



New South Wales speed skaters lead the charge to the Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF) 17-21 January, 2007 Sydney Ice Arena, Baulkham Hills

Sydney, November 27, 2006: **Six speed skaters from Sydney** have been selected to **represent Australia** at the upcoming **Australian Youth Olympic Festival (AYOF)** to be held 17-21 January, Sydney Ice Arena at Baulkham Hills. Short track ice speed racing joins the AYOF program for the first time in 2007.

The New South Wales speed skaters on the Australian Team are:

WOMEN: Lyla Abdallah-Pinney, Alix-Myra Anderson, Marissa Earle

MEN: Noah Essaghir, Grant Hester, Ben Southee

“The Australian Team selection for the 2007 AYOF demonstrates the strong base of speed skating talent in New South Wales within junior ranks and bodes well for the future of the sport in this state.” says Kyle Francis, President of the Ice Speed Skating Association of New South Wales.

“The AYOF will give local skaters an excellent opportunity to gain international racing and competition experience on home soil. All six selected skaters are members of the ISSA of NSW High Performance Squad. This is an important step towards our athletes’ goals to represent Australia as Winter Olympians.” adds NSW State Coach Maggie Holland.

Ben Southee is in his second season as a National Team skater while for the other five athletes this will be their first experience on a national team. For all of these skaters, the majority of training sessions are held at Canterbury Olympic Ice Rink.

For more information on the selected NSW speed skaters please see next page.

For more information on the Australian Youth Olympic Festival visit: olympics.com.au/ayof07

Ice Speed Skating Association of NSW Inc.



	<p>Ben Southee Age 19 Home: Bellevue Hill Club: Sydney Vikings Current World Cup Australian national team member</p>
	<p>Grant Hester Age 17 Home: Revesby Club: Sydney Arrows Ice Racing Club Gold Medalist 2005 NSW Championship – Junior Men's Division 2005 NSW Most Improved Junior Skater 2005 Most Improved Skater – Duke Trophy</p>
	<p>Noah Essaghir Age 15 Home: Summer Hill Club: Sydney Arrows Ice Racing Club Gold Medalist Australian Sub Junior Champion 2005 Gold Medalist Australian Midget Champion 2001 & 2002 Gold Medalist Australian Nipper Champion 1999</p>
	<p>Alix-Myra Anderson Age 19 Home: Lugarno Club: Sydney Arrows Ice Racing Club 2nd place Senior Ladies 2006 Australian Championships National record holder 3000m for Intermediate Ladies</p>
	<p>Marissa Earle Age 16 Home: Croydon Park Club: Sydney Arrows Ice Racing Club National age champion 2000-2004 3rd place Senior Ladies 2006 Australian Championships</p>
	<p>Lyla Abdallah-Pinney Age 14 Home: Arncliffe Club: Sydney Arrows Ice Racing Club National age champion 2002-2004 National record holder 500m for Sub-Junior and Junior Ladies</p>