

19th FIPS Congress at Big White, Canada - April 2014



The 19th FIPS Congress was hosted by Canada and held at Big White resort from 30 March to 4 April 2014.

Thirteen countries participated in the Congress. There were approximately 110 attendees. In addition, a number of local Canadian patrollers attended various sessions. Of the three Australian representatives, ASPA provided congress registration financial support for Dr Rowena Christiansen and Duncan Isaksen-Loxton.

After the entry of the flags and the Welcome to Canada ceremony the Congress consisted of a series of in-door presentations and workshops, outdoor demonstrations and multi-country practical scenarios as well as Special Interest Group & FIPS Board meetings.



Opening Ceremony

Each country's nominated delegate attended the FIPS Executive Board meetings, on the Sunday, Tuesday and the Friday. On the Wednesday participants enjoyed a free ski day or met as part of the work of the special interest groups.

The FIPS in-door presentations and workshops covered a range of topics relevant to ski patrol and included:

- An introduction to the ski industry in Western Canada;
- Details of the preparations for the Sochi Olympics;
- Smart phone apps for accident and casualty information;
- Design and safety of terrain parks;
- The Canadian 'Racer Down' protocol;
- Operation of Whistler/Blackcomb;
- Silver Star resort GPS tracking on the ski hill;
- Swiss Patrol education system;
- CSP avalanche training;
- Off-piste skiing and avalanche risk research completed for the International Snow Science Workshop;

- Legal update for ski patrollers;
- The avalanche risk and mitigation measures at Big White;
- The Canadian Avalanche Association and public safety strategies;
- The Canadian Avalanche Association and professional training programs;
- The Avatech prototype snowpack profiler for snow pack measurement in avalanche areas;
- Panel discussion on avalanche;
- CSP pain management research pilot program at Silver Star;
- Non-pharmacological pain management;
- Australian Ski Patrol Models of Casualty Care, Medication Administration and our Medical Milieu;
- Management of fractures and dislocations in the field;
- A short practical workshop on femoral fracture traction devices used in Canada;
- French Ski Patrol and the CARDIAN telemedicine project;
- Australian Ski Patrol education and training;
- Korean medical and surgical management of hand injuries in winter sports;
- An update to congress participants from the FIPS medical, avalanche and technology special interest groups;
- Challenges today and tomorrow for patrols - a forum lead by Canada, USA and Australia; and
- A forum to provide feedback on the current Congress and ideas for future congresses.

In addition, at meal times there were short introductions by FIPS member nations detailing their ski industry, patrol structure and issues of international interest.



On-snow scenario

Outdoor demonstrations and training included:

- Global first aid comparison with mixed country groups working through scenarios;
- Cascade equipment demonstration;
- Inspection of the Big White avalanche areas and associated mitigation actions
- Avalanche search and rescue demonstration using avalanche transceivers, Recco and an avalanche dog;
- Avalanche probing and digging exercises;
- Avatech field demonstration; and
- International teams using toboggans to achieve a safe descent through a defined course. After a series of controlled descents Italy was declared the lead team

- Italian demonstration of on-snow techniques;
- Chairlift evacuation techniques; and
- Big White medical clinic and patrol base.

FIPS Special Interest Groups:

The interest groups met at various times throughout the Congress.

- A Technology group was added to provide support the FIPS Board and the special interest groups as well as a focus on what technology can assist patrols and patrollers;
- The facilitators for the special interest groups are: Medical group - Dr John Holmes (UK), the Avalanche group - Ed Carlson (USA) and the Technology group - Duncan Isaksen-Loxton (Australia);
- Each country has been invited to nominate a medical doctor member for the Medical group;
- A number of tasks are planned over the next eighteen months by the individual groups and program planning for the next congress is underway; and
- Patrollers interested in joining any of the three on-line groups should contact ASPA VP International Liaison, the moderator for each SIG Yahoo group.

The FIPS Board met three times during the Congress with the key outcomes being:

- Acceptance, with minor modification, of revised Articles of Continuance for FIPS as a not-for-profit corporation to comply with new Canadian Government requirements;
- Report by the President;
- Following a contested election, the new office-bearers for FIPS are:
 - President: Jean-Louis Tuaille – France;
 - At the request of the newly appointed President the meeting agreed that Bruce Lochhead – Canada (previous FIPS President) should co-preside as President for the next two years to assist Jean-Louis with his transition;
 - Secretary: Rik Head – Australia;
 - Treasurer and Canadian Government Liaison: Hugh Thomassin – Canada; and
- The Board commended Bruce Lochhead for his time of some ten or more years as president of FIPS;
- The Mark Labow Award was made to Marie Nordgren of Sweden for her continued contribution to FIPS over many years, congratulations Marie;
- Reports from the medical, avalanche, technology and congress program special interest groups;
- The application by Romania for membership of FIPS was accepted by the Board;
- A push to encourage FIPS members to send younger patrollers to attend congresses so they can become the FIPS leaders of tomorrow;
- FIPS will work towards a formal relationship with the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (IKAR-CISA). Given the IKAR expertise this relationship will benefit FIPS members in the areas of medical, avalanche and search and rescue and offer IKAR access to FIPS;
- There will be a mini three-day FIPS somewhere in Europe (*now known to be at Montgenevre, France*) on 21-24 January 2015. This mini-congress will provide easier access for European patrollers, provide an opportunity for some of the emerging European ski patrol countries to consider joining FIPS and provide an update check-point for the special interest groups. All member countries are welcome to attend;
- After consideration of proposals from Russia and Italy, the Board decided that the 20th FIPS Congress will be at Ponte di Legno in the Ademello ski area, near

Milan, Italy on 2-9 April 2016. The next congress will focus on training with certification and each special interest group will coordinate their own program; and

- Consideration will be given to the possibility of international sponsorship for FIPS and the next congress.



Some members of the FIPS Board, in session

More details on all presentations, indoor workshops, outdoor activities and FIPS Special Interest Group notes are provided in Part B of this report. Where available, the presentation, web site and other contact details for each activity have been identified.

A very big thank you to Big White and their staff, the Canadian Ski Patrol, Tom Tull (CSP) and his congress organising team as well as the FIPS Executive for an excellent, well run congress.

This report and, where the authors have agreed, a number of the indoor presentation are available on the FIPS website for individual private use.



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