

Madagascar prepares for its first winter Olympic appearance ever in Turin 2006.

Montreal, November 28th, 2005

An Olympic dream that goes beyond the games

Malagasies the world over will remember February 10th, 2006 as their countries' first appearance at the winter Olympics. Mathieu Razanakolona, a young Canadian of Malagasy descent has qualified for the games and will represent his country of origin in Turin. Spectators will undoubtedly be curious about this exceptional feat not to mention the "warm blooded" outsider. To add to the excitement, Mathieu and his brother Philippe are redefining the Olympic dream in their own terms.

Mathieu has been compared to the Jamaican bobsled team that flirted with the Olympic dream in Calgary. Today, the rAz brothers are going a step further: they are embodying the Olympic values to help their country. Personal accomplishment, sharing, tolerance and respect will translate into development programs for Madagascar, in line with the UN Millennium Development Goals. This is Mathieu and Philippe's definition of the Olympic dream. The ski run at Sestriere in Turin is a major step to completing this project that relies on the promotion of both Madagascar and rAzAlpin.org on an international scale.

rAzAlpin.org is driven by the belief that those who have **must** help those less fortunate. One of our major goals is to stress this responsibility on the international scene. This goal is less about specific numbers as it is about a way of thinking, a system of values that we believe is essential to the fight against extreme poverty.

Busy times

The project was officially launched in Madagascar with a tour to engage the principle stakeholders, the Malagasy population. The goal of the tour was to present the project, the mission, the development programs to come and the sport of skiing to the Madagascar. So last June, Mathieu and Philippe toured Madagascar giving press conferences and doing interviews with local media throughout the country. The brothers were able to meet with local communities, as well as influential Malagasy leaders such as the minister of youth and sports, the President of the Madagascar Olympic committee, and the Mayor of Antananarivo, the capital city. Everyone they met unanimously supports the brothers' work to promote Madagascar on the international scene, and to have a positive impact on the population. (A complete media revue of the tour is available on the website at: www.rAzAlpin.org)

Now back in Canada, Mathieu Razanakolona is pursuing his athletics in order to be in peak physical condition for the Olympics. November 18th, marked the end of his collegiate American football career as he hoisted the Bol d'Or (provincial title) with the Spartiates du Vieux-Montréal. The victory marked the team's fifth title in as many years. (Photos and statistics are posted at www.rAzAlpin.org)

After a single day's rest, Mathieu's on-snow training began on November 20th. Transworld Sport filmed the session as the final piece of a feature on rAzAlpin.org. Filming for the feature began back in September in Madagascar.

Mathieu will be following his rigorous training schedule as laid out by his coach, Richard Lepage, in preparation for his first race on December 10th. After that it is off to Europe for a World Cup race and then on to the ultimate athletic competition: the Olympic games.

Promoting rAzAlpin.org, promoting Madagascar

Economic realities are such that the success of the humanitarian work requires the promotion of Mathieu, the NGO and Ski Madagascar. With this in mind, Mathieu and Philippe have partnered with Papango, a communication agency based in France that specializes in reaching ethnic minorities. "Working with rAzAlpin.org is a not-to-miss opportunity for Papango and as Malagasies, we both believe in whole-heartedly and support the project!" says Lalatiana Rakotomamonjy, director of Papango. Papango's task is to promote rAzAlpin.org in Europe. The agency is currently devising a communication strategy that will cover all of Europe and will span several months, including the Olympic period. This strategy is an important argument for potential corporate partners of Ski Madagascar. The federation is still looking for

financial partners to contribute to the success of this project that will reach over 2 billion people worldwide! (details of partnership opportunities are available at www.rAzAlpin.org) rAzAlpin.org will reach a huge audience in several ways, including Transworld Sport's 8 minute feature that will be broadcast in over 130 countries. There is also the new version of the website www.rAzAlpin.org that now contains a complete section on Madagascar with music, traditional recipes, and tourism information, and a section with complete biographies of Mathieu, Philippe and Richard Lepage, Mathieu's training and race schedule, as well as the development program section.

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