



new england NORDIC NEWS

SPRING 1999 VOL. 4, NO. 4

REFLECTIONS POST 1999 WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Zach Caldwell, NENSA Program Director

At the end of January I had the opportunity to accompany ten juniors and two other coaches to Saalfelden, Austria, for two weeks of training and racing at the World Junior Championships, followed by another week of training and racing in Fuetersoey, Switzerland, at a continental cup competition. While I have been involved in ski racing at a number of different levels over most of my lifetime, this was my first experience of any kind with European racing. I went to Europe not sure what to expect, but certain that I would learn a great deal. I did.

NENSA is concerned with development at all levels, but my own personal goal, and the goal of the organization, is to provide programs that can get our skiers to the very top of the sport. As a nation we've fallen so short of that goal for so long that we tend to look for one or two big reasons for our continuing failure. I can't count the number of times I've been party to conversations where our poor international results are attributed to a lack of ski culture, or too much (or not enough) centralization of our development programs, or too much easy living and television. I have to admit that I went to Europe half expecting to see the answer to all our problems plainly displayed in front of me. In hindsight I realize how silly that expectation was. If people like John Caldwell, Mike Gallagher, and Dick Taylor have been unable to provide a simple one-word answer to the problem, I don't know quite what I expected from a quick three-week jaunt through central Europe! So what you have here is no attempt at a recipe for success based on new-found experience, but a collection of impressions.

Several years ago my uncle John tipped me off on the strength issue. He told me that practically everybody in the country needed more strength and speed to be competitive on the world stage. When I got back from Europe in mid-February I found uncle John at home and said "you'll never guess what our kids need to improve!"

We need to improve our strength and speed. A lot. Let me put it this way: anybody who saw Rob Whitney ski at US Nationals, or at JOs, can attest to his strength in relation to the rest of our juniors. This past season he looked like a man among boys compared to the rest of our juniors, and the results reflected that. In Switzerland, the week after a seventh place finish at World Juniors, Rob told me that he felt he really needed to improve his leg strength in order to compete. I agreed.

So how do we address this problem? This is where, I think, some observations on technique can be addressed as well. Watching the races it was apparent that, no matter what type of technique or tempo they employed, the top skiers were generating a great deal of power very effectively. I gave splits during the classic races with Christer Skog, the US Team trainer. At one point Christer mentioned that, the more he saw, the more he thought that skiing was not a technique sport, but a power sport. My own impression is that technique is currently more about applied strength than about anything that could be described as aesthetic concerns. That may always have been the case, but it's not the way we coach technique. I feel that refining motions or body position on snow will have very little effect on a racer's speed. Technique needs to be developed as the application of power, and strength needs to be developed as the foundation of technique. I believed all of this before the World Junior trip, but now I believe it with such conviction that I can comfortably say: 90% of our skiers could benefit a great deal if the only training they did was strength/applied power/technique work.

How did we look technically? Aside from the short answer, which is "weak", we looked OK. I think the foundation of the classic technique for most of the kids over there was OK. Some individuals have work to do, and they know it. I would say that we're weaker skating, and that our approach to basic body positioning and alignment needs to be updated.

Horrendous shortcomings aside, I can honestly say that we're in the ballpark. I don't think you can really appreciate the magnitude of
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NEW ENGLAND NORDIC NEWS

NENN is published six times a year as a membership benefit of the New England Nordic Ski Association (NENSA). If you are not yet a NENSA member, please join — support nordic skiing in New England!

To request a NENSA membership application, contact the NENSA Administrative Office.

For fastest processing (for example, if you want your copy of NENN right away!) send in your membership fee with your request for the membership form — it's \$25 for the first member of the family (\$35 if not affiliated with a club), and \$15 for each additional family member (\$25 if not club-affiliated), payable to NENSA. When you return the signed membership form, you'll receive the NENSA competition guide and other membership benefits.

For information about life membership in NENSA, contact the Administrative Office.

DEADLINES

Articles and pictures submitted for publication in NENN must be in the editors' hands not later than:

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Late Fall (November) issue: September 25

Photos and graphics are always welcome. If related to an article, photos or graphics should be submitted with the text.

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For complete particulars on advertising in NENN and/or the NENSA Competition Guide, contact the Administrative Office.

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FROM THE EDITORS

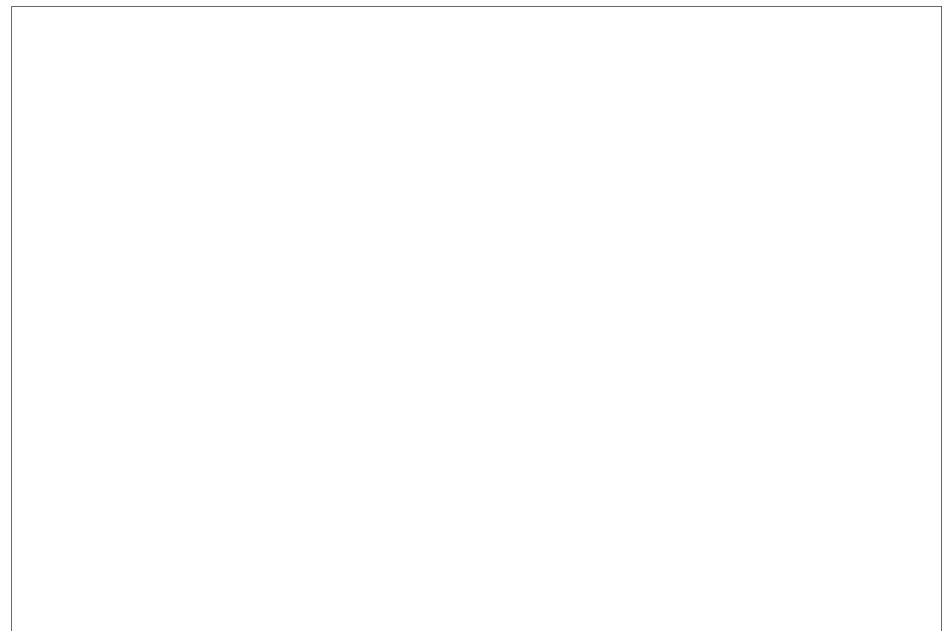
When Irish eyes are smilin'
Sure 'tis like a morn in spring...

And it was the first day of spring, when Rumford's St. Patty's Day Festival races at Black Mountain kicked off NENSA's spring series. The series, which included the races in Rumford, along with a Thursday race in Rangeley and the following weekend's NENSA Eastern Championships at Sugarloaf was a great success. Despite a peculiar winter, with some areas of New England blanketed in snow for much of the winter while other areas were pretty bleak, the New England racing scene was an active and exciting one. This issue of NENN contains reports from all the major New England festivals, the Junior Olympics and races on the European continent.

Now is the time for us to thank all the race organizers and the many, many volunteers who make such outstanding efforts to provide excellent racing all year long. Thanks also to the cross country ski areas that made snow and some great skiing for many this winter: Great Glen in NH, Mountain Meadows and Grafton Ponds in VT, Sugarloaf in Maine, and Weston in Massachusetts. Special thanks go to Volvo, for the second year in a row NENSA's official sponsor and team car. Thanks also to Smartfuel, a contributing sponsor to NENSA this season. Thanks to all of the ski industry folks who contributed a wealth of prizes to race prize tables this season. And a special thanks to Swix!

For the racers and their fans, the New England schedule of races furnished a winter of outdoor excitement. At a time when many Americans are huddled in their houses complaining about the weather, we have the smug knowledge that we are enjoying our favorite season of the year. And so in this issue NENN looks back on a wonderful season and ahead to the next year.

Mary Hamel
Anne Donaghy
Co-editors



Northeast Vermont BKL Team at the Quebec Midget Championships (see article on facing page). Front, L to R: Ida Sargent and Susan Dunklee. Back, L to R: Ryan Kerrigan, Luc Brodhead, Ben Donahue, Hazen Brodhead, Elsa Sargent, Emily Wheeler, and team mascot Dan Brodhead.
Photo: John Brodhead.

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

NORTHEAST VERMONT BILL KOCH DISTRICT TAKES QUEBEC "MIDGET" CHAMPIONSHIPS

by John Brodhead

On February 20-22 the province of Quebec hosted their Midget Championships at Montagne Coupee near Joliette. The "Midget" designation is comparable to NENSA's J3 and J4 age 10-13 group. The three-day event is the counterpart of the New England BKL Festival. This Championship in recent years has grown to become an open event with teams coming from as far away as Ontario to the west and New Brunswick to the east, and now the U.S. From Northeastern Vermont where the races get a little inbred due to a low density of population, it makes a lot of sense for teams to travel north over the border in search of competition. The Quebecois take their cross country skiing very seriously. They groom 6,000 kilometers of trail mostly with snowcats in Quebec, compared with 1400 relatively low tech groomed kilometers in Vermont. Due to the relatively high population density in proximity to heavy snow there are huge numbers of cross country skiers in Quebec. Their races are masterpieces of organization. The race facilities, including wax rooms, are remarkable.

The host of the Midget Championships, Tom Silletta from the Joliette High School, invited our eight Northeast team members to spend Friday night with host Joliette team members' families. All teams were invited to use the Joliette High school classrooms and cafeteria for inexpensive lodging and meals for the duration of the weekend. In return for Friday night hospitality, the NE Vermont district member families will host the Joliette team for hiking and mountain biking in the spring.

We arrived at the race site Friday afternoon in time to ski the course with our hosts. This was a great icebreaker and also served to put our somewhat cocky squad on notice that we had our work cut out. The Quebec Midget Championships are like the BKL Festival in their emphasis on team scoring. But, instead of just three person relay teams representing each district as at the Festival, the times of the top four girls and top four boys in individual freestyle and classical races from both "Midget" age groups were scored for overall club honors in the Quebec version. The Northeast District's eight skiers just managed to cover all age and gender criteria to qualify as a full team.

The kickoff event on Saturday was an individual start classical race. The course was a looping three kilometer circuit on open, rolling terrain with excellent spectator viewing. The sound system with a remote mike and well informed, dual language commentary was superb. The same course was used on Sunday for the pursuit start freestyle race. Over one hundred fifty kids bolted out of six start positions within six minutes without a hitch, attesting to the quality of the field and the organization. Needless to say the track became rather congested and some of the girls and younger skiers who started later, unfortunately, were frustrated in their efforts to move up.

The last day of competition, a Monday holiday for most of us, was a handicap relay. The team makeup required six skiers with both age classes and sexes represented. An elaborate formula was used to handicap each team based on the previous two days' performances. Ideally all teams would have finished at the same time. Vermont started last, about twenty minutes after the first team, and finished second in an exciting game of catch up.

The awards banquet was held in the huge day-lodge with a sumptuous spread followed by awards. We knew our Vermont

MIDGETS, page 10

100% PURE FUN

Led by some of Vermont's finest dairy cows, the Volvo Bill Koch Festival got off to a great start with an opening parade of cows, 100% pure cross country skiers and even some racers sporting "Got Milk?" mustaches. The combination of the outstanding preparation of Zoe Erdman and her crew from Northwestern VT, the hospitality of the people at Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe and the enthusiasm of over 300 young skiers and their families made this a festival to be remembered. Even Bill Koch himself was on hand for the weekend, handing out the relay awards and signing an endless stream of skis, medals, hats, etc. Even though the weather was a bit on the nippy side, a large white tent provided just the right amount of shelter to keep everyone comfortable. Add to that, races that ran smoothly and on schedule making for a near perfect weekend.

Conditions for Saturday's lollipop race and the classical relays were a waxing parent's dream. A foot of new, dry snow blanketed the trails. Colorful skiers raced to the delight of cheering fans. The relay course finished on an uphill, spreading out the skiers so that the tag zone was one of the cleanest in recent memory. The excitement continued on Sunday, with some outstanding technique being demonstrated from

J3s right down to J5s. It had stopped snowing and an early wind died down, leaving a crisp, sunny day. You can find the race results and lots more pictures on Bob Haydock's web page:

<http://www.nexcski.com>

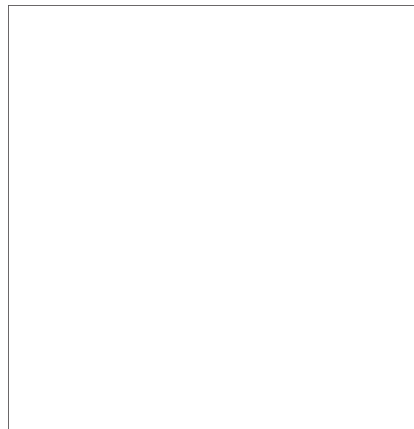


Photo: Bob Haydock

BKYSL FESTIVAL '99

by Ted Upton

This year's Bill Koch Festival was at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, Vermont. It was one of the best festivals that I have ever been to, and I have been to six. It was at a good location with plenty of snow.

The festival started off great from the beginning with the cow theme parade. Several people had cow hats on, painted their faces, or dressed up as a cow entirely. Maine had a very long cow body with a head for several kids to get under and hold up.

The races also went well. The results were out fast and there were no problems. I think everyone had a great time racing. I would like to thank the race organizers for making this possible.

The awards this year were a lot of fun, but the ones on Saturday should have been done inside. It was freezing out. I have always liked the medals Vermont gives out. They're artistic and they're big. This year's festival was definitely one of the best ever.

MASTERS

NEW ENGLANDERS RACE IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

by Jane Banks. See photo, page 10.

NENSA was well represented at the Masters World Cup in Grindelwald, Switzerland in March. It was a great cultural experience as well. We ate more fat in a week than we normally do in a month... breakfast included salami, cheese, jelly and bread. Our lunches also included lots of yogurt and cheese, and suppers could be very heavy meat dishes. Fortunately, we skied it all off. The country is littered with alpine ski areas as well as nordic trails beautifully groomed with a double classic track and skating lane.

Upon our arrival, we had to wait in Interlaken for 2 days while government officials decided whether it was safe to bring 1000 athletes into the town which had been severed from the rest of the country by avalanches. Friday, the day before the scheduled men's 30k, all the athletes and their gear were helicoptered up the valley to Grindelwald, in the shadow of the Eiger. For some, this was the highlight of the week! The race schedule was actually pushed back 2 days, eliminating the rest days, making for a very challenging week.

We expected a lot of hills on the courses, and were surprised that there were only two. That was because half the course was closed early in the week because of avalanche danger. It was interesting to find the course passing by barns, around manure piles, through homeowner's yards, and across numerous roads. However, by the last race, the 30k and 50k, we had all the hills they could muster out of the base of the Eiger.

Russia, Italy and Germany seemed to have the largest representation of racers; New England had far and away the largest US contingent ...Dave Boucher, John Brodhead, Bob Gray, Peter Harris, Pat Driscoll, Charlie Kellogg, Mike Marino, Jane and Murray Banks, Keith Woodard, Dylan Nurmegh, George and Charlotte Hall, Terry Cauffield, Len Amblo and Jon Goodrich. A strong turnout also came from Alaska. With all the Americans there was a lot of cheering and support on the race course; it almost felt like home. We noticed that when any of the Americans got together there was a great deal of laughter and camaraderie versus the more serious nature of the other athletes. Peter Harris, Bob Gray, Dave Boucher, Dylan Nurmegh were among the top in their respective age groups and Murray Banks won two silver medals.

Another highlight of the race week was a "rest day" train ride high up the mountain to Kleineshidig, where there are several hotels for the alpine skiers. This was also the backdrop for a James Bond movie. A group of hearty New England skiers enjoyed the 2 hour ski back down the alpine trails to Grindelwald on our race skis on a brilliant sunny

MASTERS NATIONALS IN WEST YELLOWSTONE

by John Morton

Early in March, when most New Englanders are scanning the sky for the first robin, a hearty group of diehard Nordic enthusiasts flew west for a few more days of winter. The 1999 Cross Country National Masters Championship was hosted in West Yellowstone, Montana, on a beautiful trail system which has become familiar to many American skiers thanks to the popular preseason training camps held there every autumn for the past two decades.

Montana in March boasts some of the best Nordic skiing in the nation: as much as 50 inches of packed powder, bright sunny days that warm to near freezing, but cold, clear nights which preserve the mid-winter snow conditions. Most of the competitors came from the Pacific Northwest and the Rocky Mountains, but if the delegations from the Great Lakes region and New England were small in number, they compensated by racing well.

The first event, held on March 8th, was a classic 20 K for women, 30K for men. John Sackett of Lyndonville, VT, John Morton of Thetford, and Tom Rogers of Williston all earned silver medals in their age groups, while Michael Fairchild of Guilford, VT was fourth among the men 45-49, only 8 seconds out of the bronze. The freestyle event on March 10th, a 10K for women and 15K for men, drew 129 competitors. John Sackett won a second silver medal in his age group, while Morton hung on for a bronze in the 50-54 category.

The 3x5K relay on March 11th was a barn burner. The first

member of each team skied classic, the remaining two skated. Tom Rogers skied the second leg for an inter-regional team which posted the second fastest time of the day. Jim Fredricks of Williston and Hank Lange of Brattleboro joined former Olympian Jon Engen from Bozeman for the third fastest relay time. But since the official relay prizes were awarded to teams comprised of skiers from the same region, second place behind a tough Utah entry went to the "Green Mountain Boys" Michael Fairchild, John Morton and John Sackett.

The Masters Championships concluded with a festive awards banquet on Thursday evening, then everyone refocused on Saturday's Yellowstone Rendezvous. Race day was clear and mild, with temperatures above freezing before the event was finished. The town of West Yellowstone had filled to capacity overnight with avid Nordic skiers. The 25K Rendezvous loop showcased the town's gently rolling ski trail network and the flawless grooming of Doug Edgerton, who has been recruited for trail grooming duties at the Salt Lake Olympic Games.

In the 25K classic event, Hank Lange was impressive, finishing 5th

MASTERS NOTES FROM BOB HAYDOCK

Current Zak Cup standings are listed at <http://www.nexcski.com>. Final standings should be available as soon as I get the two race results I am missing. The NENSA elite masters team will be based on NENSA points which are now posted on the NENSA web site. The lowest point holder for each 5 year age group for both men and women make the team.

We are still accepting bids for the 1999/2000 NENSA masters championships and should have a site selected this summer. The 1999/2000 National Masters will be held February 8-13 in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the Masters World Cup is tentatively scheduled for March 15-21 in Kiruna, Sweden (only the date is tentative). The 2000/2001 National Masters will be in the East and the selection has been deferred to the NENSA Masters Committee. Two sites have bid, Sugarloaf and a Washington Valley Consortium which includes Bretton Woods, Jackson and other New Hampshire sites. The selection will be announced by AXCS on April 15th.

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CLEARLY THINKING CLEARLY

by Fred Griffin, NENSA executive director

Choices. We make countless choices during the course of a day, a year, our lives. Some are as incidental as what we eat for breakfast while others have a more lasting impact. I want to call attention to the choices, and subsequent decisions Ben Erikson and Matt Pasternack made during a race at Putney School in February.

Both Ben and Matt were racing for positions on their state team in the Massachusetts Eastern High School Championships qualifier held just prior to the Volvo Eastern Cup event. A serious accident occurred ahead of them on course. Woon Chul Fisher from Williamstown took a fall at the bottom of a hill where there were no spectators.

A number of racers passed the spot where Fisher lay, but there was no hesitation on the part of Ben Erikson. He pulled over, took off his skis and went to Woon Chul's side. Very shortly thereafter Matt Pasternack fell at the same spot on the course. He saw what looked to be a serious accident. Off came his skis and he came over to help. Matt stayed with Woon Chul while Ben ran back up the hill to get help. Ben found a group of coaches in radio contact with the start and they summoned a snowmobile.

Matt Pasternack stayed with Woon Chul until Ben returned, employing his First Responder training. They both warned passing skiers away from Woon Chul. When the snowmobile arrived, both young men went up the trail and warned approaching racers to slow down.

Woon Chul has almost recovered fully from his injury. We will probably never know exactly what happened to him at the bottom of that hill, but we do know that Ben Erikson and Matt Pasternack made all the right choices on that day — made the critical decisions under terrific pressure that may well have saved Woon Chul's life. I know he and his family and friends are deeply grateful.

We all are. Thank you, Ben. Thank you, Matt.

REFLECTIONS, from p. 1

the performance that our boys had in the classic race without seeing the competition. Looking over the classic results, I felt that a top 5 performance in the relay was a possibility. Unfortunately, nobody had a stellar day in the relay, although Kris skied a very strong leg. What must be understood is that the relay performance that put those boys in 16th place would have beaten any other Junior team from this country. You simply can't have a bad day against competition like you find in Europe and expect to end up where you want to be in the results. Our luminaries have been saying for years that we need more exposure to international racing in order to improve. When you get right down to it, we have better courses than anything I saw over there, and better race organizers than the ones who put on the Continental Cup races in Switzerland, but the depth of the field over there is astounding. Our top kids might have a bad day in an Eastern Cup event, and not win by as much, or maybe even finish a couple of places back. It's not the same as landing on your butt in the back of the field. You should have seen Justin after the relay, or Kris after the

30K at Junior Worlds. They looked like they'd been hit by a train.

So I'm back to planning for next season in New England, and I'm realizing that there isn't any easy way to translate everything I saw into progressive program development. I've got an entirely new understanding of the magnitude of the task that we've set for ourselves, but a real sense of optimism about the possibilities. I would like to give everybody a firsthand look at European racing, but I don't know how. I'll be looking into possibilities for racing trips over there though, and I would encourage every club and team out there to do the same. In the meantime I'm working on ideas for getting stronger. The more I look at the problem, the more I think that there's no way to fix it aside from lots of hard work and high expectations. Sten Fjeldhiem told me, before the trip, that I'd come back and work my athletes about twice as hard. He might be right.

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CALENDAR

SUMMER EVENTS

May 28-30: Elite Team Testing Camp. Lake Placid Olympic Training Center. Contact Zach Caldwell with questions about the elite team testing program at (802)874-7264.

June 28-July 1: SMS BKL Camp. Stratton Mountain School, Stratton VT. Contact Sverre Caldwell at SMS(802)297-1886 X104.

July 8-11: SMS Junior Camp / NENSA Elite&Development Camp. Stratton Mountain School, Stratton VT. Contact Sverre Caldwell at SMS(802)297-1886 X104.

July 9-11: Coaches' Clinic - Gaining Ground, Part 2... the follow-up to last summer's widely hailed coaches' clinic is tentatively scheduled for Jericho VT on the 9th, 10th, and 11th of July. Details will be available soon on the NENSA website and at the Administrative Office (802)849-2270.

July 17-21: GNA Roller Ski Training Camp #1. Ethan Allen Firing Range, Jericho VT. Contact Alexi Sotskov (603)524-9484.

July 24: NENSA women's/girls' training clinic at Putney, VT. Cost is \$10 for the entire day. The date is tentative, so check the NENSA website for further information or phone Mary Heller Osgood at (802) 387-4543.

July 20-August 3: GNA Summer Trip to Europe. Vuokatti, Finland. Approximately 12 days between July 20 & August 3rd (exact dates not yet determined) at the Vuokatti Ski Center, home to the world's only ski-tunnel. Cost approx. \$2,200. Contact Alexi Sotskov (603)524-9484.

August 14-18: GNA Roller Ski Training Camp #2. Sugarloaf/CVA, Carrabassett Valley, ME. Contact Alexi Sotskov (603)524-9484.

August: First annual Bogburn BK camp sometime this month. Stay tuned for more information on the NENSA website or Bob Haydock's web site, or phone Bob at (978)369-2684.

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ETCETERA

Some places get early snow... now we see that Massachusetts is boasting of early sand!

From an email report from Charlie Kellogg to his club, CSU (we have our spies out there, Charlie!):

Singing Beach Sand Report

Having just returned from Switzerland, I was anxious to get in some skiing. Drove to the beach with Tempo 150s and no particular wax. The tide was out and there was a vast flat area to slide around on, like crust cruising in the West. Good exercise but could not skate very well. Classic was best. Take care - some bindings do not take well to being filled with loose sand. They won't release the boot!

Read your tide tables.

Charlie

NEW COLLEGE PROGRAM FOR X-C SKI RACERS

Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage, Alaska, in partnership with Gold 2002 and the Alaska Nordic Skiing Center is starting a new cross country ski team. This will provide the opportunity to get a university education in a program that is flexible in meeting the needs of athletes who want to excel in the sport of cross country skiing.

The focus of this program is to provide young American skiers with scholarship support, coaching, and high-level competition while they pursue an undergraduate degree. This is not an NCAA program. This program is designed for American athletes who want to train and compete at a high level and receive good coaching and training. The competition focus for the APU team will vary depending upon the level, experience and ability of the individual skiers in the program. Some may compete at the local or regional level, others may compete at Nationals, Junior World Trials, Yoko Series events and national FIS races, and others still may compete at the international B level.

Jim Galanes, former Stratton Mountain School coach, U.S. Ski Team coach and Olympic competitor, will be the head coach of this Alaska Pacific University team and the Gold 2002 elite program. He will be hiring an assistant coach by May to help with the APU team as well as the Gold 2002 junior program.

The new program will round out the offerings of the Alaska Nordic Skiing Center, which last summer became an official U.S. Ski Team regional training center based at APU. Skiers interested in the new program may get more information from Jim Galanes at 907-564-8320 or the web site at www.myplanet.net/gold2002.

JUNIOR COMPETITION

1999 VOLVO EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 1999 Volvo Eastern High School Championships were held March 13 and 14 at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire. This year's format was a new one, with an individual skate race on Saturday morning followed by a mixed skate relay in the afternoon. Sunday tested both racers and waxers with an individual classic race.

The sun was shining on the well groomed courses as the racers started individually in the skate race. Each state's forty skiers earned points for their team. In the girls' race, Kate Crawford of MA led the way in 25:31. Anna Carlson of VT and Carina Hamel of MA tied for second (25:51) Elise Henson (26:19) and Erika Foskas (26:27) both of VT rounded out the top five. A very tightly contested boys' race followed, with MA taking four of the top five spots. Angus McCusker (home just one day from the Deaf Olympic Games in Davos, Switzerland) finished first in 30:00. His teammate Neil Graves from Mohawk Regional High School was second in 30:24. Third place went to Jake Whitcomb (30:32) with Geoff Atkinson fourth (30:35) and VT's Kyle Dezotell finishing fifth (31:11).

The afternoon's 4 x 2k relay was a picture perfect event. With the Mt. Washington Hotel as a backdrop, the racers formed a ribbon of color along the golf course before entering the woods to return about 11 minutes later racing to the tag or the finish. The scramble leg racers held on tight to each other to create an exciting start that saw the lead

change from leg to leg. In the end the MA team of Hamel, Atkinson, Crawford and McCusker won in 43:28. The MA team of Alexis Brown, Whitcomb, Kate Dempsey and Adam Kincaid took second in 43:44. Carlson, Peter Newell, Abbie Harris and Dezotell kept it close, finishing third in 43:51 for VT.

Sunday's rapidly warming weather conditions made waxing a real challenge for skiers and their coaches. Dezotell of VT had an outstanding race to take first place in 34:44. MA skiers Kincaid (34:56) and Graves (35:14) placed second and third. Ryan Biddiscombe of VT (35:25) was fourth, followed by Atkinson of MA (35:27). In the girls' race, Hamel of MA put in an impressive performance to win in 30:10. Cricket Fellows of NH was 2nd (31:34), followed by Henson of VT 3rd (31:39). Two Maine skiers, Megan Greenleaf (31:49) and Jill Dunton (31:55) were 4th and 5th.

The overall team award went to VT, followed by MA, ME and NH. In the boys' division, it was MA 1st over VT, NH and ME. The girls' team award went to VT, trailed by ME, NH and MA.

1999 JUNIOR OLYMPICS ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

[Taken from reports to Bob Haydock's web site, www.nexski.com. For complete race results, check the NENSA web site www.rovers.net/~nensa.]

by Anne Donaghy

Monday 3/8 — Opening Ceremonies were at 4 PM outside the chalet at Kincaid Park, on the western tip of the Anchorage peninsula. Each team marched out of the two-story gray chalet, resplendent in their team uniforms, and stood under the bright March sun, comfortable in temperatures in the high teens. The backdrop was spectacular with mountains rising in every direction. One hundred forty miles to the north is Mount McKinley, or Denali ("the great one"). It's astounding how tall the mountain looks even from this far away. In sheer vertical it beats Everest since it rises to over 20,000 feet from sea level.

The skiing today couldn't have been better. Every trail in Kincaid Park had been freshly groomed and the snow was cold, well-packed powder. The 1.1K freestyle sprint started in the stadium at 5 PM after Opening Ceremonies. Someone standing in the center of the stadium could see nearly the whole race. Bright flags marked the course, music blared from the 2 story timing building, as well as commentary from the race announcer. Unofficial times were given almost instantly, so racers and spectators always knew the fastest time to beat. Temperatures began dropping as the sun set. It was down to the single numbers as the J2s finished racing. A good day.

Wednesday 3/10 — Today it was what Norwegians call brisk at Kincaid Park for the JO freestyle races. Grey clouds hung over the city, with occasional light snow flurries, and a wind that blew right out of the north, cutting through numerous layers of clothes and numbing the fingers and toes. The cavernous waxing bunker next to the chalet that was shared by all the teams was crowded today since it was warm in there (some background information: these bunkers once were part of a military base, and other nearby bunkers held missiles patrolled by armed guards, before the base was closed and the land became a

THE 1999 NEW ENGLAND JUNIOR OLYMPIC CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM:

Kelsey Allen, Alison Crocker, Hillary Easter, Mireille Hall, Tora Olafsen, Magali Sutton, Gretchen Black, Eileen Carey, Gretchen Czaja, Amber Dodge, Emily Jacobs, Margaret Maher, Kate Newick, Tyne Pike-Sprenger, Anna Sprague, Sarah Torkelson, Caitlin Compton, Sara Donahue, Karen Frost, Kiersten Lippmann, Lindsey Molyneux, Daisy Pierce, Hannah Taylor, Leah Trommer, Kate Whitcomb, Dylan Antone, Dundonald Cochran, Kristopher Dobie, Ryan Foster, Jim Hardy, Andrew Newell, Justin Easter, Ethan Foster, Andy Hardy, Geoffrey Howe, Andy Hunter, Chris Mallory, Brayton Osgood, Jordi St. John, Tom Wisdom, Justin Beckwith, Cole Caswell, Kris Freeman, Sean Gallagher, Matt Holland, Erik Jacobson, Tom Keefe, Tom Marshall, Justin Novak, Sam Trafton, Hjalmar Westie.

Named to the JO Team but did not compete:

Kate Pearson, Erin Quinn-Hurst, Parke Coggsell, Hilary Patzer, Ilke VanGenechten, Dave Stewart, Matt Cleveland, Geoff Atkinson, Daniel Chaffee, Colin Rodgers, Tim Woodbury.

Coaches: Dennis Donahue, Scottie Eliassen, Sverre Caldwell, Katie Gould, Amy Hollingsworth, Kathy Maddock, Alexi Sotskov, Will Sweetser, James Upham.

city park). Our racers did a good job of facing the challenge by adding more underlayers, putting tape patches on exposed cheekbones and making sure they had good pre-race warmups.

The J2 boys and girls raced a 5K course that ran through the stadium at about the halfway mark, which was excellent for race viewing. The 10K course that the J1 and OJ girls raced brought them through the stadium at about the 7K mark. The J1 and OJ boys raced 2 laps of a

JUNIOR COMPETITION

7.5K course. All of the courses featured challenging uphill - such as "Stairway to Heaven" which is a long gradual climb that turns a corner and suddenly decides to not waste any time about climbing straight up a rather steep slope. There are some fun downhill, too, such as "Compression" which is a steep, straight drop that quickly climbs back up so that as you tuck it your stomach is left behind for a second.

Many of our NE skiers were happy with their races; but for some the entire race was a struggle to stay warm. Probably the happiest racer of the day was Caitlin Compton, who had the fastest time over the 10K course, as she won the OJ girls' class. She gives much of the credit for her victory to Erin Connolly's cooking. It sounds like the living at the Executive Suite Hotel is going well!

Thursday 3/11 — Today while skiing (courses were open for preview before the races tomorrow) I met a woman who coaches 10-12 year old juniors twice a week up on the Hillside trail system (another lighted trail system up on the hills above Anchorage, where the Tour of Anchorage starts each year). She said that earlier this winter when she was out with her large group of junior skiers, all of them skiing down a gradual downhill, a lynx ran out of the trees to one side of the trail and began running down the hill alongside and amongst the skiers! Then the lynx had second thoughts and vanished back into the woods. Lynn Spencer, one of the chief course groomers at Kincaid Park, tells of how a family of lynx were raised not far from one of the ski trails last winter, and she even saw lynx kittens playing and pouncing on each other when she stopped her Pisten Bulley snowcat to watch. With all the crowds of skiers on the trails this week, a lynx sighting is unlikely, but it's exciting to know that they are out there. Several bald eagles and moose have been sighted by NE skiers on the trails.

Friday 3/12 - The JO classic races today began at 11 AM and ran until nearly 2 PM, and there were lots of smiles at New England's corner of the waxing bunker afterwards. Maybe this was partly because the weather suddenly changed and became much more familiar to us - low 30s, warming snow, but no sun today so the snow didn't transform and we were still skiing on hard wax. The coaches did a superb job of nailing the wax - NE kids had great kick and fast skis as well. For those of you interested, the wax of the day was Rode multigrade ironed on as a base layer, then covered with a number of coats of Star Tekno silver, covered with multiple coats of Tekno violet for the boys, and Tekno red for most of the girls. The Tekno silver is terrific for giving extra kick, and then is speeded up a little with an overlay. Our kids are also rested and feeling well, and that makes a difference too.

The course today was the same 5K loop that the J2 boys and girls raced on Wednesday in the freestyle race. Everyone raced it once today, with the J1 and OJ boys racing 2 laps. I asked some of our kids if they preferred skating it or classic skiing it and the response was unanimous — classic skiing! This reflects how well our team did today, and how they were feeling about it afterwards. NE skiers medalled (top 3) in every age group. Two NE skiers placed in the top 6 in the J2 girls race, five in the top 11 in the girls J1 race, four in the top 10 in the girls OJ race, four in the top 15 in the boys J2 race, four in the top 11 in the boys J1 race, six in the top 14 in the boys OJ race. One of the most exciting races to watch was Kris Freeman skiing only 17 seconds behind a very strong looking Rob Whitney in the boys OJ race.

Saturday 3/13 - It was another good day for New England at Kincaid Park today. The day dawned warm - high 20s as we all headed over to the race site - and with occasional light snow flurries. Definitely humid. There was no wind, which was nice. The temperature was close to freezing by race time, comfortable racing and cheering weather. And fortunately it was not too hard to wax for. The NE classic skiers were on the same combination of kick wax they'd used yesterday.

Our NE teams all raced their hardest, battling Alaska for first place in

nearly every age category. Watching them was exciting. Lynne Hardy and I were the voices of all the parents back in NE cheering for their kids. We cheered in at least 3 spots on the trails during each leg of the relay race, since the trails (a separate one for the 2 first classic legs and a separate one for the final freestyle leg) were separate from each other and neither ran too far away from the stadium, though they both featured some challenging terrain. The kids raced with cheers from parents, coaches, and teammates in their ears nearly all the way around the trails.

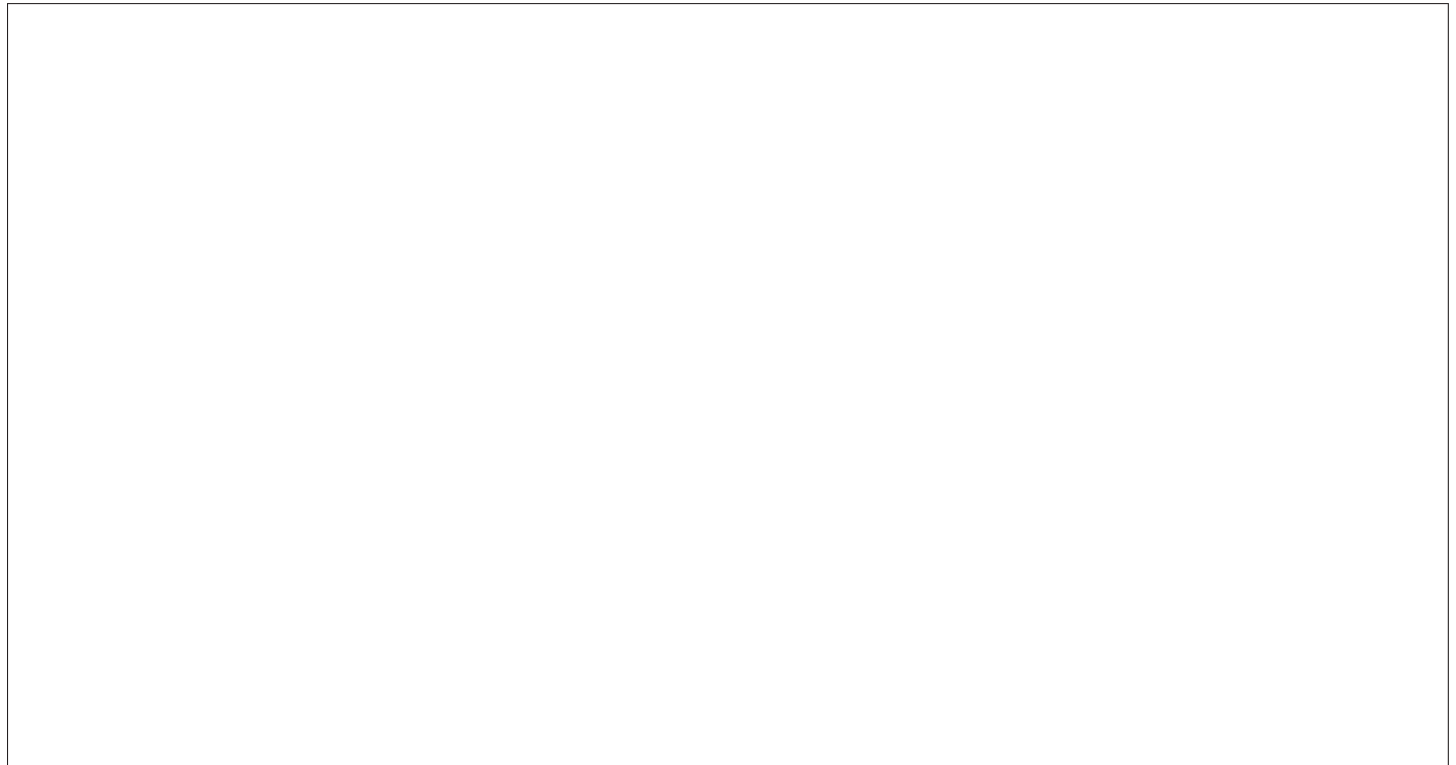
All of our teams raced well. They left Kincaid Park and headed back to their hotel and a massive pack-up effort, and then to one of the week's highlights, the final awards ceremony and the big dance. After that — the midnight flight out of Anchorage. It was a great week. Congratulations to our racers and coaches!

1999 NEW ENGLAND J2 FESTIVAL

True to form, Holderness School in Plymouth, NH pulled out all the stops to host a spectacular J2 Festival. The well-groomed courses were a challenging mix of climbs and descents with quick turns, allowing the skiers to demonstrate their abilities as well as their endurance. For spectators, the courses provided an exceptionally good opportunity to see these young racers in action as they wove their way through the stadium before heading off into the woods. Before crossing the finish line, the skiers returned to the stadium to ski in front of their cheering fans.

With upbeat music blaring from the sound system, the racers started in waves of four skiers. Each of the four attending states ranked their skiers from 1 to 20 according to their finishes in their home qualifying races. This format is unique to the J2 Festival and one that adds to the excitement of the races for racers and spectators alike. Each of those waves becomes a mini-race unto itself with skiers trying to win their wave or be as close as they possibly can to the other skiers in their wave. Many of these mini-races had very close finishes adding to the drama of the event.

In the girls' races, Alison Crocker (NH) and Carina Hamel (MA) battled it out all weekend. In Friday afternoon's 5km freestyle race just 16 seconds separated 1st from 4th place. The lead changed places several times during the race with Hamel coming out on top in 15:22, followed by Crocker (15:29), in 3rd Elise Henson (VT, 15:33) and 4th Kate Crawford (MA 15:38). Laura Shannon (MA, 15:59) was 5th. Saturday morning's 5km classic race had Crocker (13:57) beating Hamel (13:58) in a sprint to the finish. Magali Sutton of MA was 3rd (15:00), with Tora Olafsen (NH, 15:10) and Erika Forkas (VT, 15:11) rounding out the top 5. In Saturday afternoon's classic sprint, some skiers used their classic skis while others chose to double pole the course on skating skis. Crocker and Hamel battled it out again using



MASTERS WORLD CUP: Dave Boucher, Mike Marino, Murray Banks, Peter Harris and John Brodhead in Grindelwald, Switzerland. The Eiger is in the background. It's a tough assignment, but somebody has to go. Photo: Jane Banks.

MIDGETS, cont. from p. 3

team had garnered many individual awards but the overall team championship was too close to call. We were in close contention with strong clubs from Mount Ste. Anne and Quebec City. Out of a possible 800 points for perfect score, our NE Vermont team beat out Quebec City by one point to take home the banner. Then the tables were pushed back, three DJs running a sound, light and special effects system rivaling a Montreal nightclub blasted a nonstop set that had even the skeptical Yankee kids, their coaches, parents and grandparents rocking for two hours. Talk about culture shock, we didn't know ski racing could be so much fun.

Ski racing in Quebec is always a pleasant experience thanks to the gracious officials and Quebec participants. We always feel welcome and usually can find someone who can interpret or tell us what is going on. Quebecois are also anxious to race in New England. There are lots of events both north and south. By not taking advantage of this fact, we as racers and race organizers are limiting ourselves and our events to half the potential starts. As a race organizer in northern Vermont I feel that minimal effort is needed to break down this wall at the border. The greatest impediment is simply lack of advertising and information. Listing events in most Canadian and U.S. ski journals is free. Exchange of mailing lists is free. Translation of race announcements is free. The fun of participating in a new event and making new friends across the border is worth the effort.

Opposite, top:

Eastern Cup Championships, Women's Pursuit, 3/28/99: Sue Long (2nd place), Amy Hollingsworth (1st), and Kate Whitcomb (3rd). Photo: Bob Haydock.

Opposite, bottom:

Junior Olympics: National J2 Relay champions Tora Olafsen, Alison Crocker, and Magali Sutton. Photo: Nancy Crocker.

CRAFTSBURY CLUB ANNOUNCES ELITE TRAINING GROUP

The Craftsbury Nordic Ski Club is hoping to expand its programs to include an Elite Training Group and racing team for post-college athletes. In addition to Craftsbury's excellent snow conditions and 110-km trail system ideal for training and racing, there is potential for supportive employment and housing in the area. All interested persons please contact Diana Sabot at 800-729-7751 or by e-mail at dsabot@hotmail.com. All questions and ideas are welcome!

From the Archives

This is a new NENN feature, and here's a challenge: send us your old photos, race results or ski stories from long ago and we'll publish them. The older the better!

Here's one found in an old attic box — from the 1969 Junior Nationals, held at Mount Alyeska, near Anchorage, Alaska. It was the last time the alpine, jumping and cross country Junior Nationals were all held at the same location. This excerpt is from a tattered piece of paper reading "TO ALL DIVISIONS" and signed by the "Entertainment Chairman":

"As part of the entertainment for the Junior Nationals, we are trying to attempt something new, and to some it may seem old fashioned.

"Each division will be responsible for selecting a representative for the 1969 Junior National Ski Queen; this must be a female. She will be judged on poise, personality and talent. I will need to know by the 17th if she will need any special props (I hope not)..."

This really did happen, and the owner of the tattered entertainment guide is pretty sure the Alaska division entry — an alpine racer (and a female!) — won. Anyone out there who remembers this event thirty years ago, let us know!

Send your Archives photos, race results, ski stories to:

anne.donaghy@valley.net

or mail to NENN, P.O. Box 402, Meriden NH 03770. Mail with a self-addressed, stamped envelope and we promise to return what you send.

J2 FESTIVAL, cont. from p. 9

klister with Crocker (3:23) coming from behind to take the win in a photo finish. Lindsey Burke (MA, 3:29) was 3rd, with Henson and Shannon tying for 4th (3:30).

The boys put on a great show of strength and endurance over the course of the weekend. The freestyle race was taken by MA's Neil Graves in 13:25. Ryan Foster (VT, 13:48) placed 2nd with Jake Whitcomb (MA, 13:51) 3rd. Joel Bradley (MA, 14:11) edged Seth Hubbard (ME, 14:12) for 4th. In the 5 km classic, the order changed slightly with Foster (12:45) taking the win. He was followed by Whitcomb (2nd, 12:52) and Graves (3rd, 13:04). Lars Erik Siren of ME took 4th (13:23) and NH's Kris Dobie in 5th (13:25). 1st place in the sprint race went to Jake Whitcomb (2:58) on classic skis, followed by Foster (2nd, 2:59), Bradley (3rd, 3:03), Aaron Bloom (4th, 3:07, MA) and Grant Janukatis (5th, 3:09, VT).

The mixed, mixed relay was held on Sunday morning. The first two legs (one boy, one girl) were classic with the last two legs (one boy, one girl) skating. The MA team of Whitcomb, Hamel, Graves and Crawford put on an impressive performance winning in 35:24. The VT team of Foster, Forkas, Andrew Donovan and Henson took 2nd (36:23). In 3rd for MA were Bradley, Sutton, Bloom and Shannon. NH's Dobie, Olafsen, James Letson and Crocker (36:41) were 4th, with the ME team of Siren, Hillary Easter, Seth Hubbard and Maggie Burke taking the 5th spot (36:51).

The VT team took the overall team award, followed by MA, ME and NH.

MASTERS WORLD CUP, from p. 4
day.

The avalanche situation presented difficulties for the race committee, but still the organization failed to live up to the standards set last year at Lake Placid. In fact, we often heard ourselves saying, "If this were a NENSA race..."

Next year's Masters World Cup is in Sweden, 2001 in Austria and 2002 in Quebec... start making plans now!

MASTERS NATIONALS, from p. 4

overall, while Barbara Belcher-Timme of Guilford, VT was 5th in her age group. Diana Lange was 11th in her age group in the 25K skating race. The 250 finishers in the 50K Rendezvous were predominantly from the West, but New Englanders took the top honors. Olympic veterans Pat Weaver of Lenox, MA and Mark Gilbertson of Hyde Park, VT finished first and second overall. John Morton won the men's 50-54 category, Alisha Laramie of Lyndonville, VT was the second woman in the 18-24 group, John Sackett was fourth in the men's 35-39 bracket, and Michael Fairchild finished 12th in the tough 45-49 group.

All the sunburned competitors gathered that evening for another terrific banquet, the awarding of prizes and a merchandise raffle which seemed to send everyone home a winner. We may have some work to do before American Nordic skiers are consistently competitive at the international level, but if a week in West Yellowstone is any indication, cross-country skiing is alive and well in Montana.

NEW ENGLAND 1996-99 JO UNIFORMS FOR SALE:

One-piece suits \$100, mid-weight warm-up jackets \$65. These are brand new extras from the VOMax stock of '96-'99 uniforms. Contact Scottie Eliassen (scottie.eliassen@dartmouth.edu or 603.795.3165).



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