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Emily Weekes wins silver in Canada Winter Games para cross-country

Arm injury forces former wrestling star to find a new sport

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North Vancouver's Emily Weekes glides to silver in para cross-country skiing at the Canada Winter Games Monday in Prince George. Photo Kevin Bogetti-Smith/Team BC

North Vancouver's Emily Weekes added to Team B.C.'s medal total Monday with a silver showing in para cross-

country skiing, finishing second in the 2.5-kilometre standing classic female race.

Weekes is a relative newbie to her sport, having taken up cross-country skiing just last November, according to a Team B.C. release. The 24-year-old was a former wrestling star, having competed in that sport in the 2007 B.C. Summer Games and 2009 Canada Summer Games held on Prince Edward Island.

Two weeks before the 2009 Summer Games, however, Weekes suffered an injury that left her with nerve damage in her right arm. She taped up the injury and won bronze for Team B.C. in P.E.I. but over the next few years the injury worsened. Looking for a new sport, Weekes first took up triathlon before moving to cross-country skiing this season after being recruited by Tony Chin of West Vancouver's Hollyburn Cross Country Ski Club.

"I had never even skied alpine when I started cross country," said Weekes. "I competed internationally in triathlon and wrestling and skiing really isn't that different. Everything about competing is the same — the mental preparation, the focus, the execution. So it made it easier to move into a new sport because I've been involved in sport my whole life."

Weekes said her race strategy was to stay calm and relaxed.

"My game plan was to try not to crash and to have a clean race," she said. "It's a relief and an honour to win a medal."

The Carson Graham grad, who is also training in para biathlon, is excited about her future on the snow.

"I'm actually doing way better than I expected and I kind of wish I had started this sooner," she said. "I wrestled for nine years then I did triathlon for five years but I've picked up skiing much faster than either of those sports. It's been really fun and my coaches have been unbelievably supportive."

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