge Association ran a We’re For Sale campaign to help sponsors find them. And Mr. Weeks did. “I saw them on TV and immediately knew this was a perfect fit,” says Mr. Weeks. “The way I look at it, I try to help underdogs in Canada and, unfortunately, 99.95% of Canadians are underdogs when it comes to financial literacy. When it comes to sponsorship, the luge team

is an underdog.” Plus there’s a certain symmetry: Luge is run on a fast track and now the team’s title sponsor is Fast Track Capital. Nice.

So he called up Tim Farstad, the executive director of the Canadian Luge Association, and in April they announced the largest corporate sponsorship in the association’s history: \$1,002,014 over five years.

“The important thing for us was to find a sponsor who could help our sport be sustainable at least to the 2014 Olympics in Russia,” says Mr. Farstad.

The funds will go toward elite coaching and training costs.

“Many countries think sport is more important than Canada does, and those governments support it a lot more,” says Mr. Farstad. “In luge, you have countries like Germany, Italy, Austria, where it’s a big sport, and so it’s easier for them to find sponsors and they have big-

ger sponsorship deals. Also, their athletes will stay in the sport for years because they have personal sponsors, and that’s not true of our athletes.”

Mr. Weeks is hoping to change that. “A couple of years ago, the team literally could not afford a first-aid kit. They had to borrow the Americans’ first aid kit,” says Mr. Weeks. “I sponsored the team because they had a need and I knew I could help. I also wanted to help give the sport more exposure. When possible, the athletes come to my events, and I suggest people sponsor them individually as well, because \$1-million may sound impressive but it’s not enough when you look at what the Americans, Italians and Germans receive in funding per person. They are underdogs and we are in this for the long term.”

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