Beat: News

Snowbirds Final Season With Iconic Planes

Current Jets To Be Replaces By 2030

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Brian MacKenzie-Teepell/USPA 24 News - The Canadian Forces Snowbirds 431 Squadron is the Canadian military's air demonstration team. The Squadron is based in Saskatchewan at 15 Wing CFB Moose Jaw. The Snowbirds consist of a fleet of the Tutor CT-114 aircraft. For more than 50 years, the Snowbirds have brought millions of Canadians together for thrilling air show displays as well as supporting the nation during hard times with the presence of their symbolic jets. The 2026 season will be the Snowbirds 55th season and in a sad announcement by the Federal Government we learn last season flying the iconic aircraft.

The Carney Liberals have announced that 2026 will be the last season the Snowbirds fly, paving the way for a new era in Canadian aviation. This transition presents an opportunity to innovate and find a modern replacement for the Tutor jets, ensuring the iconic CAF Snowbirds continue to thrive as a beloved part of our Canadian heritage.

In a recent interview, Captain Philip Rochon mentioned that the Snowbirds demonstration team was founded 55 years ago and have used the Tutor CT-114 exclusively since the beginning. He went on to say that there are 20 CT-114 jets in the current fleet, of which the team uses 8 along with one spare used by team coordinators. He continued by saying, "The Canadian Forces Snowbirds mission is to be ambassadors for the Canadian Military. "The goal is to show the skill, professionalism and team work that not only makes up the Snowbirds team, but the entire armed forces." He also emphasized that "skill, professionalism, and team work" is needed to keep the team in the air.

The Canadair CT-114 Tutor first took to the skies with the RCAF as a jet trainer in 1963, marking the beginning of an extraordinary legacy. Since 1971, the Canadian Forces Snowbirds have proudly represented Canada and the RCAF, inspiring countless hearts with their breathtaking performances. The Department of National Defence will procure the cutting-edge CT-157 Siskin II (Pilatus PC21) for the future Snowbirds team, ensuring a seamless transition to a modern fleet that will continue to captivate audiences nationwide. This state-of-the-art capability will be based at 15 Wing Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and is expected to take flight in the early 2030s, ushering in a new era of aerobatic excellence.

Stay tuned to USPA 24 News as we continue to highlight the Canadian Forces Snowbirds, a symbol of national pride and inspiration for Canadians from coast to coast. The next installment of this 5-part series, a testament to the team's enduring impact, will be available soon.

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