

SPORTS



STAFF PHOTO/ROB ALARY

Knut Brundtland hopes Canadians take to kicksledding, which uses a CrosSled.

Leave your huskies at home

BY GIANNI COLAVECCHIA
Staff Writer

Convincing York Region residents to abandon winter traditions, such as tobogganing or cross-country skiing, in favour of kicksledding is a daunting task, but Knut Brundtland is up to it.

Kicksledding has existed for nearly two centuries, but it's relatively unknown in Canada.

The 60-year-old Unionville resident is hoping the sport's popularity in his native Norway will spread.

He's doing his part by hosting a demonstration this week.

The second annual CrosSled Rendezvous is scheduled for 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday at Kortright Centre for Conservation in Vaughan.

The event gives people a chance to try kicksledding with a model that Brundtland distributes in North America called CrosSled.

"Kicksledding requires a certain level of ambidextrousness, if that's a word.

"It's quite the exercise

machine, if you want it to be. And it's good for cardiovascular and muscular development."

Formally introducing the CrosSled model to Canada four years ago, Mr. Brundtland describes it as a dogsled with a seat affixed to the front of two steel runners and a handlebar attached to the top of the seat.

Standing six feet long and three feet high, the CrosSled is fairly light, weighing less than 18 pounds.

To operate a kicksled, participants stand behind the upright

frame of the seatback and hold on to the handlebar.

One foot is placed on one runner, while the other foot propels the sled forward by kicking against the snow or ice.

The seat can hold up to 250 pounds (112.5 kilograms) and steering is done by twisting the handlebar.

Mr. Brundtland notes a kicksled can reach speeds of 40 kilometres an hour.

Sports enthusiasts in

See CLIMATE, page 27.



Amy West

Been There, Done That

Patient pony saddled with polo novice

My first attempt at the sport of kings left me feeling like the palace fool.

I've been riding horses most of my life, but nothing could have prepared me for the high-speed, body-twisting, mallet-swinging game of polo.

David Wayne, general manager and head instructor for the Toronto Polo Club at the Gormley Polo Centre, decides I should start on the more predictable wooden horse. All students start here, Mr. Wayne assures me, until they learn to swing their mallets.

Swish! My mallet cuts through the air, completely missing the ball.

I get back into position. Feet turned to the right, left shoulder directly over the ball, bent at the waist. My right arm is stretched straight back with the mallet at a 90-degree angle to my arm.

Swish! Thunk!

"Oh my lord, there goes Trigger's leg." Mr. Wayne moans as the wooden horse takes a direct hit from my mallet.

If I can't keep from destroying a wooden horse, how will I ever manage a living, breathing — and expensive — polo pony?

Not just any horse is up to the job. The modern polo pony is a finely tuned athlete, combining speed, stamina and a whole lot of courage.

See POLO, page 27.

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