



# new england NORDIC NEWS

LATE FALL 1999 VOL. 5, NO. 1

## NORTHERN EXPOSURE

by Fred Griffin, NENSA Executive Director

Picture this, please: A series of trail systems, some of them challenging race loops, threading the woods and fields of the five communities fanned out around two world class nordic training facilities. In this land of pointed firs, snow in mid-November and mid-April is not only common, it's expected. It's a place where culture and geography have historically come together around outdoor sport.

I'm talking about the Maine Winter Sports Center and the towns of Fort Kent, Presque Isle, Stockholm, Madawaska, and Caribou. Under the direction of Max Cobb, Program Director of the U.S. Biathlon Association, and Max Saenger, MWSC Director, this extraordinary project is rapidly becoming a reality. John Morton has been laying out the trails and bulldozers have been shaping them. The Fort Kent system and facility are near completion, while work in the other towns is underway. Biathlon and nordic coaches are being hired. A series of clinics for all age groups began in September and has no plans of ending. Local elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools are introducing Learn-To-Ski programs. And this is just the start. Ground-breaking on the second world class facility in Presque Isle begins next summer.

The mission of the Maine Winter Sports Center is simple: to provide enhanced biathlon and cross country ski opportunities for the youth of Aroostock County. Its genesis is more complicated, and reflects the vision and hard work of many people. It is the brainchild of Andy Shepard, a product manager at L. L. Bean, and Owen Wells, a Portland lawyer. Wells enticed the Libra Foundation, a Portland-based charity, to fund a feasibility study in 1998. They drew in John Morton, the former Olympic Biathlete, coach, writer, and trail designer, and Max Cobb, the national program director for the USBA. A working group was formed, plans were drawn up and presented, funding approved, and ground-breaking on this sprawling complex began last summer. With the hiring of Max Saenger, a former Dartmouth skier, to coordinate development, things have taken off on all fronts. Ties are being built between local schools, athletes, and coaches. Citizens and athletes will be skiing and racing on the new trails this winter.

Granted this is exciting, a real boost for the sport we love

— but what does it mean for NENSA members? It means that our skiing world, our skiing community is growing breathtakingly larger. It means that for those of us who dare venture northward, the potential for early and late season on-snow training, for summer training opportunities, and eventually, for new and exciting race sites, is expanding on so grand a scale it is hard to ponder. Fort Kent, the two Maxes (Cobb and Saenger) assure me, is only 6.5 hours from Burlington, VT — certainly far closer than Marquette, Yellowstone, Mt. Bachelor — other early and late season snow meccas.

More importantly, Maine Winter Sports Center and NENSA are in many respects partners in this venture. The youth skiing programs Max Saenger is bringing to life will be part of the New England Bill Koch League. The junior and masters groups will belong to the NENSA Club system. We will be seeing MWSC skiers who are also NENSA skiers competing in Eastern Cups, Junior Olympic Qualifiers, and all of the NENSA Championship events. Look for them in our races as early as this winter. Be sure to welcome them. In a short time, they'll be looking to return the favor to you in northern Maine. What a great time it is to be a nordic skier!

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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. 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, send your membership fee in with your request for the membership form — as of 4/25/99, it's \$30 for the first member of the family (\$40 if not affiliated with a club), and \$20 for each additional family member (\$30 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:

Winter (January) issue: November 15

Late Winter (March) issue: January 25

Spring (May) issue: March 25

Summer (July) issue: May 25

Early Fall (September) issue: July 15

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.

### ADVERTISING

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

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## FROM THE EDITORS

Can it be? The summer is gone, the days are getting shorter, the nights are crisper, and there are reports of snow right here in New England. Crackling fires in wood stoves give us a sense of comfort after time spent outside. For all you young skiers who balk at hauling cordwood, remember John Caldwell prescribes chopping, splitting and hauling as natural strength work!

As another ski season approaches, it's hard to imagine that New England Nordic News first began publication in the fall of 1995. We have come such a long way in four years. There is a community of skiers in New England fostered by NENSA that is expanding each year. The opportunities for our racers are also growing. We even had a group of young skiers representing NENSA in Finland's ski tunnel this summer! (see page \_\_) The excitement being generated is felt from BKL skiers to Masters.

This season's first racing opportunity is scheduled for December 5th in Grafton. That's just about four weeks after this issue of NENN is scheduled to arrive in your mailbox. As you read this issue, you'll be drawn to look at future occasions for early and late season skiing generated by the newest, and perhaps most energetic new undertaking in recent skiing memory (see story page 1). The new facility in northern Maine, breaking ground next summer, will encompass areas of five towns and add a new dimension to skiing here in New England.

This winter, in addition to the nine days of Eastern Cup racing, New England will play host to two days of USSA/FIS Continental Cup racing at Black Mountain in Rumford (February 12 and 13) as well as the week-long Junior National Championships at the Jackson Ski Touring Center (March 5 - 12). Many of you will look forward to the "Relay Revival Weekend" planned for January 29 and 30 in Hanover, NH and Putney, VT. Watch the NENSA web page and your competition guide for more details, but start planning your teams now. The season will finish out with our usual series of festivals and championships for all age groups.

Happy Holidays and Happy Winter,

Mary and Anne

# BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

## CROSS COUNTRY SKI RACING: A FAMILY AFFAIR!

by Mary Hamel

For one of the most active cross country ski families in New England, introduction to organized ski racing came in 1986 when they joined the then Hickory Hill Bill Koch Ski League (now Berkshire Trails.) As she registered her brood for the League, Cath Whitcomb said, "I don't want them to race." She was assured that there was no requirement for racing. But by the end of that very first season, Matt (8), Kate (6) and Jake (4) were traveling to Mountain Top to ski in their inaugural Bill Koch festival. The three kids were dressed in jeans or corduroys, wool hats and mittens and skis with three pin bindings for that first event. Cath remembers Kate's reaction when her parents cheered as she rounded the first corner, "Kate stopped, smiled and gave us a big wave!"

Growing up, none of them remembers training for skiing until they were at least 13 years old. Their days were filled with activity, however. As soon as they got home from school, they changed their clothes and headed outside until mom called them for supper. Activities included building forts, damming brooks, running around in the woods and riding their bikes. In the summer, every afternoon was spent at the town pool.

Fast forward to today. Matt will be a junior skiing at Middlebury College where he qualified to go to the NCAAs last season. Kate, who was ranked #1 on NENSA's points list at the end of the 98/99 season, will do a post-grad year at Stratton. You can watch Jake ski on the JO circuit this year. Last winter, he was #2 overall at the New England J2 Championships (winning the classical sprint race and scrambling for the winning relay).

Beyond their many accomplishments, what makes the Whitcombs special is the sheer joy they take in skiing. Anyone who has watched them ski will tell you how technically good they are. Excelling in both diagonal stride and skating, the development of their technique began in the BKL. In addition to spending countless hours playing with their friends on skis, they attended the two scheduled practices a week. Every Wednesday was spent perfecting their classical skiing. Saturdays were reserved for playing games. The games gave them the incredible balance that allows them to glide for long distances on flat skis. All of them enjoy the camaraderie of skiing and training with a group. Matt still has many of the same ski buddies he made while in the Hickory Hill BKL. Along with new friends made over the years, he has spent the last two summers working and training in Oregon with two of his original BKL cohorts. Kate enjoys the dynamics of skiing on the team at Stratton. Whether in season or off season, training with skiers her own age makes the workouts fun. Jake is still training with the Berkshire Trails group but looks forward to some of the same experiences as his older siblings.

Friends from all over New England are impressed by the energy and excitement the Whitcombs radiate while they ski. Longtime coach in the Berkshire Trails ski club, Ed Hamel looks at it this way, "The Whitcombs know how to have fun. Without

fun, they wouldn't be in the sport."

When asked about the importance of family to their skiing, they all agree that family is a key component in their successes. The whole family stands together supporting each other in some way. Over the years, Dave Whitcomb (Dad) has become an expert on wax. He not only waxes his own kids' skis but helps out other racers as well. Cath Whitcomb provides that special support in all areas of their lives that only moms can give. Reflecting on the ties she shares with her brothers that come from their shared passion, Kate says, "Skiing has brought us closer together because of the team spirit we have just within our family. I know that Matt sometimes wants me to win more than I want to win!" She goes on to say, "Jake makes me a better person because I've seen the example that Matt sets for me and so I try to set the same one for Jake."

### ATTENTION BKL LEADERS, COACHES AND PARENTS

Manual will be available for sale by the time you read this. The price had not been determined at press time.

This manual is an indispensable guide to operating a successful kids' cross country ski program.

For pricing and other details, call or email the NENSA office (see page 2 for contact information).

## MASTERS

### MASTERS UPDATE FROM BOB HAYDOCK

The 1999/2000 masters season lines up as follows. Please note that some dates may change between now and when the season starts, so be sure to verify dates.

#### ZAK CUP

The Zak Cup will continue to use the same format it has for the last few years. Rankings are based on the old World Cup points system with 25 points for first place, down to 1 point for 15th place. A skier's total points are based on the sum of points earned from his or her 7 best races. Two sets of scores are maintained, one for overall performance, and one for a skier's performance within his or her 5 year age group. Skiers must be 30 years or older, be a NENSA member, and complete at least 2 races to participate. Unfortunately the race schedule had not been finalized as of this writing so you will need to check the NENSA competition guide.

#### NENSA MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

It was hard to leave Sugarloaf as they did such a nice job with the championships, but this year we have awarded the championships to Grafton Ponds and have moved the championships to later in the season (February 26th and 27th) to give people a little more time to get into shape. We will use the same format as last year. Saturday will feature a classic race in the morning (10k for men and 5k for women), and a 3x2km mixed freestyle relay in the afternoon, while Sunday will be a skate race (10k for women and 15k for men). There will also be a banquet Saturday night. More details will be available later in the Fall.

#### NATIONAL MASTERS

The National masters will be held in Saint Paul, Minnesota February 6th -11th with the option to ski the Mora Vasaloppet on the 13th. The detailed schedule is available on <http://www.nationalmastersxc.org> and on <http://www.nexcski.com>. I believe the final ruling on AXCS membership was that it is not required but AXCS members will get discounted race entries. I urge all those entering the nationals to join AXCS regardless. Note that the 2001 National Masters have been awarded to Sugarloaf.

#### WORLD MASTERS

The World Masters will be held March 18th-24th in Kiruna, Sweden. Details available at <http://www.kiruna.se/> (although I don't see much info there as of this writing). You can also check <http://www.xcskiworld.com/EventCenter/index.html>.

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 Home Page: <http://www.nexcski.com>

## USSA

### REPORT FROM EASTERN REP. TO USSA CROSS COUNTRY SPORT COMMITTEE

The cross country sport committee met for its fall meeting during the USSA congress in Park City, Utah, Sept. 16-18, 1999. The full committee met on the first day, the officials and coaches subcommittees met for most of the second day and the early morning of the third day as well, then the full committee met for the last two hours to vote on proposals from the subcommittees. Three regional representatives - those of Alaska, Pacific, and Central - were not in attendance. The coaches' representative was not present. It was noted that a second At-Large seat has not been filled, nor have two seats for Athlete representatives. Chair Lee Todd stated that the committee's revised by-laws that allow for naming of athlete reps by the committee, rather than the election of them by the national athlete body, should make it easier to fill the seats. Some other committee members, however, feel that representation on the CCC would be better served if travel reimbursements were available for the two meetings per year.

The Fall meeting is the time to look two years ahead to the approval of initiatives to the Cross Country Plan, to review and approve selection criteria for international and national teams, and this year to review proposed rules changes for national competitions. Program director Luke Bodensteiner presented initiatives for funding for the 2001 Plan, including several that had been sent in from the East and one for regional training center support for Marquette, Michigan. No other regions had sent in initiatives for USSA funding consideration. Bodensteiner stated that it was time to consider ways to bring the USSA program deeper down the Athlete Development Pipeline and more fully into the regions, though it could not be done in piece-meal divisional programs but in context of the Pipeline (for full meeting minutes, see the USSA website or contact me, AD). Rick Kapala, the Mountain representative, urged a prioritization of initiatives pertaining to the national team first, the National Development Group second, and then look to the next step of the pipeline, the regions. Without the other regional representatives in attendance, it was difficult to proceed from this point and it was left to the coaches subcommittee to informally meet during the next two days for discussion. A USSA funding initiative to the regions, for purposes of athlete development, is still being discussed by Bodensteiner and the regions.

We formed a women's task force/working group to research problems behind low numbers of elite senior women athletes and coaches in this country, and to develop some possible solutions in the way of initiatives to be brought to the CCC. I consider myself fortunate to be a member of this group and encourage anyone, male or female, in the East who is interested in serving on this group to get in touch with me.

For full CCC meeting minutes, please go to <http://www.usskiteam.com>.

Anne Donaghy  
 Eastern regional representative to USSA cross country committee

## WOMEN

## SKI FOR YOURSELF CAMPS — FEMALE FUN &amp; FITNESS

Ski For Yourself Camps, the six-year-old cross country ski camp series for women and the longest running, most successful camp in the business, is gearing up for its seventh year of programs. The dates and locations for the 1999-2000 camps are: Mazama, Washington, December 9-12; Trapp Family Lodge, Vermont, January 20-23; Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, February 3-6.

The secret to the success of the Ski For Yourself Camps (SFYC) lies not only in the unique quality of the camps themselves but in a deep understanding of the women's sports market. According to the National Sporting Goods Sports Participation Survey, women comprise at least 50 percent of cross country skiing participants. Christal McDougall, founder of the SFYC, points to the special connection and camaraderie that women experience at the camps, "We give them a complete package, not just a lesson," she says. "Our motto is instruction, information and inspiration; this means we not only work to teach skiing, but to inspire women in other areas of their lives. To us, inspiring people means breathing life into them — and helping them do it for themselves and each other. And it works — so much so, that not only do they have lasting memories, they keep coming back for more."

Marian Schenke of Tabernacle, New Jersey has attended three camps, and plans to return again this season. "Returning home after the first camp," she says, "was like going back to reality with a new shine to it thanks to the after-glow of the weekend. Thanks to the great coaches, I've become more confident that I can make it past the basic beginner level to whatever goal I choose to pursue. The staff's enthusiasm and encouragement should be bottled."

The SFYC itinerary features formal and informal clinics about ski equipment, clothing, training, nutrition and other nuances of nordic skiing such as waxing and caring for skis. Watching the videotapes of the campers' techniques, an educational highlight of the camp, is not only an effective tool for learning, it's also great party fun.

Even with the emphasis on ski instruction, SFYC are about much more than just skiing. In addition to welcome parties, door prizes and other free gifts, the SFYC staff coordinates group lodging and meals, yoga sessions and massages to help the campers get in touch with themselves and connect with each other. Whether women attend by themselves with the intention of meeting new people or as a small group, everyone develops new friendships and still has plenty of peaceful time alone at the resort. "The staff took such care and patience with us, not only in our ski instruction but with our needs for the whole weekend," says Diane Sieg of Estes Park, Colorado, who attended the SFYC in 1998. "Having some unscheduled time balanced out the high activity level."

The SFYC coaching staff, which includes former U.S. Ski Team members and certified professional ski instructors, are supportive and helpful to both first-timers and veteran skiers.

Women trust them to recommend products and equipment that are suited to their individual needs. The coaches also act as role models to help the more experienced skiers gain tips for racing and improving their enjoyment of the sport. And it's obvious that improvements in skills and appreciation of cross-country skiing do occur at every ability level. "It's great to see the support these women show for each other," says McDougall. "The younger women root for the older women; the really good skiers cheer for the beginners; we all recognize each other's individual successes. Everyone has a victory, whether it's perfecting the skating technique or making it down a hill for the first time."

With a program that accommodates women of so many different ability levels and that is set in locations like the storied Trapp Family Lodge in Vermont, Waterville Valley Ski Resort in New Hampshire's beautiful White Mountains and the Methow Valley in the heart of Washington's North Cascades, it's no wonder that the Ski For Yourself Camps are booked so early every year. For more information contact Women's Sports Works at 303.499.0436 or look them up on the Web at [www.womenssportsworks.com](http://www.womenssportsworks.com).

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## CALENDAR

### WEB SITES

Here are some excellent web sites to check for updated information on regional and club events open to all:

NENSA:

<http://www.rovers.net/~nensa>

New England XC Skiing:

<http://www.nexcski.com> (for CSU events)

Maine Nordic Ski Club:

<http://www.bangornews.infi.net/~cdorion>

### LATE FALL/EARLY WINTER EVENTS

Nov. 6: Roller training session, 9 AM; meet at Troy General Store in Troy, Vermont (Jay Peak area). (Detailed directions to follow a week or two in advance). Roller skiing for 2-3 hours on a quiet road with great pavement. Bring a picnic lunch. Host: Peter Harris, 802-766-8002.

Nov. 7: CSU roller ski race, N. Andover MA. 9:30 AM start. Contact Jamie Doucette at [james.doucette@state.ma.us](mailto:james.doucette@state.ma.us).

Nov. 18-30: On-snow training camp in Silver Star, B.C. Coach: Will Sweetser. Price is \$1,650 with a minimum of 5 athletes, \$600 deposit due Sept. 6. Option of racing the western Continental Cup Openers. For more info, phone Will at Carrabassett Valley Academy 207-237-2250.

Nov. 26-28: GNA Early Snow ski camp. Sugarloaf, ME. Cost: \$225 includes lodging, meal, facility use and coaching by Alexei Sotskov and GNA assistant coach. The main goal for this camp is to help skiers make final adjustments before the race season starts, to make transition between roller ski technique and ski technique, between dryland and practices on snow. We are going to stay at the condominium which is at the Sugarloaf Mountain Area. This will allow us to ski right from the door. CVA, where we are going to have meals, is only two minutes away. Ski hard, learn a lot and have an opportunity for recovery at Sugarloaf famous health club at night - this is our attitude at this camp. If you would like to participate at this exciting camp, please send me a note and nonrefundable deposit of \$100. Then you will get enrollment forms and camp itinerary. Remember, there will be only 25 skiers accepted to this camp. First come, first serve. Unfortunately last year some skiers could not get in, just because the camp was already filled. Hope you can join us! Alexei Sotskov, GNA coach, PO Box 221 Laconia NH 03246. 603-524-9484. [VIALPA@TOGETHER.NET](mailto:VIALPA@TOGETHER.NET). You can get more information about GNA and our camps at our web page: <http://www.6r.com/gunstocknordic>

Dec. 4: Training session, 9 AM. Meet at the NEW LOCATION of the Bolton Valley X-C Center for skiing (hopefully) or trail running if no snow. The XC Ski activities have a new central location and are being run from the Bolton Sports Center (a large building with indoor sports activities and 2 tennis courts) set back on your left behind a big parking lot as you enter the Bolton Ski Resort. Bring a picnic lunch. Hosts: Nat Goodhue, 802-253-2121 and Walter Pichler, 802-434-5070.

## CLUB NOTES

### SUMMER CLUB ACTIVITIES

Send Rob Bradlee your club news at [robb@instructionset.com](mailto:robb@instructionset.com)

Have you listed your club events on Bob Haydock's Cross Country Skiing in New England Web Page (<http://www.nexcski.com>)? It's a great way to draw new members into your club or socialize with members of other clubs. Bob's own club, CSU, has listed a dozen rollerski tours, rollerski races, and other club events. Bob would be glad to add your club's events to his schedule. Send them in now.

On a glorious sunny September day CSU hosted NENSA Program Director and Coach extraordinaire Zach Caldwell for a rollerski technique clinic. Several of the fifteen skiers at the clinic were non-club members drawn in by the announcement on Bob's page. Needless to say club chairman Rob Bradlee had the newcomers signed up before the end of the day. Zach made the essentials of good technique so simple and clear that even CSU Masters skiers could understand him. He'll be touring New England all fall helping skiers in every NENSA club wise enough to invite him.

Along with importing coaching talent from Putney, CSU copied another page out of the PSC training manual by hosting a one day 25 mile hike through the White Mountains. To make the experience authentic the hike was led by PSC racer, Charlie Kellog, who lives and trains in the CSU neighborhood. Scrambling over six 4,000 foot peaks in ten hours didn't seem to faze the 59 year old Kellog who left many a younger CSU hiker stumbling down the trail behind him.

One event to put on your calendar is the Bethel Outing Club's big ski sale on October 29 and 30. It's a top fund-raiser for their club. They are also preparing for their annual Flying Moose Classic race on February 6th. Great prizes at this race so don't miss it. Speaking of winter race plans, an unidentified source deep within the Upper Valley Nordic Club has confirmed the rumor that plans are underway to resurrect the Hanover Relays this coming ski season. Currently UVNC and Ford Sayre are involved in careful negotiations with the Putney Ski Club over a Relay Weekend, which will be a highlight of the 2000 NE racing season. Ford Sayre coach Scottie Eliassen reports that she's had 10 junior skiers training hard all summer. And the UVNC crowd kept busy by entering an outrigger canoe race on Lake Champlain. Jay Davis led a squad of aged but tough skiers who are still gloating about beating Jim Fredericks and his Team Rossignol boat. And by the way the UVNCers won the race too.

Cami Cardenali of the Dartmouth Ski Team reports they will be hosting the annual Mt. Moosilauke hill run on Oct. 31st at 10 AM. Everyone's welcome to join this low-key but grueling event. She didn't bother to mention it, but my spies tell me that Cami also took time to give birth to a lovely little baby girl this summer. And Farmington Maine coach Dorcas Wonsavage joined the new-mom club in September when she gave birth to a handsome baby boy. Looks like NE is working on our long range skier development program. Wisely anticipating that her little bundle of joy would consume most of her time, Dorcas brought along Jim Hines and Buzz Davis to the Gaining Ground clinic this summer so that FSC will have a trio of trained coaches to keep the team on top this winter. Time to move Down East?



# SKI BASE PREPARATION

## RECONDITIONING YOUR SKIS FOR THE NEW SEASON

by Jim Galanes, head coach, Alaska Nordic Skiing Center, Gold 2002

This fall, while we all anxiously await the new ski season, is a good time to get our race skis out of storage and give them a proper reconditioning. If your skis were fast last year, do not assume they will again be fast unless you recondition them to remove the dirt and old wax from the base, and do some basic base maintenance. Old skis that have been properly cared for tend to be faster than new skis because they have been waxed and skied on much more. To keep those old skis fast and to improve those skis that just have not seemed fast, follow this simple procedure. The tools you will need to have available to recondition your base are:

- A ski waxing iron with an accurate thermostatic control
- A sharp plastic scraper
- Fibertex-Jenex Omni Prep System
- A brass brush
- A stiff plastic brush
- A soft paraffin, like Star's Uniblock Yellow

The first step in reconditioning your base is to thoroughly scrape with a sharp plastic scraper all of the storage wax that you put on the skis in the spring. Then make 10-15 passes down the base with a brass brush to help lift dirt and oxidized base off the ski. Next make another 10-15 passes with fibertex to clean the loose wax and dirt particles and oxidized base off the ski. You are now ready to begin hot scraping to thoroughly clean the bases. Start by setting the iron temperature about 10 degrees centigrade above the melting point of the wax, or about 100 Centigrade for Star Uniblock yellow. Drip a bead of wax down each side of the groove and iron the ski for 3-5 minutes. While ironing the wax on the base be sure to keep the iron moving and work approximately one half of the ski at a time. With this soft a wax, the wax should stay molten on the base for a couple of minutes. While the wax is still molten, scrape it off the base with a sharp plastic scraper. You can also wipe the wax off with a clean rag or fiberlene. This will pull the dirt and residue out from deep within the base. In the wax you scraped or wiped off you will see the dirt and residue that was in the base. This process should be completed 2-3 times or until you see no more dirt in the base.

After completing a couple of hot scrape applications the ski base should be very clean. The next step should be to evaluate the base for damage, oxidation, burns, nicks, scrapes or unevenness. Using a stiff steel scraper or a truing bar, hold the ski up to a light source and place the truing bar or scraper across the ski every five centimeters to check for base flatness. If the base is flat you should see no light under the truing bar or scraper. If the base is not flat then you either have to metal scrape the skis or if you prefer get them stone ground. Both metal scraping and stone grinding require a highly skilled technician. Either of these options can ruin a good pair of skis if not done correctly so please use caution.

If the base shows signs of burn or oxidation, the bases will need to be steel scraped or stone ground to get down to fresh polyethylene. Burned base will look somewhat like the skin of an orange, while oxidized base will appear discolored. In either case the ski the base will not effectively absorb wax. In the case of

minor oxidation that occurs due to exposure to air, sunlight, and heat, an aggressive fibertexing can remove the oxidized material.

After the bases are flat and free of oxidized or burnt base material, you need to check the edges for nicks. I recommend beveling the edges by lightly holding a sharp steel scraper or sanding block with 220 grit paper, at 30-40 degree angle to the base in the tip and tail and 10-20 degrees over the rest of the ski. If using a scraper very lightly trim the outermost edge of the ski, if sanding a couple of passes over the edge should be enough. The goal of beveling the edge is to take away any nicks or rough edges that will slow the ski and to slightly round the edges to aid in turning and in keeping the ski from excessively edging in the snow.

Once the bases are in top condition then it is time to make a decision on base structure. If you have only one pair of skis you may decide to put in a structure, either by grinding or with hand tools, that will match the condition you are most likely to face in early season races. If you have skis for both wet and dry snow, you may want to put in the appropriate structure at this time and then begin the final base preparation process. Or you can wait until the race season starts and prepare your skis with the optimal structure for the snow conditions.

After the bases are flat and free from burn or base oxidation, or structured, they should be finished with an aggressive fibertexing. The purpose of fibertex is to remove base oxidation and microscopic polyethylene hairs that occur from steel scraping, sanding, or stone grinding. The fibertexing can be done by hand for 10-15 minutes per ski or for a few minutes with a rotary fibertex device. When looking at the base under a microscope you will find the base covered with polyethylene hair. It is very important for good glide that these hairs be removed. We have done testing at Jenex and have found that traditional fibertex reduces the size of the polyethylene hairs, but also creates more, smaller, hairs. We have tested and found a type of fibertex, the Jenex Omni-Prep system, which has proven to be very effective at removing the polyethylene hair without creating the smaller hairs.

The final step in base preparation is to impregnate the base with wax. In the past it has been thought that the initial base impregnation should be done with a non-fluorinated hydrocarbon wax. In theory this is because the fluoro waxes do not have the same molecular structure as the base and do not seem to penetrate the base as well. I recommend starting with a soft hydrocarbon wax, like Star Uniblock Yellow, for the initial 4-6 layers of base wax. Then I progress to a soft low or medium fluoro content wax like Star Ultra-Tech Pink or Tekno TF 12. For skiers competing on the national or international level and who demand the best performance from their skis I finish the base preparation-impregnation process with a soft high fluoro wax like Star MB 2, Yellow, formerly Eclipse Yellow. Using these medium and high fluoro content waxes at the end of the base preparation phase will improve the bonding of the fluoro in the high fluoro waxes we will be using in races.

During the impregnation process be sure to use a good iron and set the temperature about ten degrees centigrade above the melting point of the wax: 100 to 110 degrees centigrade has proven ideal for optimal wax absorption. Iron each wax application for three to six minutes; depending upon the temperature of the ski it may take as long as three minutes before the base material

Galanes, cont. on page 11

# TRAINING

## THOUGHTS ON TRAINING

by John Caldwell

During the last several years we have witnessed a new approach to cross country ski training. The advent of computers and pulse rate monitors and the knowledge of other nations' theoretical training programs has spawned a new generation of coaches and accomplished exercisers.

Coaches with computers can give updates to the latest hour on an athlete's percentage of training levels one through five. Coaches studying these theoretical training programs from abroad, or wherever, can prescribe daily, weekly, monthly and yearly programs to the nearest five pulse rates. The athletes, or exercisers, equipped with spandex unis, the newest roller skis, fancy gloves, padding, helmets, fanny packs to carry the in sport drink, skin cream and a pulse rate monitor, take off following a specific program and exercise. It's all wonderful! The coaches feel good and the athletes feel good. It's only the skeptics that are very disappointed with our results on the international level who wonder what's going on. In point of fact, we have not had any really good skiing results since the early '80s. You can look it up. Obviously, there's something wrong.

As an example, a typical (and questionable) workout based around anaerobic threshold intensity calls for a number of reps - maybe 5-8 - for about one-two minutes, each followed by a rest of one minute. In a race, when you break away from an opponent, or when you catch up to an opponent by virtue of one of these two minute bursts, do you both take a one minute rest? Hah! It doesn't work this way! You've got to keep going at race pace. So this type of workout does not make sense to me.

Present programs for skiers contain a lot of hours at levels one and two, fewer at level three, even fewer at level four, and level five intensity is practically a no-no. This amount of exercise at levels one and two is hokey for the older junior or any senior with a decent background in training. The knowledgeable coaches know that the main advantage of doing a lot of work at levels one and two is to build up conditioning so one can adjust to tougher workouts later on.

No one has shown verification of building speed and strength and capacities (aerobic and anaerobic) for going fast by training a low speeds and low efforts, as in levels one and two. Does the 100-meter sprinter train large percentages of the time running 15 and 16 second 100s? Of course not! Well, you say, that is a special event, and you're right. I have a friend who rows competitively and she trains at four minute all-out sprints. Her time for most races is four minutes or less. That makes sense to me. It does to her too, because she is a national champion in her age group.

Aha, you say, but skiing is still different. Races take much longer and so you can't go at race speed in training because you will get too tired, or sick, or pull muscles or some such doom and gloom. Who says, I ask? Where do we draw the line on training times at race speed?

Consider the following conjectures or premises: The body is a marvelously adaptable organism and responds well to stimuli. If you want to teach it to be able to "go fast," you better train "going fast." On the other hand, if you want it to learn to ski at three minutes a kilometer, just keep training lots at that speed and you will be guaranteed of feeling good after an international race where you

finish between 40th and 80th. In fact, you will probably be able to go out the next day and enjoy another workout at three minutes per km.

Here's another way to put this: If you want to learn to race, you practice racing. It's as simple as that. There are plenty of foreign skiers who get 50-70 starts a year. They are practicing racing. And they train hard in the off-season too. How many "starts" do you or your skiers get per year?

My prescription is for a whole lot more time at levels three, four and five and a whole lot more rest time to recover from these bouts. Forget this business of 7-8-900 hours a year (assuming you have the background) and start training with more intensity.

But it's not as simple as that. Another area that needs attention is in knowing when to rest and when to go hard in training. This lack of knowledge is encouraged in part by the computer programs which specify each day's workout with predetermined levels of intensity (read "pulse rates"). Unfortunately, these programs never work well during a race. The racer has to know how hard to go on any given section of the course (particularly the hills) and still recover or stay with the fast race pace. The racer has to know his/her body. One way to learn this is to go under lots of times in training and suffer the consequences. Another good approach is to use measurements taken often (even daily) that give an indication of ability to work or exercise. The most basic is pulse rate first thing in the morning, but this is such old hat that it's been discarded in favor of other routines involving exercise, blood tests, and so on.

After all, the racer is the one who makes the final call on the course. The racer is all alone then, with that number on. The coach can't call in and say, "A little more at level two right now." Basically, the athlete must learn to take more responsibility for training intensities. And what better way to learn capabilities than testing them in dryland training. Get out there and go with more intensity more often. But don't forget the rest.

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# JUNIORS

## TRIP TO FINLAND

by Alexei Sotskov, Coach, Gunstock Nordic Association

When a friend of mine, world champion biathlon skier Vladimir Drachev, invited my family last spring to go and see the ski tunnel in Vuokatti, Finland I thought it would be interesting. And it was! Especially when you travel with such a famous person as Vladimir! The training center staff worked hard to present the place as the best skiing center in the world. I was really impressed and the idea to bring American skiers there stuck into my head.

But still I had some concerns about finding enough people for the trip and a few other logistics. Now I can say it was not a big problem, but a big part of this was long planning and preparation work throughout all last season. So what I got for the “ambitious” as some people told me before, camp in Vuokatti: 14 junior age skiers with great attitude and ready to work hard and improve skiing by seeing what’s going on in Finland and why they are still in most cases faster than Americans, Will Sweetser and Sarah Dominick — seems like the only seniors in the East who are training and hoping to get into the US Ski team without support of big ski businesses, Chris Read as my assistant coach and me, Alexei Sotskov, Gunstock Nordic Association

A lot of young athletes running with poles on beautiful ski trail system. It is about 10 feet wide and covered by sawdust and the longest loop is 40 K long, I was told. Incredible amount of older people walking with the ski poles still seems like getting in shape for the winter. Seems like everybody there has some connection with nordic skiing.

The training center has so many top level facilities: ski tunnel, weight gym, regular gym, tennis courts, soccer field, skating rink, roller ski loop and so on. And all of this on the beautiful lake with the fish jumping out every night, just to show themselves, great fresh air ( by the way, couple skiers told me they could not feel any problem with their asthma at all).

And of course the unique ski tunnel. 1.2 K long one way, 8 meters wide, 54 meters total climb, freshly groomed every morning for classical skiing and skating snow and temperature of about 25 ° F, a lot of light and modern music makes it so much fun to ski in.

We managed to put in about 220 K of high quality skiing during the camp and it was just enough not to get bored. Every skier after the camp mentioned how much they enjoyed to ski with and around National Japanese ski team members as well as numerous Russians, Finnish, Swedish and others. It was incredible and you really get to the point where it is impossible and uncomfortable to ski lousy, without thinking of your technique, around all these people.

We also had a chance to participate at the little race with Japan National skiers. We were beaten by quite a lot, but I think still it was so much fun just to ski against this group. Our leaders Cole Caswell and Kate Newick won fancy T-shirts.

Another great experience during the camp was a strength practice run by former Russian National Biathlon and currently Finnish Biathlon Head coach Anatoly Hovantsev. After the practice we had a little social and all the skiers could listen to his training tips and ask questions. I cannot forget to mention our soccer experience against Finnish Junior Biathlon team. We lost, but had so much

fun and our kids met a lot of new friends.

Overall it was a great camp! As a coach I was really impressed with such a great group of young skiers so dedicated to the nordic sport. We worked hard — skied a lot, ran and even swam every morning in the lake and still had a great time! Almost forgot one thing — sauna. In Finland it is so big deal!

coach.

We started our trip in Boston at 6 PM on July 26 and flew to Helsinki with a stop in Frankfurt. It is a long flight and with a little bit of delays here and there got to the capital of Finland next evening. Even Vuokatti is 400 miles north from Helsinki, quite comfortable train ride gives you some rest and next morning when we got to Vuokatti we were ready to go.

What was the first impression for me as a coach when we arrived? First how many people using for transportation their bikes, roller blades, even roller skis. And bike paths along the roads go forever.

Galanes, cont. from page 8

is ready to absorb wax. Remember, just because the wax is liquid on the base does not mean the base is absorbing the wax. The base material has to first reach a temperature of 100-110 degrees centigrade before it will absorb the wax. It is best to work the ski in sections so as to avoid over-heating the ski and the base. As you are ironing if you see dry spots develop, as the base absorbs wax, add more wax. You never want to run a hot iron over dry ski base.

In the initial stages of base preparation the skis should be waxed, plastic scraped, and plastic brushed at least ten times to ensure optimal performance. After each wax application the skis should be allowed to cool completely, usually 30-60 minutes, prior to scraping and brushing. It is possible to reheat a layer of wax, providing it stays clean, and there is adequate wax on the base. I discourage this method during base preparation because I think the scraping and brushing process helps to remove additional polyethylene hairs and creates a faster base.

This reconditioning process may be done a couple of times per year depending upon the snow conditions. Skiing in wet dirty snow will increase the need to clean and recondition your skis on a more frequent basis. This initial step in base preparation will greatly improve the performance of your skis during the winter. Give yourself an edge prior to the race season by taking the time to prepare your skis. Spending the time now to prepare your skis will help you cruise by your competition in the races this winter.

#### Important Notes

Modern ski bases are all made from polyethylene of various grades

and qualities. Polyethylene consists of small crystals, crystalline, surrounded by less structured, amorphous material. When the base is heated some of the crystals begin to melt before the material itself begins to melt at a temperature of 135 C or 275 F. When wax is ironed into the ski base, the molten wax penetrates the spaces between the crystals and mixes with the amorphous material. This means that we are not only waxing the ski, we are changing the chemical structure of the base itself.

Extreme caution must be used when waxing skis with high melting point cold weather waxes and additives and pure fluoro products. Look at the melting points of all the waxes you use and reduce the ironing time as the melting point of the waxes exceeds 120 degrees centigrade.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Remember, Readers — send us your old photos, race results or ski stories from long ago and we'll publish them. The older the better!

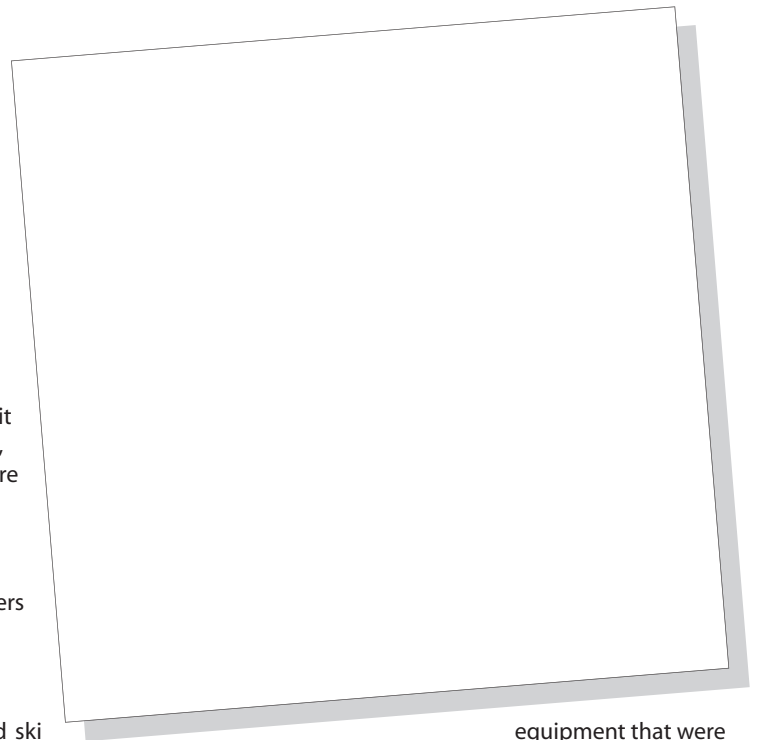
Taken from an Anchorage Daily News clipping following the 1972 Junior Nationals, held at Bread Loaf just above Middlebury, Vermont:

"The relay event was concluded by the annual coaches handicap race which drew a lot of comment and was enjoyed by all skiers. The event was made up of hilariously thrown together teams. Adorned with such 'honorable' titles as 'Remembering the Course,' 'A Trick Knee,' 'Shell Shock,' 'Missed the Wax,' 'Short Legs,' and 'Travel Fatigue,' the teams clamored onto the course amid the cheering of their ardent fans. When it was all over, the Alaskan team comprised of 'Hairy Lips' (Jim Burkholder), head coach, and 'Poor Equipment' (Jim Whisenant), assistant coach, were victorious due to some excellent intuition.

The race was based on handicap, with the team guessing the closest beforehand as to how quickly (or slowly) they would finish the race determining the winner. The course itself was booby-trapped by members of the boys and girls nordic Junior teams using ski poles, molasses, and other crude inventions to add color to the race.'

We even have a photo here of the winning team's 'Hairy Lips' tagging off to 'Poor Equipment.' We hope our readers enjoy the knickers and ski

equipment that were



## HELP WANTED

### NENSA Media Liaison

Contracted position involving coverage of NENSA Eastern Cup and Championships events. Photography equipment and basic computer literacy required. Much work can be done from the home, but at least six events must be attended in person. \$75.00 per event plus expenses.

Juniors in Finland, cont. from page 10

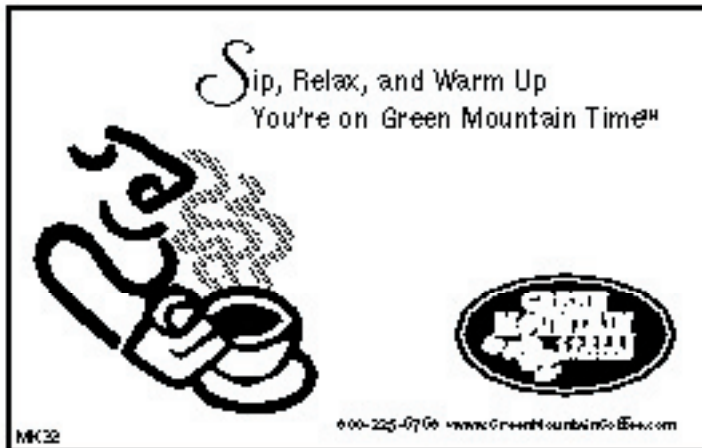
And you know what? Our skiers loved it! They had it almost every day and thought it was really helpful for recovery after training sessions — so maybe this is why Finnish Skiers still little bit faster than Americans?

12 days in Vuokatti went by fast and on August 9 we got back to Boston with a lot of stories to tell and great memories about trip to the place where reindeer start their journey to all over the world. By the way, we saw a couple of them ready to go! Thanks to all skiers making this trip so unforgettable and wonderful. After having experience to run summer camps in Europe last two years, GNA is definitely planning to have another one next summer!

Also GNA is going to have an Early Snow ski camp in Sugarloaf at Thanksgiving time. Last year I could not accept every skier who expressed interest to participate, just because of the limit of spots. So if you are interested to participate this year, please contact me early to reserve a spot.

You can get more information about Gunstock Nordic Association and camps run by GNA at [www.6r.com/gunstocknordic](http://www.6r.com/gunstocknordic).

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