SnOasis set to become GB Olympic hub

Saturday, 28 February 2009

WINTER sports haven SnOasis will provide a platform for British success at future Olympics, it can be revealed today.

The Â£350million Great Blakenham resort - which will boast the largest indoor ski slope in Europe when it opens in 2012 - is set to become the national Centre of Excellence for winter sports.

Snowsport GB chief executive Mark Simmers said the move will ensure SnOasis is to winter sports what the Manchester Velodrome has been to cycling.

Following the opening of the Manchester Velodrome in 1994, Great Britain has gone from strength-to-strength on an international stage, capped by Team GB's eight gold medals at last year's Olympic Games.

And Mr Simmers believes that SnOasis - the scale of which will be beyond anything Europe has ever seen - could provide a similar platform for British Olympic triumph.

â€œIf you look at British Cycling, the impact of having a world-class base in Manchester has been incredible,â€• he said. â€œSnOasis could do the same for winter sports.â€•

Great Britain has won just 21 medals at the last 20 winter Olympic Games, not one of which has come in alpine skiing, however, all that could be about to change.

SnOasis will boast facilities for 14 different winter sports, including speed skating, bobsleigh and cross-country skiing, with athletes living on site in a 200-bed academy hostel.

Snowsport GB is likely to relocate its offices from Scotland to Suffolk in conjunction with the opening of SnOasis, while the resort is also likely to bring a number of top sports scientists, nutritionists and researchers to the area.

Mr Simmers said: â€œIf you turn the clock back 15 or 20 years, we have had some great athletes, but really we have always been the plucky Brits with a real amateur ethos.

â€œWe can't operate like that

anymore. You need to leave no stone unturned if you want to be the best and having a facility like SnOasis will provide a much more professional approach. This could really change the landscape for the whole sport.â€•

Noel Baxter of the British Alpine ski team said:
â€œThe SnOasis development is a really exciting project for winter sports in Britain. The thought of competing in front of a home crowd is unreal - it will be amazing feeling to have the whole crowd cheering you on.

â€œThe facilities themselves sound amazing and something which will really benefit not only our training, but the future of British ski racing as we will have world class facilities on home soil.â€•

Dan Wakeham of the British snowboard team added: â€œI'm stoked to hear about the SnOasis development. Having a World Cup standard halfpipe in our own back garden will be a huge boost for our training programme, cutting down on a lot of our travel.â€•

Are you looking forward to the arrival of SnOasis?

SnOasis facilities

- Ski slope: 415 long x 70m wide with a 100m drop
- World Cup standard half pipe
- 60m x 30m ice rink
- 400m ice speed skating track
- 100m bobsleigh push start
- 1.5km dedicated cross-country skiing track

-
16m ice climbing wall

-
The UK's first ice museum