

Whistler Sliding Centre

BC Sliding Development Centre

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Arnita Ancena, Head Coach Luge

Arnita Ancena was born on March 11, 1980 in Madona, Latvia. She joined the BC Sliding Development Centre with over 20 years of experience in luge, both as an athlete (from 1995 until 2001) and as a coach (from 2000 onwards). Arnita represented her home country Latvia both in the Luge Junior and Senior National Teams. As a coach, she has worked with novice, development and youth/senior national team athletes both in Latvia and in Canada.



Athletic Career

Already as a child, Arnita was involved in many different sports such as track and field and horseback riding. During her time at Murjani Sports Gymnasium, a sports-focused secondary school, she first specialized in track & field, but was curious what other sports would work for her. A fellow Murjani student and luge racer suggested that she should check out the Sigulda Sliding Centre. She did, the local luge coach convinced her to try luge, and she immediately knew that this was her sport. Arnita was an active luge athlete from 1995 to 2001 and represented her home country of Latvia in international races all over Europe and the world. She was part of the Latvian Junior National Team, and from 1998 to 2001 she was a member of the Latvian Senior National Team.

Why Coaching?

Throughout her whole sporting life, Arnita has always loved working with people and introducing new athletes to sliding sports. She obtained a Master in "Sport and Health" from the University of Latvia with the intention to pursue a career in coaching. After retiring from competition in 2001, she was encouraged by Ingrida Amantova, a luge coach and Olympic medalist, to start working as a luge coach. Coaching has been Arnita's passion ever since.

Biggest Career Influence

Arnita's biggest influence in sports and life was her mom, who always encouraged her to try a lot of different sports. Her mom also suggested Arnita should choose Murjani Sports Gymnasium for her secondary education, so that she could stay focused on sports. At the school, she met friends and coaches who would teach her how to be a good athlete and, later, an even better coach. Also her fellow luge athletes and coaches were a big influence and role models for her development as athlete and as an individual. From an athletic perspective, Arnita was most inspired by Armin Zöggeler, former Italian luge athlete and double Olympic Champion.

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Meaning of Sport

Sport has always played a major role in Arnita's life. She passionately loves her work as a coach and the different lifestyle that comes along with it. In sliding sports, she specifically loves the intensity of the sports, the mental and physical challenges and the speed and thrill. She enjoys the mutual respect that sliding athletes have for each other, despite the competitiveness, and the close bond within the sliding community despite the fact that the sports are otherwise very individual activities.

Coaching Philosophy

Arnita encourages her athletes to think beyond their imagination and mental barriers. She teaches them to think positive, visualize victory, to believe in their goals and to go out of their comfort zones.

Her favorite quote and coaching motto comes from baseball legend Bob Feller: "Because every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way is."

Coaching Education

- Various NCCP courses
 - National Officials certification through the Canadian Luge Association
 - Latvian Category B Coaching Certificate (for coaches with advanced sport and pedagogy education and multiple years of coaching in an advanced professional position)
 - Education in gym/sport club management
 - Fitness/bodybuilding instructor certificate
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Previous Coaching Experience:

- 2000-2006: Luge Coach, Latvia Children and Youth Luge Sport School of Sigulda (LBJKSS)
 - 2006-2007: Junior/Senior Luge Coach, Canadian Luge Association
 - 2007-2009: Youth Luge Coach, Latvian Government, Agency of Youth & Latvia Children and Youth Luge Sport School of Sigulda (LBJKSS)
 - 2009-2012: Judo Coach, Saldus Judo Club
 - 2012-2013; 2014: Youth Luge Coach, Latvian Luge Federation
 - 2013-2014 & 2014-2015: Provincial Team Luge Coach, British Columbia Luge Association
 - 2015-2016: High School Sports Teacher, Latvia
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Further Education

- "Sport and Health Master" from the University of Latvia/Riga
- Murjani Sports Gymnasium (secondary school) in Latvia