new england NORDIC NEWS

WINTER 2003 VOL. 8, NO. 2

Where Do We Go From Here?

by Fred Griffin, NENSA Executive Director

I need your help. NENSA needs your help. During the six years I have been NENSA's Director we have striven to build a grassroots service organization responsive to the needs of the ski community as a whole, while providing programs for those who strive for excellence. There have been many successes and there have been some failures. My sense though, is that our sport is thriving and growing. We currently offer year-round programming for skiers of all ages with an unwavering focus on providing a meaningful lifetime, lifestyle, activity for young people.

None of this has happened by chance. Every three years NENSA does a self-assessment where we evaluate where we've been, where we are, and where we want to go. This process is vital to the health of our/your organization. We use the results of the assessment to draw up a three-year Strategic Plan, from which emerges NENSA's policies and programs, NENSA's purpose and direction.

The quality of the Strategic Plan for 2003 – 2006 will be largely determined by the candor and by the accuracy with which we assess our current activity and recent history. That is why your help is critical. I ask that you take time to fill out the following questionnaire and return it to the NENSA Administrative Office. You can pull it electronically from the website as well. Rather than writing long narrative responses, bullet your opinions and ideas.

This is your chance. Tell us where to go!

NENSA Mission:

It is the mission of the New England Nordic Ski Association to implement and direct educational, recreational, and competitive programs at all levels of cross-country ski racing in order to create and sustain a vital and active skiing community in New England, and to provide the structure necessary to bring athletes to their highest potential at regional, national, and international events.

NENSA Long Range Planning Questionnaire

* Is our mission statement still reflective of what we want to achieve as an organization?

* Who are the largest target populations that we should serve? Do they have unique needs you can describe?

* What are the greatest opportunities NENSA will have in the next three years?

* What are the greatest threats to our survival that we will face in the next three years?

* What have been the greatest accomplishments of NENSA in the last 6 years?

* What are our greatest strengths as an organization?

* At the present time, what are our greatest weaknesses, or problems?

* What services can we provide to New England skiers that are better than those that can be provided by any other organization?

* What other organizations should we be collaborating with over the next three years?

* What other aspects of NENSA's current situation should we consider before we go further in our planning process?

CONTENTS

NENSA Long Range Planning	1
From the Editors	2
BKYSL fun	3
NENSA Clubs	4
Masters 2002-2003	5
John Upton letter	7
NENSA highlights	7
Norway correspondent	8-9
Sports Medicine: Winter fueling	10-11
Bill Koch Festival photos	12

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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:
Midwinter (January) issue: November 25
Late Winter (March) issue: January 25
Spring (May) issue: March 25
Summer (July) issue: May 25
Early Fall (September) issue: July 25
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

It's snowing! As this issue goes to press, winter is beginning in earnest. Mother Nature is giving us a weather pattern that holds promise for a great season. Many NENSA members have able to ski since early to mid November. This year, early races will actually be held as scheduled! The NENSA staff has put together another outstanding schedule of events over the course of the upcoming winter including the NENSA Banknorth Marathon Series, US Nationals, the Zach Cup Series, Eastern Cup Series and the various year-end events for all age groups. Check the website www.nensa.net for a complete listing.

We're excited by the articles we're able to provide in this issue as you prepare for the winter ahead. Our sports medicine contributor, Dr. Christie, gives nutrition advice that athletes can really sink their teeth into on pages 10-11. And NENSA has another junior skier living in Norway for the year. From above the Arctic Circle, Jack Nelson shares his experiences and the latest Norwegian ski news on page 8. The opportunities skiing presents to young skiers seem limitless.

On our cover page NENSA's Executive Director, Fred Griffin asks for your help in shaping NENSA's next three years. We ask that you take the time to share your ideas, as it will benefit us all.

Happy New Year, Anne & Mary

Help Wanted

NENSA Media Intern for 2002-03

Looking for college credit? Are you a journalist/sports writer/photographer/winter sport fan? NENSA is looking for a Media Intern to help Media Coordinator on weekends scheduled with two NENSA events*. Responsibilities include: hanging/taking down sponsor banners, taking digital/print photographs for sponsors and media, writing post-event press release and sending results, press release and photo to media immediately following event.

* Trial weekends Feb 1-2, Feb 28/March2, March 7-9.

Please respond to NENSA Media Coordinator,

Dorcas Wonsavage, Dorcas@nensa.net

or 207/778-0653.

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

CLUBS

Clubs News by Rob Bradlee, Cambridge Sports Union

The theme this fall was NEW: new snow, new facilities, new equipment, new coaches, and of course new sponsors. With BankNorth stepping forward as title sponsor, the sun shines again for NENSA and we can think beyond survival and towards growth and expansion. With an early arrival of winter in mid-November, skiers' spirits soared and energies went into new projects.

I love new toys so I was especially excited to hear that Craftsbury purchased a Pisten-Bulley 100 groomer. Their marathon will be a delight from end to end this year. To match their new equipment the Craftsbury club sent twenty skiers to Silver Star over Thanksgiving for early season snow with the express purpose of "getting ahead of Stratton and CSU."

Stratton will be sharing the trails with them in Canada. CSU meanwhile held its annual fall rollerski classic and won most age categories. Having a year-round (winter included) rollerski program has really paid off for them.

New equipment and buildings seem to be the theme for Vermont this year. The Mountain Top Resort has new owners who added a second story to the Center, outfitted the place with new rental skis, and bought a new groomer. The club banner is flying proudly, and they will be ready for the BKL Festival in nearby Putney. Meanwhile in Morristown the BKL club has turned an old 40' x 7' truck trailer into a clubhouse with heat, ventilation, ski racks, benches, waxing tables, and hand-painted murals on the walls. Cool!

New skills are the focus for NE Nordic where coaches Fred Griffin and Jeff Hixon have been busy with four non-profit camps for junior skiers who lack a local program, but who want to compete in the JOQ races. Thanksgiving saw them in Fairfax, VT (with fresh snow!) while in December they moved on to Mt. Ste Anne and the Maine Winter Sports Center.

Cape Nordic boasts two new coaches with Zach Stegeman and Deven Morrill. With their racing experience from St. Lawrence and UNH they will bring new enthusiasm to the area's junior racers.

Early season snow caused the cancellation of Bowdoin's rollerski race much to the chagrin of Colby which hoped to end Marty Hall's bragging about winning the big trophy last year. But coach Tracy Cote can handle another year of waiting in exchange for groomed trails in November. The same fate met the Maine Nordic rollerski race on November 3rd. The event was moved to high on the shoulder of Sugarloaf Mountain where Karl "ATV" Johnson dragged some old bedsprings around to make a perfect loop for on-snow action under sunny skies. The event did require an extensive disclaimer (See on Right). Rumor has it that this disclaimer will be considered by the NENSA Board of Directors to replace our current rather staid boilerplate release.

"All rights reserved. No copies, representations, or facsimiles of this event are allowed without the express written consent of the owner. No responsibilities, ethical, or otherwise are assumed by the operators. All risk is your own, DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME.

Roller skiing may be dangerous: wear seatbelts at all times, yield to the right, and display proper lighting at all times. Allowing skis to roll may cause injury or death: under no circumstances allow your skis to roll. California studies have found carbide dust to cause cancer in earthworms, please sanitize your tips and wear approved protection while sharpening. Sharp tips have been found to cause puncture wounds, please use safety covers. Do not pass without warning, do not pass on the right, yield to pedestrians, stay alert, take frequent breaks, dim your lights, no squealing of tires, engine retarders are restricted.

Bring extra clothes, dress in layers, don't wear cotton, wear bright colors, stay hydrated. Bring emergency food, space blanket, compass, map, cell phone, nametag, and TP. Don't ski alone, don't leave the road, pay attention to your route, read all signs, advise others of your route and planned return time. Don't continue in dangerous weather conditons, don't overestimate your abilities, and above all don't refer to the natives of Highland Point Maine as 'Scottish'."

The Andover Outing Club Bill Koch skiers sent their best wishes to fellow Andover skier and 2002 Olympian Kris Freeman. (Don R. Kline photo)

MASTERS

Zak Cup Series 2002-2003

by Peter Harris

I first met Vlastimil Zak skiing the Livermore Road outside of Waterville Valley on a cold December afternoon in 1977. For those of us skiing in central NH this was the only place to come for early season skiing and I was finishing a workout at about 4:00 PM as the sun was going down. As I was packing my skis up, Pat Zak came gliding down the track to the parking area, greeted me warmly, then muttered something about getting in one more out and back, turned around and headed off for another hour of skiing that would certainly end up in the dark. It is this kind of enthusiasm and dedication that we celebrate in the skiing of the Zak Cup. When Vlastimil Zak died prematurely, tragically falling through the ice on Squam Lake in central New Hampshire New Year's 1979, the decision was made to name the seasonal masters series after him.

The Zak Cup is the season-long masters championship for NENSA. It is made up of nine races, across the region, short and long, designed to find the best skiers in the five year age groups. You have to ski 2 races to be scored, and the best 5 races will be used to determine the winners. The age group champions are awarded flashy VO Max tights…if you want to see them, check with Bob Gray, Dave Boucher or Trina Hosmer… no doubt they have a closet full of them.

This year's events include: December 29, Mt. Hor Hop, Westmore Vermont: This fabulous early season venue is high above Lake Willoughby in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. Take I-91 to the Lyndonville exit, then head north on 5-A to the top of the pass just before Lake Willoughby. You have to hike up the hill for a mile to get to the race course but it is worth it! January 12, Bogburn, Pomfret Vermont: This is a fantastic homegrown course on Bob Haydock's land high above Central Vermont. It gets great snow and the conditions are usually fabulous. This exciting winding course is a challenge to all! Jan 18, 19, NENSA Masters: This annual event is one not to be missed! Great racing, great camaraderie, food, socializing, relay racing, prizes…this year made even better by a skate technique clinic to be taught by our own master Zach Caldwell. Be sure to put NENSA Masters on your calendar! Jan 21, CSU Sprints: Good chance to go head to head with the best of the Cambridge Sports Union! Feb 1, Craftsbury Marathon: The oldest and greatest of them all. The Master of masters racing! The point to point format is fabulous. The opening climbs and downhills are heart thumping and hair raising (note to self: try to avoid broken pole fall this year!) Feb 16, Holderness Eastern Cup: This is a huge race with fabulous turn out, great facilities, announcing, a legendary race loop, made even better this year by a classic technique clinic for masters being taught by Dorcas Wonsavage. February 23, Coastal Nordic: Time to head to the coast of Maine for some racing put together by one of the up and coming clubs in NENSA. March 1, Rangeley Loppet: Venture north to the wilds of Maine for a fabulous skate marathon. See you there! March 23, Mt. Washington Cup Bretton Woods: What a great way to finish off the season with a race under the shadow of Mt. Washington. Legendary skiing at a famous site!

So, if you are a regular to the race scene, a former racer, a coach, a parent, and wannabe racer, wax 'em up and join us at a few of the Zak Cup events this winter!

You've been invited to participate in the 2003 Banknorth New England Masters Championships!

January 18th and 19th, 2003

Ole's Cross-Country Ski Center, Warren, VT

Something for everybody!
In addition to the masters races, Saturday's events will include a fun race for novices and a BKL race for kids. So be sure to bring your family and any non-racing friends who want to join the fun!

For lodging options in the Mad River Valley, visit www.madrivervalley.com. For directions to Ole's and full weekend event schedule visit www.olesxc.com.

Looking for more??

The 2003 Subaru AXCS National Masters Cross Country Ski Championships will be held at Kincaid Park in Anchorage, Alaska on February 22-28, 2003.

Hundreds of skiers from throughout North America are expected to take part in this exciting week of top notch racing, social events, and fun comaraderie.

Take a couple of extra days and get in one of the best ski marathons in the country! On March 2, 2003 the Nordic Ski Association of Anchorage is hosting The Tour of Anchorage, featuring races of 25, 40 or 50K on their incredible city trail system with terrific snow conditions at sea level, all surrounded by stunning mountain vistas including Denali (Mt. McKinley) rising to the north.

Come ski and play in one of the best cities for cross-country skiing in the country!

For more information visit the official website of the NM2003, www.xcskiworld.com.

And wrap up a great ski season at the Maine Winter Sports Center in Presque Isle, March 20-25 -- Banknorth presents the Nordic Heritage Spring Series!

On-line registration at www.mainewsc.org. For more info. contact Max Cobb at maxcobb@aol.com.

NENSA

Letter from NENSA President, John Upton

Dear Members:
NENSA is on the move! Since last speaking with NENN, there have been many exciting developments that are central to the health of skiing in New England. First, as hopefully all members are now aware, Banknorth has joined with us as Title Sponsor. The professionals at Banknorth are committed to the success of all our communities across Northern New England. We also welcome Hannaford Brothers, which has joined Budurus as our two Associate Sponsors. We have a strong group of other sponsors as evident in this edition of NENN. I hope you will support with your patronage those organizations who support us.

At the full meeting of the Board of Directors, I appointed George Atkinson, Zoe Erdman, Judy Geer and Bob Haydock to begin the process of establishing a new long-range plan for NENSA. They are a wonderful cross section of our membership, intent on involving our entire membership in the planning. Over the winter months all Members will have ample opportunity to shape the vision for our organization. This planning process will culminate in the adoption of a long-range plan at our annual meeting this spring. Please look for announcements, share your ideas, and attend our annual meeting. This is your opportunity to set the course of skiing in New England.

As I write this note, it is a rainy late November morning. Tomorrow, I will be joining the first annual NENSA TREK. This year's destination is Silver Star British Columbia. I can't wait, but the TREK is only the beginning of a star-studded season of premier events that Fred Griffin and Pat Cote have been carefully planning for us. Check out the website or your Competition Guide. There is something for everyone across New England. It feels really great to know that NENSA is on the move.

Regards to all - John Upton, NENSA President

Skiers! There are so many more scheduled NENSA events than the ones you see here in this newsletter! Be sure to head to the NENSA website: www.nensa.net to see what's ahead for you this winter.

Banknorth and NENSA present:

Women's Cross-Country Ski Day

Feb. 2, 2003 9:00 - 3:30
Bretton Woods, NH

Rental equipment, Ski Clinics, Waxing clinics, Fun Relay Races, Clothing displays (for purchase!), lunch concession, child care on site.

This year we are supporting Ammonoosuc Community Health Services, who provide vital health resources for women! More info. on the NENSA website. Please come!

The Banknorth New England Marathon Series

In 2002 NENSA launched the three-event New England Marathon Series with races in Craftsbury VT, Rangeley ME, and Bretton Woods NH. Nearly 1600 skiers turned out to participate in these events. Each marathon was supported by the efforts of hundreds of volunteers from the surrounding communities, each featured en route gourmet "feed stations" and each fielded a large "touring" class as well as a smaller but substantial racing class. The Series attracted significant media attention in regional TV and press, and in regional and national magazines (Vermont Life, SkiTrax, Yankee Magazine, Boston Globe).

The New England Marathon Series has clearly struck a chord amongst nordic racers and cross-country recreationalists. It holds the promise of being the largest, most visible winter sporting spectacle in New England -- perhaps anywhere in the country.

The Banknorth Craftsbury Marathon - Feb. 1, 2003

A point-to-point cross-country skiing experience beginning at the Highland Lodge in Greensboro VT, looping through pastures and woodlands, by rustic barns, 19th century farmhouses, and ending at the Craftsbury Academy in the historical village of Craftsbury Common. The Craftsbury Marathon is a longstanding event with a deserved reputation for excellence. It is the cornerstone of the Series.

The Banknorth Rangeley Loppet - March 1, 2003

Two 25 kilometer loops wind gently through miles of green forest corridors broken by sensational views of Saddleback and Sugarloaf mountain and the Rangeley Lakes. The Rangeley Loppet offers the opportunity to experience the beauty of the Maine northwoods in this land of pointed firs. Rangeley Lakes 250-member Nordic Ski Club provides gourmet food and hospitality second to none from the beginning to the end of this event.

The Banknorth Great Glen to Bretton Woods Nordic Adventure - March 9, 2003

This extraordinary experience begins at Great Glen Trails spacious lodge at the foot of Mt. Washington and ends at the legendary Mt. Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods NH. In between, skiers climb Pinkham Notch "B" road, a service artery for the U.S. Forest Service, connect with Jefferson Notch road, descend to Crawford Notch, make their way through the vast trail network of the Bretton Woods Touring Center to finish at one of the few remaining Grand Hotels in New England.

Entries are limited. More info. on the NENSA web site!

JUNIORS

A Year of Skiing in Norway

by Jack Nelson, Ford Sayre
nelsonnordic@yahoo.com

It's mid November right now and very dark up here, north of the arctic circle. We have had snow since before Halloween, and the skiing is amazing.

I am living in northern Norway for a year as an exchange student with AFS. I go to a school with a ski section, and since I graduated from high school last year, I can focus most of my energy on learning Norwegian and skiing. The ski program is the Northern Norwegian Ski Line, and it attracts racers from all over northern Norway, many of whom board at the school. I only have academic class for about 16 hours a week, and the rest of the time is "ski class." The training is intense but fun, and there is a broad range of abilities so it's not so intimidating. About half the skiers are biathletes, and they use a shooting range just a short distance from the school (it's a little strange as an American to see kids walking through the halls with rifles on their backs...).

We have a training camp at least once a month and I have already learned and improved so much since I came here in August. The town, Storslett, abutts a national park, and there are endless opportunities for hiking, canoeing, and trails for running (if you don't mind the sheep everywhere). The landscape here is incredible, lots of mountains, and not many trees. One of our most interesting, and exhausting workouts in the fall is "myrinterval" training in the peat bogs, with freezing muck up to our knees. The hikes have also been incredible, with snow year round. The Northern Lights appear almost nightly, and reindeer graze beside the road.

And the environment here is so clean you have only to reach down and drink from a stream if you're thirsty.

It has been great learning Norwegian and experiencing Norwegian culture as well. Skiing and the outdoors are part of the national identity and one can see it everywhere. Children ski or take sleds to school, and families go up in the mountains on weekends for telemark skiing and picnics in the snow. It is new for me to have even non-skiers excited about our sport, and I get a kick out of watching the evening news where an interview with Bente Skari gets more attention than Bush and Iraq. Ole Einar Bjorndalen is on talk shows, Vegard Ulvang pitches his wool socks on TV, and Bjorn Daehlie's recent wedding was all over the tabloids.

In mid-November, however, the ski news on television was nothing to smile about. Right before the World Cup in Kiruna, Sweden, a Norwegian tv station broadcast an hour long documentary in which they asserted that Norway's athletes had been doped during the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer. As evidence they showed a list of medications, supposedly purchased from a pharmaceutical company by Norwegian team doctors. The response was enormous.

REPORT FROM NORWAY

Bjorn Daehlie, Vegard Ulvang, and Johan Olav Koss issued a stinging press release the next morning in which they meticulously countered every accusation. Thomas Alsgaard appeared on the morning news close to tears and all the national team skiers found themselves suddenly having to deal with mobs of press as they tried to prepare for the World Cup opener. Barely 24 hours after the show was aired, the embarrased producers called a press conference and apologized for airing misinformation. Apparently the list of medications was actually an order form of all the drugs the company manufactured.

In relatively stable and peaceful Norway, this has become the largest news scandal in recent history, and has grown into a national tragedy of sorts...

News channels in other Scandinavian countries and all over Europe were quick to spread news of the doping accusations, but never aired the retraction or apology. The head of the ski federation in Finland (a nation with its own doping history) said smugly in an interview that there was no smoke without fire and recent polls of the public in Sweden and Finland show that close to 75% believe the Norwegians dope, a figure second only to their judgement of the Russians.

To avoid a lawsuit, the TV channel met with the Norwegian Sports Federation and agreed to pay a huge sum of money towards anti-doping efforts and to hold press conferences at the next few World Cups to try to repair the damage they have done to the Norwegians' reputation abroad. It was exciting for me to see such attention payed to this issue, but at the same time it is a sad situation that only underscores the seriousness of doping. When the best ski racers fall under suspicion simply because of their ability, what does that say about the future of ski racing? That we expect the winners to be cheaters?

On a lighter note, my ski team was lucky enough to be in Kiruna for the World Cup right as this story was unfolding. Despite the bitter headlines and angry press conferences, I can say that it was an amazing experience. The temperature was -20 degrees C, with that perfect crisp snow that gives you barndoor kick. We had a training camp on the World Cup trails and were able to ski behind the likes of Alsgaard, Eloffson and Bjorndalen. It was training, eating, and sleeping for a few days and then we watched the World Cup on the weekend. The race course was just a five minute ski from our hotel, and incredibly was not closed during the race!

I was skiing up a long hill during Saturday's individual race and heard a lot of commotion behind me. I stepped aside just in time to see Beckie Scott from Canada whiz by. I yelled after her, "Beckie Scott deserves a gold medal!" but she was gone. Maybe she heard me though, 'cause when the day was over she finished in fourth place, barely a second away from first place and well ahead of all the Norwegians. Way to go Canada! The next day I was on my way to watch the relay when I passed her and two others in Team Canada jackets. I sprinted back and was all out of breath but told her I thought she was awesome and congragulated her on her race. I think she was surprised and I

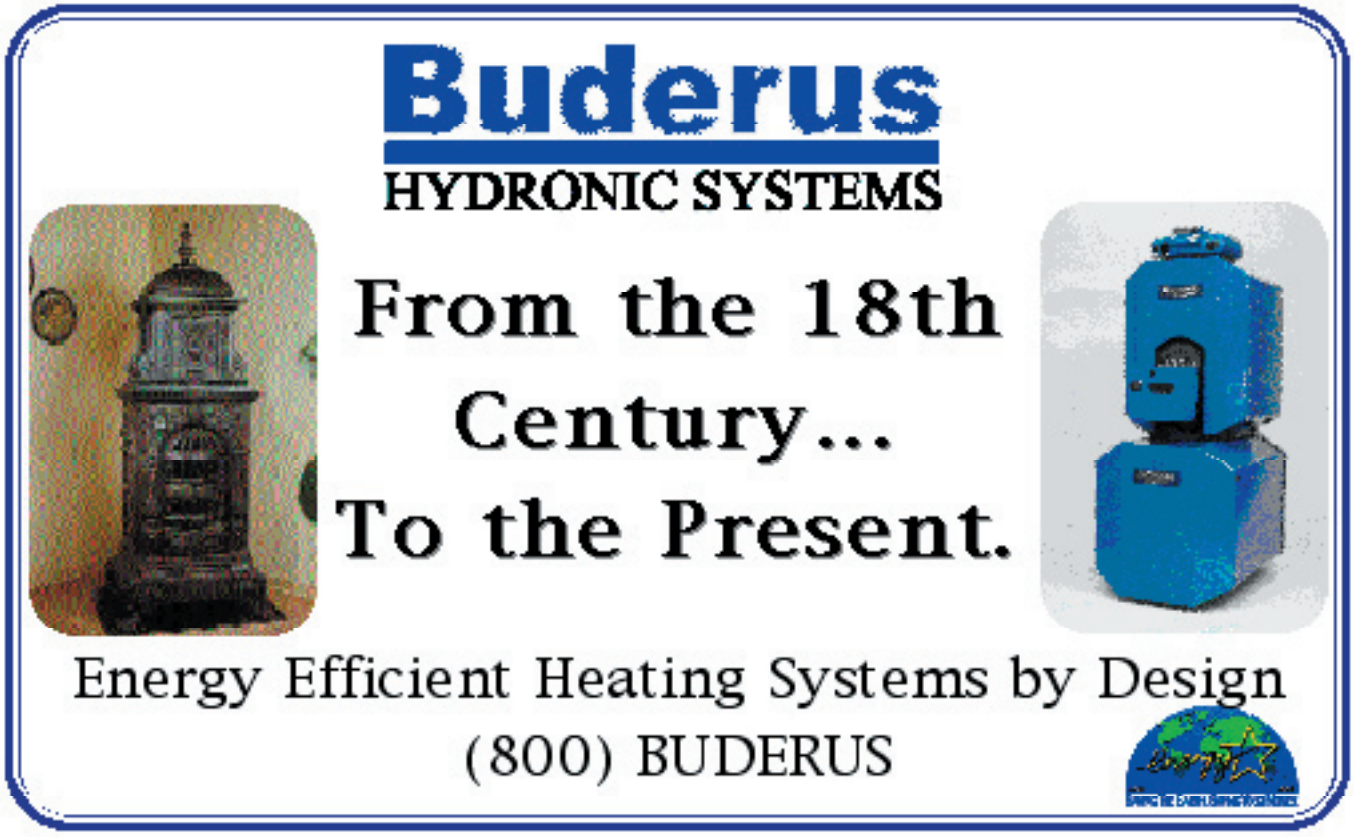
REPORT FROM NORWAY

was so nervous I forgot to ask for a picture, but it was exciting. And damn, they make them fine up north!

The other highlight of the day was speaking Norwegian to Thomas Alsgaard when I asked him if he wanted to trade hats, but he pretended not to hear me so that was kind of a bummer...

Now we are back home in Storslett, and the forecast is for more snow. We just had our first race last weekend, and it was a lot of fun to watch and participate. We are all working towards the Northern Norwegian championships in March, and it is really the experience of a lifetime to be training along side such talented and committed athletes. I am learning so much about skiing and training and am so glad I took this opportunity to come here. I hope snow comes soon to you at home, and wish you all the best of luck in the upcoming season.

(Anne Donaghy photos)



TRAINING

Fueling Winter Workouts and Races

By Donald M. Christie Jr., MD, Chair, NENSA Sports Medicine Committee; Winter 2002-2003

With the new season underway, serious skiers want to test the "engine" that they have so assiduously been building, rebuilding, and adjusting during the preceding months. Yet, understanding why, with what, and when we "fuel" and "refuel" these engines is vital to getting the most out of those miles put by during the long months of dryland and early on-snow training.

Food Is Fuel

Think of the food and fluids we consume as our fuel mixture -- fuel for building, rebuilding, and for providing the energy the active body demands. It consists of numerous constituents with several purposes.

Fluids: Essential to restore and maintain body water balance, to support the "hydraulic" pressure and high volume flows of our active circulation, and to serve as a carrier of various foodstuffs, vitamins and minerals. Most of the body's weight is, literally, water. Loss of as little as 2% of body weight through sweating (that's just 3 pounds for a 150-pound individual, about a quart and a half) produces a noticeable decrease in performance.

Food (Glorious Food!): Carbohydrates, fats, and proteins -- the three categories of foodstuffs, or macronutrients -- provide both the energy (calories) and the raw materials for building, rebuilding, restoring, repairing, and energizing our muscles. Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, while providing no energy, are essential to the biochemistry of building and repair of a body fit for training and racing.

Nordic skiers need to get most of their energy from carbohydrates and fats. Glycogen, the form of sugar stored in muscle, is vital to intense effort, and must be renewed as soon as possible after intense exercise if one wishes to train or compete well soon afterward. (Anyone who has ever "bonked" or "hit the wall" knows what it feels like to be depleted of muscle glycogen!) While a third-rate source of energy, proteins are necessary to the building and repair of the active body.

Plan Ahead

Whether you are concerned about preventing dehydration and the attendant weakness and poor performance, or wondering about eating right at the right time, before and after races and long training sessions, it is essential to plan ahead. This means making sure you, or your faithful camp followers, assemble and bring with you the kinds of food and fluid you'll need. Convenience stores and restaurants aren't always nearby and open to provide your every need.

What, and How Much?

Fluids: Per day, take in a total of 2-3 quarts in addition to what your get in your solid food. (In warm weather training, you'll need 3-4 quarts!) This fills up 8-12, 8-oz. glasses (or about 3-5, 20-oz. water bottles) over a day's time, beginning when you first get up, and continuing throughout the day, even during training and very long races (30-50K). What you drink in the form of water, milk, juice, and sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade, XL-1, Extran) counts toward this daily fluid requirement. You still sweat, even in the winter! Those high-tech fabrics that wick sweat out for rapid evaporation in the dry winter air, along with the loss of water vapor in your breath, allow more water and mineral loss than you realize.

-- Rule #1: Don't wait for thirst to remind you to rehydrate. Thirst is a late symptom of dehydration. If you feel thirsty, you're already "a quart low." Except for during brief races (under 30 minutes), you want to drink about 8 oz. (240 ml.) of fluid every 15 minutes during exercise.

-- Rule #2: Water is fine to drink during brief exercise between meals, but during prolonged training or racing (more than 40 minutes at a time) drink water with some sugar and salts dissolved in it, which is what sports drinks are all about. (You can easily concoct your own tasty sports drink: Mix orange juice half-and-half with cold water and add a pinch of table salt per 8 oz. of drink. The dilution is necessary to bring the natural juice sugar concentration within the range -- 4-8% -- for optimal stomach emptying during exercise.)

Food: This provides both the energy and the building and repair materials for the active body. While the actual number of calories you need to fuel your engine will depend on your weight, rate of growth and development, and metabolic efficiency, you can quite well estimate your daily calorie need by multiplying your body weight in pounds by 20 (a bit less for those who wish to lose fat weight; a bit more for those in a growth spurt or in very hard training). Hence, a 150-pound junior would need to consume about 3000 calories in solid food and fluids per day. (A hard-training skier at the international competition level may require 5000-8000 calories on some days!) If you believe that your body composition and current body weight are about where you want them, you are already consuming the "right" amount of calories per day.

Once you have an idea about your total daily calorie need, go on to calculate your protein requirement: One gram of protein intake per pound of lean body mass (your total weight minus the guesstimate of your body fat weight) is a very generously adequate amount. Protein consumed in excess is inefficiently disposed of as urea and excreted by the kidneys. Determine the caloric value of this protein intake by multiplying each gram times 4 calories.

Subtracting the amount of protein calories from the total daily calorie need will give you the number of calories that must come from carbohydrates and fats (oils). These two foodstuffs provide the vast majority of one's energy needs. In order to take on board enough fuel for their sport, skiers need to consume about 3 grams of carbohydrates (CHO) per pound of body weight each day (4 calories per gram of CHO), and about 1/2 gram of fats (oils) per pound of total body weight (9 calories per gram of fat).

O.K., but what does all this mean in terms of "real" food?

First of all, learn to read "Nutrition Facts" labels on all foods and packaged drinks. This will tell you the serving size, its caloric value, and how many grams of protein, CHO, and fat are contained in each serving. It also lists the noteworthy presence or absence of vitamins and minerals. (For example, a 1 1/4 cup serving of spoon size Shredded Wheat 'N Bran, a product consisting of only whole wheat and whole wheat bran, provides -- before adding fat-free milk -- over 200 calories, 47 grams of CHO, 7 grams of protein, 1 gram of fat, and significant amounts of several vitamins and minerals)

Develop a better idea of the nutritional value of what you are now eating and drinking. Read labels and ask your school's librarian to help you find a book with lists of the nutritional contents of common foods. (Many "fast food" restaurants will -- if you ask them nicely -- provide you with the "Nutrition Facts" of their menu items.)

When?!

-- Rule #1:Consume a day's food in frequent small feedings, no more than 2 1/2 - 3 hours apart. (Hang around an elite athlete for awhile, and you'll note that she or he is "always" eating or drinking something. Some call this "grazing.")

-- Rule #2: Coordinate your "grazing" to fit your training and racing schedule. Eat a "square" meal -- be it breakfast or lunch (according to the schedule) -- with lots of CHO, some fat, and its fair share of your calculated daily protein, about 3 1/2 - 4 hours before you exercise. Have a light snack about 1 1/2 - 2 hours later. Water or a sports drink, but not solid food, can be consumed during warm-up, and don't forget to "refuel" with 8oz. of a sports drink -- "on-line" and in "real time" -- every 15-20 minutes during a long workout or race (e.g., 30-50K).

-- Rule #3: Begin the muscle glycogen replenishment and tissue-rebuilding phase of nutrition within 20-30 minutes after training or racing. For example, have a snack of protein and carbohydrates, such as 10 oz. of low-fat milk with half a peanut butter sandwich and a piece of fruit, or some low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese in place of the milk. Clif Bars, Endurox R4, Jogmate, Balance Bars, etc., are convenient, though pricey, substitutes for homemade snacks. (View such items as "convenience foods," but beware the claims of some manufacturers that purport almost-magical restorative powers for this or that added ingredient.) The world of sports science has by no means settled the argument about the value of this or that "additive," beyond the well-established building and rebuilding value of timely snacks and meals. It's a matter of consuming the right amount of the right kind of "Mother's groceries" at the right time. If you are training or racing again that day, the next "refueling" will be another snack about 1 1/2 hours before the next exercise, plus on-going intake of diluted juice or sports drink. Otherwise, your next "refueling" will be a good lunch or supper.

-- Rule #4: Never try a new food, snack, or drink for the first time just before a race! It's not the time to discover that it doesn't "agree" with your digestive system. Once all exercise is finished for the day, have that snack or regular meal within 30 minutes, if the timing is right, followed by a regular meal no more than 1 1/2 - 2 hours later. Then get a good night's sleep. Don't forget to have a bedtime snack, along with more water, juice, or low-fat milk. Lots of muscle fuel replenishment, restoration, and growth occurs during sleep.

With a practical knowledge of the basics of sports nutrition and by making appropriate changes in your eating, drinking, and snacking routines to favor the growing, training body, you stand ready to make the most of all your efforts. Up! Up!

Dr. Christie is a sports physician in Lewiston, ME, and keeps a special interest in the physiology and clinical problems of Nordic skiers. He can be reached with comments and questions at dchristie@adelphia.net.

2003 Bill Koch Festival -- March 8-9, Putney Vermont

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Photos from the Festival a couple of years ago (Don R. Cline photos)

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