



new england **NORDIC NEWS**

MIDWINTER 2000 VOL. 5, NO. 2

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2000 USSA JUNIOR OLYMPICS

by Anne Donaghy

The USSA Cross Country Junior Olympics take 400 athletes, 50 or more coaches, countless cheering parents, put them together for a week of racing for individual national titles and for team points toward the Alaska Cup, the award to the fastest team out of the nine USSA divisions across the country. And don't forget the small army of volunteers — officials, race workers, housing and facilities organizers — who make it all happen!

The village of Jackson, New Hampshire is hosting the Junior Olympics in March of 2000. This is the first time New Hampshire has hosted this junior national championship that rotates each year around the regions of the country. On the eastern rotation, the JO's have been hosted by Lake Placid, New York in 1982, 1984, and 1988, and by Rumford, Maine in 1992 and 1996. Jackson is a New England village nestled in New Hampshire's White Mountains — the kind you see on postcards, with a white church steeple rising through snowy pine trees, with white mountains beyond. But Jackson isn't an isolated little village: the hopping shopping mecca of Conway is only a few minutes down the road to the south, Wildcat ski area is just to the north, and the bustling coastal city of Portland, Maine with its international airport is a convenient hour and a half away to the east.

The 2000 JO's are masterminded by the Jackson Organizing Committee, a working group under the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation. The Foundation, a community based non-profit organization in existence since the 1970s, maintains a 158 km trail system over three river valleys, connecting with Appalachian Mountain Club Pinkham Notch trails at the foot of Mt. Washington, and operating on a special use permit with the White Mountain National Forest. These folks groom kilometers of trail all winter long for tourers, but they know how to organize big races, too. Some past national and international races they have hosted include the 1984 and 1995 NCAA's, and the 1990 Disabled World Nordic Championships.

The 2000 JO's will open on March 6 with the sprint races, which for the first time in JO history will be medal events, counting toward the Alaska Cup. The Jackson Organizing

Committee plans to hold the sprints at the Jackson Ski Touring Center right in the heart of the village, with the exciting Sprint Finals following the Opening Ceremonies Parade. The classic technique longer distance races start two days later up at the Eagle Mountain House stadium. The shorter distance races in the freestyle technique follow two days later on the same trail system, on March 10. Then the JO's wrap up with the relays on March 11... and of course with one of the most important events of the week — the banquet and awards ceremonies.

Be sure to check out the Jackson Ski Touring Foundation web site, with a special link preview of the 2000 JO's: <http://www.jacksonxc.com>. You'll find the full JO schedule, statistics on each of the race courses, maps of each course, even photos taken from places along the trails. Best wishes to everyone — athletes, coaches, race organizers — preparing for the date, which will quickly be upon us. See you there for a fun week of racing!

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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

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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:

Midwinter (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

We in the East have quite a winter line-up of races ahead of us. At the International level, the Nor Am/Continental Cup finals will be held in Rumford, Maine on Feb.12-13. This caps a North American racing season that began in late November, eight races from British Columbia to Maine, by way of the 2002 Olympic trails in Soldier Hollow, Utah. And in the East just one week later the first Winter Goodwill Games opens in Lake Placid, New York with international fields of competitors and a global television audience through Turner Sports. The cross country individual sprint will be on February 19, and the sprint relay on the following day. The U.S. hopes to field strong teams in these exciting events.

In the second week of March the town of Jackson, New Hampshire hosts the USSA Junior Olympic Championships (see the article in this issue). Top junior racers from the nine USSA divisions across the country will race for individual titles and for the Alaska Cup, which goes to the team with the most points scored during the week of racing. This will be the first year that the sprint opener is a medal event, and it promises to be exciting. Come cheer for your New England team at Jackson!

At the New England level we have a full schedule of races running from the first week of December until the last week of March. If anyone is worried that our snow may not last quite that long, not to worry — UNH coach Cory Schwartz has the answer to the snowless problem (see our Archives page in this issue). Finding beaches big enough to host fields of up to 300 racers may be a bit of a challenge...if you know of just the place, be sure to let Cory know!

Finally, even though it's racing that we talk so much about, this sport is about much more than that. Few things in this world can beat a long tour with friends on a beautiful winter day, or a good long satisfying workout on well groomed tracks at one of your favorite trail systems. We hope that each one of you finds soft powder, hard wax skiing and good company along the trails this winter.

Anne and Mary

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

MY SKI TRAIL

by Sarah Solnit, 6 (Bath Nordic Ski Club)

I came down from my nap and got my winter clothing. Papa and I went to the cellar. Papa put one ski on the waxer and waxed his ski. Then he waxed his other ski. Then he moved a stool over. I waxed my skis. The cousins came and we got ready. We skied across the field. I spied the ski trail first. Then Rebecca. Then Anita. We skied over. Branches were hanging from the trees. We skied into the dark woods. We crossed a stream and came to a place where the trail split in two. We skied up a hill and came to an opening with logs. We sat down and ate a snack. We finished and skied down. I was in the lead. Then we skied across the swamp. We got half way across when Nita started bawling, "I'm cold." I comforted her. We skied home. Then we got our snow pants and jackets off. Then Anita and I played with Nate while Becca made snacks for the grownups.

THE 1999 BILL KOCH FESTIVAL

by Sarah Van Dyke, 12 (Stowe Nordic Outing Club)

Last year the Bill Koch Youth League Nordic Ski Festival was held in my hometown: Stowe, Vermont. It was my first festival and a great first one too. The races were held at the Trapp Family Lodge, one of my favorite places to cross country ski in Stowe. It was an advantage for me to have it be at Trapps because I live only five miles away and therefore could ski the course as many times as I wanted. When it was time for the race I was confident that I was prepared.

There was a huge snowstorm on Saturday for the relay which made it tough — good thing it was classical and the waxing was easy! On Sunday it was clear and frigid cold. The snow was piled up thick and deep so you really had to be light on your skis to go fast. The Festival was really well organized and there was always so much excitement with the parade, awards and crowds cheering for the racers. I even got my medal, jacket, and number signed by Bill Koch himself!

I made a lot of friends and many of them were staying at my family's hotel called the Golden Eagle Resort. I especially made friends with my NWVT relay teammates because we had to work together to win the race, not against each other.

Last summer I played my violin in the gardens at Trapps for the guests, dreaming of the winter snow. I am very excited for this year's Bill Koch Festival. I will be racing as a J3 so it will be even more challenging to get in the top ten.

"IF YOU THINK YOU CAN"

by Morgan Smyth, 13 (Berkshire Trails Nordic Ski Club)

My philosophy of life is, "If you think that you can you will. If you think you can't, you won't." This idea was brought to my attention from my ski racing, when I found out that the race is 80% in your head. If you believe that you can do something, there is a good chance that you can, and if you do not think that you can, it is almost a sure bet that you won't. I have believed in this saying for a number of years now, and realize that it is true.

There are many times when I have believed in myself and told myself that I can do it. One example of this is in my cross country

ski racing championships. This was a competition for all of the kids in the New England Bill Koch Youth Ski League. This was my biggest race of the year, and I went out there believing that I could win. I really thought that I could win, even though there were a lot of other girls out there that were very good. I felt that I was prepared, that I had trained, was well rested, and had eaten right. I knew that I was ready. I skied very hard and finished with the top racers. Even though I did not win, that does not mean that I did not believe that I could. It meant that on that day, someone else skied faster than I did, and that she, too, was prepared and confident. She had just skied faster. I had to believe that I could do my best, and if I had not believed that, then I probably would not have done as well as I did.

In my ski race I had a positive attitude. This also carries over into my life. If I go around having a negative attitude about everything, and never think that I can do something, I will probably never get very far in life. Whereas, if

I look up and see things in many different ways, and think that things could actually work, then there is a good chance that they will. Life is greatly affected by the attitude of the people in it. If people do not see things in a positive way, then the world is just not going to be a happy place.

This is like if you see a glass to be half-full, or half-empty. The positive person sees the glass as half-full, and the negative person sees the glass as half-empty. Not only do you have to believe in yourself in sports, but also in what you want to do with your life. You have to believe that you are making the right decision. You can be anything that you want to be, if you work hard, and believe in yourself.

MASTERS

MASTERS UPDATE FROM BOB HAYDOCK

The Zak Cup schedule has been set as shown below:

| Date | Day | Race |
|----------|-----|-----------------------------|
| 12/18/99 | Sat | Eastern Cup Opener |
| 12/19/99 | Sun | Eastern Cup Opener Pursuit |
| 1/9/00 | Sun | Craftsbury Marathon |
| 1/16/00 | Sun | Bogburn 15k |
| 1/23/00 | Sun | Jackson Jaunt |
| 1/25/00 | Tue | CSU Sprints |
| 2/5/00 | Sat | Rangeley Classic |
| 2/5/00 | Sat | Prospect Eastern Cup |
| 2/6/00 | Sun | Stratton Eastern Cup |
| 2/13/00 | Sun | Tusen Tak |
| 2/20/00 | Sun | Holderness Eastern Cup |
| 2/26/00 | Sat | NENSA Masters Championships |
| 2/27/00 | Sun | NENSA Masters Championships |
| 3/5/00 | Sun | Craftsbury Spring Fling |
| 3/11/00 | Sat | Rangeley Lakes Loppet |
| 3/25/00 | Sat | NENSA Eastern Championships |
| 3/26/00 | Sun | NENSA Eastern Championships |

[see the '99-00 NENSA Comp. Guide for complete information on these races]

NENSA Masters Elite Team

The following master skiers have been named to the NENSA Masters Elite team based on having the lowest NENSA points in their age group. Note that a skier had to participate in at least three scored races to qualify for the team, so not all age groups are represented. Being named to the team entitles each member to unlimited bragging rights for the 1999/2000 season.

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Men | David Boucher |
| Jay Davis | Edmund Brelsford |
| John Sackett | Women |
| Robert Bradlee | Sue Long |
| Peter Harris | Mary Osgood |
| Murray Banks | Jane Banks |
| Bob Gray | Trina Hosmer |

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NATIONALS PREVIEW

FIRST TIME AT THE VENUE

by Anne Donaghy

The 2000 Chevy Truck U.S. Cross Country Championships will be held at the Soldier Hollow Olympic Venue on January 8-15. These will be the inaugural national events at the cross country and biathlon Olympic venue in Midway, Utah, just a short drive around a mountain ridge from Park City.

These U.S. Nationals will be the first of two years of dress rehearsals at the Soldier Hollow Venue. Other test events include the NCAA's in March 2000, and three 2001 World Cup races — cross country, nordic combined and disabled. At the end of these two years, Chief of Competition John Aalberg, Assistant Chiefs Ed Finnerty and Lee Todd, Chief of Course Gary Larson, Chief of Timing Tom Kendall, Chiefs of Stadium John Estle and Don Christman — these leaders, as well as many others involved in secretarial and athlete services, will all have their teams as ready as the teams of athletes who will arrive in 2002.

This January all of the Olympic courses, insured by an extensive snowmaking system, are in place. Athletes will be racing on sprint loops, two different five kilometer loops, and other courses of seven and a half, ten, fifteen, and sixteen point seven kilometers. These trails were designed by FIS Technical Delegate Hermod Bjorkestol from Norway, who will also be the Olympic 2002 cross country TD. The terrain is rolling and challenging, especially as the courses lie just below the Olympic altitude cutoff of eighteen hundred meters. Talk about a home course advantage for the U.S. racers who have two years to train and race on these trails before the Olympics!

It will be a wonderful venue for spectating, as well as racing. When spectators in the stadium look up at the hillside, the Olympic courses spread out with almost every kilometer visible, except the farthest loop that winds up a small canyon on the right. Stadium crowds will be able to watch races unfold as athletes tackle uphill, double pole through winding, gentle terrain, and tuck the steep downhills. Nearly every stride of the way will be visible from the stadium.

The U.S. team to the 2000 World Junior Championships in Slovakia will be chosen from the January races at Soldier Hollow, as will the J1 Scandinavian trip team. A number of New England athletes — many of them juniors — will be racing at Nationals, and New England coaches out there include Zach Caldwell, New England Program Director, Amy Caldwell and Sverre Caldwell, Stratton Mountain School coaches. We wish them the very best of luck! For race results, and for the naming of teams following the U.S. Nationals, see the USSA web site:

<http://www.uskiteam.com>.

MOTIVATION

GREY RATS

by NENSA Executive Director Fred Griffin

Why race?

There was only one winner in each of the Eastern Cup races in December. Everyone else lost. There were a double handful of contenders of course, athletes who might have won had they had a better day, or better wax, or both. But most of us were out there competing in an event we had no chance of winning. Especially me: I'm old AND slow. I've mastered the art of awkward. I have the balance-bobble down cold. My butt was born in the bucket it is going to die in. Why go out there and hammer away after my own fashion only to finish so far down that every direction I look is up?

These are familiar questions to me. I ask them of myself before, during, and after races. There are an abundance of easy answers I supply myself with as well. Ski racing improves my health, it fends off the aging process, it provides a needed counterbalance to the sedentary stress of my job, it brings me into contact with friends, fellow skiers I've known for years. I'm the Director of NENSA and I've got to be at the races anyway. Why not race?

They're not enough — the easy answers, I mean. They're sufficient to get to me to think about racing but not enough to bring me to put on a suit, much less to tie down a bib. Ah, but there's the coaching. I dearly love coaching and at most races I have 6-8 juniors competing. But I didn't do aerobic sports until I was middle-aged and I don't have a backlog of racing memories to draw from. Racing from time to time makes me a better coach, I tell myself. Going through the warm-ups, fighting to turn pre-race jitters into pre-race excitement, going out at a pace that doesn't torch my lungs before a K is passed... having all of this fresh on my mind helps me help the kids. It informs my teaching. It helps me understand their triumphs as well as their less than successful efforts. Yes, to be the best coach I can be, I need to race.

This reasoning pleases me. I'm getting closer now. I've got the suit on at any rate. But there's more. There's got to be more. I race because... I race because it means something to me to be the best possible skier I can be given the non-negotiable limitations of my age, experience, ability. I work hard to achieve fitness, and when I'm racing, I take a measure of my conditioning that I can never obtain in a practice or a workout. My appreciation for race courses is different at speed as well. All in all, I'm convinced that when I'm at the limits of my form and my conditioning and my confidence, I experience the sport I passionately love in its most exalted state.

But most of all I climb into the suit and tie on the bib because I know that somewhere out there on the course there's Some Thing waiting for me. I know that no matter how well I prepare myself I'll come on him when I am least ready, when I am most defenseless. I'll be climbing a hill or working to pass someone or fighting to avoid being passed. I'll be all alone on a flat section where I need to push, or on a corner that begs a

discreet snowplow. That's where I find him waiting — when the issue is in doubt and the issue is in me. That's what my race is about, those moments when the grey rat looks me in the eye and I must decide whether to quit or to continue, to back off or to push ahead, to conserve a safe margin or to release with every last thing I've got.

That's why I race. I race for the chance to look the grey rat in the eye and make him back down.



NEW CORPORATE SPONSOR ON BOARD!

NENSA is proud to announce that Irving Oil will be an Associate Sponsor for the Y2K Volvo Eastern Cup series and the Y2K Volvo Eastern Championships. As many a NENSA skier on the road to races across New England can attest, Irving has earned their reputation for service and hospitality of the highest order. It is our great pleasure to welcome them as a partner into the cross country skiing community of New England.

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CALENDAR

MIDWINTER EVENTS

See the NENSA '99-00 Comp Guide for complete information on NENSA races this winter around New England. Here are some special events we'd like to highlight for our readers:

TRAINING CAMPS

Jan. 23-28: Carrabassett Valley Academy on-snow Nordic camp for athletes aged 11-18 years. For more info, contact coach Will Sweetser at 207-237-2250 ext. 25.

RACES

At the International level:

The Nor/Am Continental Cup finale on Feb. 12-13 at Rumford, ME.

The Winter Goodwill Games on Feb. 19-20 at Lake Placid, NY.

At the National level:

The USSA Junior Olympic Cross Country National Championships on March 6-11 at Jackson, NH.

At the New England level:

NENSA Club Series

Come out and race for your club! Someone needs to take the trophy away from Putney this winter!

Jan. 16 Bogburn, Pomfret VT

Jan. 29 Hanover Relays, Hanover NH

Jan. 30 Putney Relays, Putney VT

Feb. 20 Cheri Walsh Eastern Cup, Holderness, NH

Mar. 25-26 NENSA Eastern Championships

NENSA Championships — Sponsored again by VOLVO.

Feb. 26-27 NE Masters Championships, Grafton, VT

Mar. 4-5 J2 Carnival, Rangeley, ME

Mar. 11-12 Bill Koch League Festival, Waterville Valley, NH

Mar. 18-19 Eastern H.S. Championships, Rumford, ME

Mar. 25-26 Eastern Championships, Sugarloaf, ME

Relay Revival Weekend, Jan. 29-30! Bring your team to Hanover, NH on Saturday for the skate relay, then head down to Putney on Sunday for the classic race and the determination of fastest NENSA club!

**Want to help with timing at the
Junior Olympics?**

Seeking volunteers to work with Chief of
Timing Chuck Broomhall.

March 6-11 at Jackson, NH. Contact Chuck at
<norcomb@landmarknet.net>

CLUBS

FALL/EARLY-SEASON CLUB ACTIVITIES

Send Rob Bradlee your club news at robb@instructionset.com

The Fall meeting of the NENSA Board also brought the NENSA Clubs committee together. The committee made plans for continuing the superb growth of clubs in NENSA. When NENSA was formed we didn't even have the chance to register as members of a club. Now we have almost 50 active clubs and the majority of NENSA members join through a NENSA club. This winter you will see race organizers listing club affiliations on results to increase awareness of clubs. We have another exciting Club Series planned. The question for this year is, can anyone dethrone Putney? The Relay weekend will be a huge challenge to clubs to muster all their forces. How many teams can you field? How fast can they go? Also in the series is the very challenging Bogburn 15K, the Holderness Cheri Walsh race, and of course the NENSA championships at Sugarloaf. Remember, every club participant scores at least one point for their club just by finishing.

An interesting club initiative that you might want to consider for your club is an "Introduction to Racing" program for adult skiers. CSU is having one this year to lure athletes from other sports into the nordic lifestyle. It's a simple program. One night to explain equipment, one for simple waxing, and three of basic instruction to get new racers up to speed on the sport's basics. We need our sport to grow.

Now that snow is here and we are all skiing fast, it's good to remember all the hard work last fall that made us so tough. NENSA head honcho Fred Griffin not only can run the postage meter but also organizes some innovative workouts. He led his club on a grueling 27 mile rollerski tour of the Kancamagus highway in November. Open that to all NENSA next year, willya Fred? Sounds awesome. The other half of NENSA's dynamic duo, Zach Caldwell, barnstormed all of NE doing his famous dryland clinics. Prospect Ski Club in Vermont hosted him for a day of hard training, and he even brought snowflakes with him. Just a bit north of there, the Mountain Top group did some old-fashioned strength training by cutting and clearing fallen trees from their racing trails. They will be hosting state team qualifiers for J2 and High School Championship teams. CSU did similar work at their Vermont outpost in Pomfret. They widened and improved the drainage on the Bogburn race trail. The Dartmouth Ski Team had their traditional all-comers challenge running up Mt. Moosilauke. Multiple winner and Upper Valley member Chris Nice sat out this year's race to let Dartmouth's Steve Donahue take the win.

FANTASY LEAGUE COMPETITION HEATS UP

The verbal sparring between Putney, Upper Valley, and CSU continues to get out of hand. All fall John Caldwell fired off emails about grooming imaginary kilometers covered with snow. Then Anne Donaghy would start grousing about problems fixing an imaginary fleet of Pisten Bulleys. Finally, Rob Bradlee would chime in with stories of training in an imaginary ski tunnel in Boston's Big Dig project. Does running a ski club make you insane? Maybe, but at least you get interesting email.

TECHNIQUE

SKATE TECHNIQUE

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

Discussion or descriptions of the various ski techniques in cross country skiing are of necessity complex. We often break the movements down into segmented parts of the whole in order to explain them, while in reality that is impossible, since each movement or position is directly related to the whole of the movements. We must think of ski technique as a "circle" where all the movements flow in an integrated manner and result in efficient ski technique.

When I coach technique on snow, roller skis, or in drills I always keep in mind the total integration of the movements. That is, how one movement seamlessly flows into the next, with the total quality of the movements dependent on a few basic principles and a progression of technique development that will affect the total quality of movements. This means critically assessing each skier's technique and finding the major cause of the technical inefficiency. I find that skiers are often working on many little things that may make sense to correct, but that are not the fundamental cause of the particular problem they need to address. In other words, the smaller problems are an effect of a larger problem. Often correcting the main cause will support better or improved peripheral movements.

There are four fundamental principles that are the foundation of efficient skiing in all techniques:

1. **Ease of Movements:** This first step is to develop a sound movement pattern that is relaxed and fluid as possible.
2. **Quickness of Movements:** After we have developed relaxed and fluid movements we then need to develop the speed or quickness of the movements in a relaxed manner in order to produce power efficiently.
3. **Power:** The last phase is to add power to each movement while maintaining relaxed and quick movements.
4. **Speed of Center of Mass movement.** The fast skiers shift their center of mass more quickly from ski to ski and are more balanced on each ski.

Following these basic principles are three important biomechanical facts that are often overlooked:

1. Power is optimally developed with quick explosive movements rather than slow forceful movements.
2. Stride length, or in the case of skating, step length is a function of speed, not a cause! In essence, the range of movements is a function of speed: the higher the speed the fuller, or larger, the range of movements. Striving for a stride that is too long for the speed you are traveling will result in the center of mass sinking down and back, making it impossible for an effective weight shift and balanced glide.
3. The timing of the weight shift and kick are also a function of speed. At slower speeds, the weight shift and kick have to occur earlier in the cycle!

In skating there are a variety of techniques used. I feel they all share the same basic principles; the main differences are

related to slight changes in body positions and the timing of the movements.

PROGRESSION OF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

Basic Body Position:

- A. Basic, forward body position in the "zero" feet together, "collected position".
- B. The upper body is projected forward slightly.
- C. The hips are forward over the feet.
- D. The shin angle is compressed forward at a similar angle to the upper body, as a result of flexing forward over the ankle.

I. Weight Shift:

- A. The weight shift is initiated in the hips.
- B. The weight shift is initiated prior to the kick.
- C. The center of mass travels down the trail, in an elongated "S" or snaking pattern; the center of mass is never static over the ski.
- D. Drive the leg and hips forward and to the side in the direction of the new gliding ski.

II. Upper Body Orientation:

- A. The upper body stays generally oriented down the track.
- B. Think of the upper body, hip pointer bones and shoulders as forming a rectangle. The rectangle is never broken by twisting of the shoulder or the hips.
- C. Head and shoulders follow the hands down slightly at the initiation of the poling.
- D. The upper body moves on top of and with the hips with each weight transfer.

III. Kicking and Leg Drive:

- A. The direction of the kick is to the side and timed under the hips and drive leg forward in the direction of the gliding ski.
- B. The kicking forces are directed at 90 degrees to the kicking ski and the opposite leg is driven forward in the direction of the new gliding ski.
- C. The kick is through the whole foot and the greatest pressure is under the ball of the foot, not the heel.
- D. It is important to remember to drive the leg and not just step with the foot. The forward driving leg does not travel far outside the plane of the body. The hips stay on top of the leg.

- IV. Reduced size of the "V" made by the skis. Too wide a "V" requires the center of mass to travel too great a distance for complete weight shift.

- V. Maintain "V" between skis during recovery.

- VI. Quick, relaxed, and powerful movements of the arms and legs.

TECHNIQUE

The following graphic is a centerline graphic of a skier who I feel is demonstrating sound skating movements in the V2 alternate technique.

The basic body position at pole plant will vary somewhat for the different skating techniques: the general body position should have the hips forward over the feet. If the body is not in a forward position, the timing of the weight shift and the kick will not be correct. The upper body is projected slightly forward in the V2 techniques and more in the V1 technique. The forward body position enables the skier to get the weight of the upper body into



**Basic Position
at Pole Plant**

**Poling & Pre-
Load Phase**

**Kick & Leg
Drive Phase**

**Glide
Phase**

the poles. I feel getting the body weight into the poles, particularly in the V1 greatly increases the effectiveness of the weight shift and the glide. Over the past year, there has been much discussion over having a sharp shin angle in skating. I think this point is being misunderstood. While it is important to have a sharp or decreased shin angle, how and when we get into that position is even more important. It is achieved through good flexibility or rotation over the ankle joint and the forward movement of the center of mass. Also related to body position is the position of the arms and upper body in the various skating techniques. In all of the V2 techniques it is important to have good lifting or opening of the upper body and the arms in order to pre-load the arms and stomach muscles, which create a whipping action into the poling movement.

In the poling and pre-load phase we see a slight compression of the upper body and a corresponding compression in the shin angle. The shin angle compression occurs with the poling motion. It is at this phase that the center of mass (hips) begins to shift over the driving ski, in this case the left ski. This timing of the weight shift before the kick is critical. Correct timing of the weight shift will enable the skier to land the new gliding ski in a balanced position to take advantage of maximum glide at the moment of ski touch down. It is important to check that in this phase the upper body is staying oriented in the direction of travel and there is no twisting or rotation of the hips or shoulders. Twisting of the hips and shoulder can result in other problems like a late kick or ineffective weight shift. In this case we may often work on the timing of the weight shift or kick rather than the fundamental problem of the rotation that is causing the center of mass to stay over the kicking ski too long!

In the third sequence the skier is nearing completion of the kick phase. In this phase the new gliding leg, left, is still driving forward and will not touch down until a fraction of a second after the kick has been completed. It is important that we think of driving the leg and not stepping with the foot. If we imagine a point mid way between the hip and the knee and imagine we are driving that

point out in the direction that the new gliding ski will land in, the leg will tend not to land too far in front of the center of mass. If we lead with the foot, the center of mass tends to stay too far behind, and we are not in a forward or balanced glide position at the moment of ski touch down, missing the opportunity for optimal use of the body's forward inertia to generate speed. At ski touch down, if the weight shift has been effective, there should be a vertical alignment up the outside of the leg and upper body. It is at these few brief moments when the glide is optimal! As can be seen in the transition from sequence 3 to sequence 4, the center of mass continues to drive quickly forward over the new gliding ski as the arms and kicking leg drive forward to initiate the next poling and kicking phase.

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NEW ENGLAND JUNIOR PREVIEW

by Zach Caldwell, NENSA Program Director

With the JOs coming to Jackson, NH this winter, the New England ski machine is cranking up to keep the streak of host-division Alaska Cup winners alive. Given the home-course advantage, the question isn't whether New England skiers will fare well come March, but who will be leading the charge.

As usual there are a handful of proven performers who can be counted on to deliver top results, but the status of many of the stars of last season's JO team is uncertain. The mainstays of the OJ Boys group from last year, Kris Freeman and Sean Gallagher, are both at UVM, coming off strong cross country running seasons. While these guys could add tremendous strength to the NE team, chances are good that they'll be representing UVM at the NCAAs come March. Whether or not these guys are available, the New England coaches will be looking for strong performances from Tom Keefe and Justin Novack. Joining Tom and Justin in the OJ ranks this season is Ethan Foster, a World Junior Team member from last season. Ethan is back at Stratton Mountain School this year as a PG. Also moving up to the OJ ranks this year are Brayton Osgood, Justin Easter, and Tom Wisdom. Conspicuously absent from the JO team last year because of school commitments, Colin Rodgers is likely to be missed again this year, as he's spending the year in Norway.

The J1 crew suffers quite a number of losses this year, and it will be quite interesting to see who steps in to fill the voids. Leading the returning cast of J1s are Andy Hunter and Chris Mallory. The J1 field is very likely to feel the impact of last year's graduating J2s, led by SMS skiers Ryan Foster and Andy Newell, and Dun Cochrane from Mountain Top. All three have been training well, and Andy could scare a few World Junior Team contenders if he makes it to Soldier Hollow for the trials.

The J2 class lost some of last year's depth, and the perennial question is how the gaps will be filled from the ranks of the graduating Bill Koch League J3 skiers. The returning J2s are likely to be led by Kris Dobie and Jim Hardy.

On the girls side, the OJ field will miss Caitlin Compton who is attending school at Northern Michigan, but Kate Whitcomb returns as a Stratton Mountain School PG to lead the charge. New England JO Team Leader Dennis Donahue will have a tough time this year deciding whether or not to cheer on daughter Sara at the EISA carnivals. She would be a very strong addition to the OJ crew in her last year as a junior if she doesn't go to NCAAs, racing for Dartmouth.

Perennial performer Margaret Maher is expected to lead the J1 girls again this season. In summer testing at the Lake Placid OTC Margaret showed her most significant physiological improvements to date. Anna Sprague burst onto the scene from Northern Maine last season, and her motivation this year should be bolstered by the presence of the Maine Winter Sports Center in Aroostook County. All of New England is hoping that MWSC director Max Saenger is able to uncover another dozen or so skiers of Anna's caliber. Other strong returning J1s including Eileen Carey, Tyne Pike-Sprenger and Sarah Torkelson make this year's J1 girls crew possibly the strongest in years.

Allison Crocker will return this year to lead the J2 girls field, and will be joined at the front of the pack by Carina Hamel who chose not to pursue a spot on the JO team last year. Another name to look out for in the J2 ranks is Molly Gray, daughter of former Olympian and current Masters sensation Bob Gray.

The New England coaching staff will be working all season long to ensure that every aspect of the home-course advantage is realized. The kids will know the courses well, after a qualifier and a special JO Team training session the weekend before the races start. The one thing that can't be guaranteed are good New England March conditions. It may be dry powder snow, but we hope not. The message to the other divisions is clear: Bring your klister kits — we'll be doing a rain dance.

COLLEGE OPTIONS

by John Chiarella, club coach, Colby Sawyer College

There are few colleges and universities that provide the opportunity for nordic skiers to be involved in interscholastic ski competition. In the Northeastern United States approximately 20 schools offer such programs: a small percentage of all the institutions of higher learning in the region, although more than most people know about. Those in the ski community know many of the teams skiing in the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association such as UVM, Dartmouth, Middlebury, and UNH. Collegiate ski competition began with this NCAA entity which continues to thrive, attracting quality skiers from around the U.S., Canada, and Europe. These schools provide rigorous academic and athletic programs. High standards and expectations, coupled with a limited number of entries given to each school at Carnival races, makes it hard for many skiers to find a place on an EISA cross country ski team. Competition just to make a team insures a high quality of league racing. The trick for parents, coaches, schools, and ultimately students is to find a school that meets an individual's personal and academic goals, while allowing continued involvement in nordic competition from the many options available.

There is a secret that has been well kept, although not purposely, that expands this range of academic and athletic choice: The United States Collegiate Snowsports Association, which provides for regional and national competition in alpine, snowboarding, and cross country. Schools involved in the USCSA that provide the opportunity for nordic competition in New England are Colby-Sawyer, MIT, and Yale, while New York has Alfred, Clarkson, Cornell, Skidmore, and West Point. These schools are as diverse academically as the EISA Schools, and the ski programs are more so, providing competitive situations for elite skiers, as well as skiers with little to no previous experience.

Teams such as National Champion Clarkson are varsity sports, while Colby-Sawyer and many other schools are clubs. There are former JO skiers; a couple anyway. There have been Europeans, but the one I knew had skied very little. Former National Champions include Olympic skiers, but mostly there are a good number of quality high school skiers from all over the country, while I can't think of a team that hasn't brought kids to races who are just beginning in the sport. We have restrictions on field sizes at Nationals, but schools are welcomed to ski as many skiers as they wish in our league competitions. There are schools that have two or three skiers and others bringing 20 to our meets. Our race traditions collectively go back relatively few years, but there are schools such as Colby-Sawyer, Cornell, and MIT with long competitive histories that include stints in the EISA. It has become established that these teams host races as they did in their previous incarnations, with each using Eastman, Tug Hill, and Prospect Mountain respectively. It falls to West Point to host our Eastern Championships. This year they will be in Vermont on the

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19th and 20th of February. Our top skiers are then being invited to compete at the EISA Championships the following weekend, with our Nationals at Bretton Woods, March 8th through the 11th.

USCSA is a very open entity. We pick up on ideas such as sprint races and pursuits quickly. We have a tendency to mingle teams, resources, and ideas. We share information on all aspects of the sport including training, what the wax of the day might be, and how to negotiate courses. Skiers tend to mix together at races and after, as do the coaches. Last season getting together for dinner and bowling or movies was a big hit with many teams, as were activities on snow like group technique sessions and just playing around on skis after races. Everyone seems genuinely happy to see the best skier win or a neophyte just make it to the finish line. They have the same enthusiastic response, cheering loudly for each. There is competition, and teams do want to win, but there is a true spirit of wanting to make sure that the winner is the best skier, not the one who had the best secret wax or who won because other skiers were at a disadvantage due to lack of knowledge. We're creating a truly educational ski league, where coaches and skiers of all the schools work together to help each other improve. In both names, EISA and USCSA skiing is always preceded by the word Scholastic or Collegiate. Education comes first

and skiing is a complement to it. We make every effort to insure that skiers are given every opportunity to do well academically and that being a skier enhances that goal.

Choosing a college is many faceted. It is important to pick an academic setting that suits your skills and needs as a student, and one that will help you to achieve your goals in and out of school. Degree programs, quality of education, and a school's stature, are the major concerns, but you also have to live there. Consider the life that you want at school, and the type of surroundings that you would like to be in. I can guarantee that if you wish to include interscholastic cross country ski competition in your educational experience, then there is a school that will meet needs and exceed your expectations in the EISA or USCSA.

~~FROM THE ARCHIVES~~

RACE RESULTS: The 1999 Schwartz/Mahood/Seppala Long Sands International (men raced 4 laps; women 3 laps). Sometime in November.

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Arika Poulin | 26:47 |
| 2. Jamie Glommen | 27:15 |
| 3. Jen Connant | 27:54 |
| 4. Gretchen Czaja | 30:14 |
| 5. Jesi Kinnevan | 30:37 |
| 6. Kristin Green | 30:56 |
| 7. Sara Newbury | 31:06 |
| 8. Jenny Bressler | 31:26 |
| 9. Missy Hoffman | 33:09 |
| 10. Betsy Upham | DNF |

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Tim Woodbury | 31:59 |
| 2. Tom Keefe | 32:29 |
| 3. Chris Wolski | 32:44 |
| 4. Peter Tollefson | 34:47 |
| 5. Robert Parker | 34:53 |
| 6. Matt Voisin | 35:05 |
| 7. Adam Kincaid | 35:45 |
| 8. Erik Jacobsen | 36:22 |
| 9. Patrick Sinnot | 36:34 |
| 10. Sam Trafton | 37:30 |
| 11. Will Resko | 37:57 |

What wax did the winners use — or did they not wax? Did the sand really work on the ski bases like stone grinding? Did the tide get Betsy Upham? For answers to these questions, and to many more, email UNH Ski Coach Cory Schwartz at: corys@christa.unh.edu Thanks to Cory for sending in the terrific photos and the race results!

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF SKIING FOR LIGHT

As you glide along beside him, you learn he's summited Mt. Rainier, waterskied from Vermont to Honolulu, owned a computer consulting business and produced award-winning television programs. Unremarkable accomplishments for some, but Doug Wakefield can't see.

Doug is only one of about 250 active adults from across the U.S. and around the world who will be celebrating the 25th Annual International Ski For Light (SFL). A week long cross country skiing vacation, the event pairs visually and mobility impaired "Skiers," like Doug, with nondisabled "Guides." Held at a different U.S. location each February, the 2000 milieu is the Inn at Silver Creek near Granby, Colorado — deep in the heart of the Rockies.

SFL draws skiers from all walks of life and at every level of skiing expertise, from novices to competitors. Many return to the event year after year. Guides also find SFL's energy and atmosphere contagious. For Kari Heistad, 34, Granby will be her 14th SFL.

"Whenever I guide, I learn something new about myself," says Kari, who grew up in Lebanon, New Hampshire. "In addition to sharing my love of skiing and the outdoors, I've noticed my own skills improve with every experience."

"And there's more to SFL than just skiing," says the international organizational development consultant. "Through the social aspects of SFL, from the ad-hoc gatherings in the hot tub to the organized evening activities, I've come to know people from so many places. I feel like I'm part of a truly unique extended family,

filled with interesting and exceptional individuals — both with disabilities and without."

As an all-volunteer organization, meeting the demand for Guides always proves challenging. This year is no exception. Even if you've never met a blind person before, you can be a Guide. If you're confident on skis, SFL will help you get started during an intensive one-day training session with seasoned Skiers and Guides.

The 2000 Ski For Light will be held January 30-February 6. To find out more about being a Guide, contact the SFL Guide Coordinator, Brenda Seeger, at 507-274-5502 or brenda@sfl.org. Visually impaired Skiers may contact Judy Wilikinson at 212-662-9593 or judyw@sfl.org, while mobility impaired Skiers may contact Jeff Pagels, 920-494-5572 or jeff@sfl.org. SFL also maintains an extensive Web site at <http://www.sfl.org>.

If you're interested in seeing what Ski For Light is all about but you can't make it to the International event this year, give your nearest Regional a try. Regionals are similar in structure to International but are shorter, generally held over a weekend. The New England Regional Ski for Light will be January 7-9 and March 3-6, 2000. Contact: Claire Morrissette: Tel: 508-543-6157, after 6 p.m. E-mail: clairem@ici.net. Web site: <http://members.xoom.com/NERSFL>. As with International, no prior experience with visually impaired people is necessary. If you're confident on skis, you can share your love of the outdoors by being a Guide.

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