



new england NORDIC NEWS

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The Chisholm Ski Club, US Nationals and the Power of Chummy Broomhall

from "Tales from the Klister Box" by Andrew Gardner for SkiPost

The country's best skiers descend upon Oxford County, Maine and nestle deep in the Adroscoggin watershed at a little mill town called Rumford. Just past St. John's Catholic cemetery lie trails that travel across Black Mountain, a four hundred and fifty acre tract of rolling Maine hillside. This is where great skiing happens.

Before you arrive at the parking lot, you are likely to be met by racing skiers. The trail crosses Glover road before meeting the sharp corners and lung testing "high school hill." At this road crossing, there will sit at least two men with shovels -- maintaining the trails as skiers take on the challenge of the course, and cars take on the challenge of the driveway. I think of this intersection whenever I think on the volunteers of the Chisholm Ski Club.

The club was founded in 1924 to promote an annual winter carnival that would incarnate every year for the next half century in a sort of festival to celebrate ski sport and wintery New England sturdiness. From there the club grew into a resource that would support a collection of Olympic Team members, World Championship team members, Junior National skiers, and Collegiate Champions. Black Mountain, home base for near-by Bates College, has hosted collegiate races, collegiate national championships, junior national championships, U.S. Nationals, and even the World Championships.

Leading the charge for the better part of a century has been Wendall "Chummy" Broomhall. As with most prominent skiers in our familial sport, Chummy's name resounds throughout the nordic skiing landscape. Chummy was a 1948 and 1952 Olympian, and a member of the 1950 World Championship team that competed in Rumford. (A relocated event due to lack of snow at well-known Lake Placid.) The club provided support for Chummy in the years that he was racing; Chummy has paid back the club, with interest.

"My wife likes to say that if I had put my energy into making money, I might have some now," Chummy explains with a chuckle in a clipped voice that would be the envy of most Mainers. "This is a lifetime hobby. I guess, as with most hobbies, you get personal satisfaction."

The club, it would seem, has reaped greater benefits. Chummy has coached local juniors, and would-be heroes, eventual coaches and any others that happened through the ranks of the Chisholm ski club. But there is more -- Broomhall designed ski trails for Olympic competition in California, he's acted as a paternal figure to the changes in skiing at Black Mountain over a collection of years, he's supported kids as they've made the jump to college skiing.

"I guess (the club) showed these kids that there's things out there in life. You gotta go get 'em," explains Chummy.

Through the myriad of support, gifts (Broomhall has donated money and land in copious amounts), and the fortitude that typifies rural Maine, Chummy remains powerfully humble. He is quick to note the "100 or so volunteers that support the race" without whom there would be no racing. He cites the names that have helped to carry the load of a healthy ski club: Roger Arsenault -- the current club chairman, Ray Broomhall, Chummy's brother and the chief of course, and Tom Kendall, who has timing honed to "an art."

"Somebody always seems to step up," Chummy describes of the powerful nucleus of volunteers that greet skiers upon their arrival. "It takes a lot to keep up with the technical changes in skiing. We've done a lot." This "lot" includes the four plus kilometers of man made snow that will ensure that US Nationals will take place, despite New England weather, which has a penchant for not always cooperating, it includes the widening of the trails in spots to guarantee clean skiing, and finally it includes the cast and crew that give life to the gray buildings on the Black Mountain lot.

Chummy Broomhall, cont'd on pg. 2

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About NENN

Co-Editors

Anne Donaghy
nenn@nensa.net
603-448-4133
Mary Hamel
nenn@nensa.net
413-527-0164

NENN Committee

John Caldwell
Jack Eckels
Stu Goldberg
Marty Maher
Joe Walsh

NEW ENGLAND NORDIC NEWS

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DEADLINES

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

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CONTACTING NENSA

NENSA Administrative Office
Fred Griffin, Executive Director
PO Box 176
Fairfax, VT 05454
(802) 849-2270
email: nensagr@mail.sover.net

NENSA Program Office
Patrick Cote, Program Director
96 First Rangeway
Waterville, ME 04901
(207) 873-0498
email: pat@nensa.net

Web: <http://www.NENSA.net>

FROM THE EDITORS

It has been quite a winter. Ask anyone from Massachusetts how the skiing has been this winter in their state, and they positively glow. We have been blessed with snow while other parts of the country have yearned all winter long for it.

A lot happened in New England cross-country skiing this winter, too. Rumford, Maine, host of this year's U.S. Nationals disproved those people who believe that New England weather does not always cooperate. Usually it does! We have a wonderful cover article on Chummy Broomhall, mainstay of the Chisholm Ski Club in Rumford, written by Andrew Gardner for SkiPost, the interesting and helpful email bulletin for cross-country skiers. Dorcas Wonsavage also reports from Nationals and includes the rosters of the teams selected just afterwards, who headed off to the World Championships, the Junior World Championships, and the U-23 Championships. The East was well-represented on these teams, as well as by Bret Bedard, Elsa Sargent, and Morgan Smyth who all qualified for the J1 team from the U.S. to the Scandinavian Cup in February. Congratulations to all of these athletes!

Meanwhile a very full schedule of Banknorth Eastern Cups continued, and the Banknorth Marathon Series, the masters' Zak Cup races, and our Women's Ski Day all drew crowds of enthusiastic skiers. But the best is still to come -- the Bill Koch League Festival on March 8th and 9th in Putney, the Sugarloaf Inferno, the Banknorth Great Glen to Bretton Woods marathon, the Eastern High School Championships at Sugarloaf the second weekend of the month, the NCAA's at Dartmouth, and the Spring Series at the Maine Winter Sports Center on the third weekend of March. Join the fun!

Anne Donaghy, Mary Hamel, co-editors

For the very latest news on ski events throughout New England, to see what's ahead for you this spring after the spring skiing is over and skiers' thoughts turn to hiking and biking and canoeing... to see who's been named to the NENSA Elite and Development teams, to see photos from the season's events, to read great travel skiing stories.... it's all on one website, www.nensa.net!

Chummy Broomhall, cont'd from pg. 1

"Fortunately, I could (be involved in skiing). My wife let me do this," Chummy says whimsically of his lengthy force on the sport. Fortunately for the rest of the Nordic skiing community, Chummy wanted to do this in the first place.

Thanks to Andrew Gardner for allowing us to reprint this article, and thanks to SkiPost, email resource newsletter by Andrew Gerlach and the Subaru Factory team. See www.DreamOfIt.com.

BILL KOCH YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

The Story of the Birkie

by Mary Hamel

Have you heard some of your grown-up skiing friends talk about the Birkie? It's a really long race, 50 kilometers to be exact, held in Wisconsin every winter. There are a few hundred people who race the course but several thousand more tour the course that runs from Hayward to Cable, Wisconsin. The true name of the race is the American Birkebeiner, and it was started in Wisconsin to commemorate the Norwegian Birkebeiner that begins in Rena and finishes in Lillehammer.

You might have heard about what good ski racers Norwegians are. Norway is a long, mountainous country in Northern Europe. During most winters, snow comes early and stays late into the spring. Skiing stories are woven throughout Norwegian history. In Norwegian mythology, epic poems refer to Ull, the god of skiing, and to Skade, the goddess of skiing and hunting. In times past, skis were the only practical way for Norwegians to travel from place to place. Even now, people joke that Norwegian children are born with skis on their feet. Of course, that isn't true but Norway has a long tradition of skiing that goes back thousands of years. Rock carvings found in Rodoy show that Norwegians used skis as long as 4000 years ago.

The story of the Norwegian Birkie began a very, very long time ago. In 1206, King Haakon III ruled Norway. He lived in Oslo. His army was made up of soldiers known as Birkenbeinere (Birchlegs). People referred to them as Birchlegs because their high boots were made from animal skins wrapped around their legs and then tied with birch roots. When civil war broke out, the King was killed. A few weeks after the King's death, his son Haakon Haakonson was born. Knowing that the infant prince was heir to the throne, the King's enemies, known as baglere, plotted to kill the prince too. A band of Birkebeiners decided to take the infant north to Trondheim. On Christmas Eve, the party reached Lillehammer and stayed in hiding at a small farmhouse. Because of stormy weather and severe snow conditions, the two best skiers, Torstein Skevla and Skjervald Skrukka, struck out on their own taking turns strapping the young child heir on their backs. They carried him from Lillehammer, across two treacherous mountain ranges covered in deep, heavy snow to the town of Rena in the east and then on to Trondheim further north. He grew up safely there and when he reached adulthood became King. During his reign, Haakon IV brought the fighting to an end and Norway enjoyed a period of greatness.

In 1932, a race was established to commemorate the great journey of the child king and his Birkenbeiner heroes. Each year, more than 6,000 skiers compete in the event, skiing from Rena to Lillehammer. The rules require that racers carry a 3.5 kilo backpack as a symbol of the child's weight born by the Birchlegs. Skier who finish the course in the allotted time are rewarded with a pin to commemorate their achievement of following the 55 kilometer course.

The 2003 Bill Koch Youth Ski Festival is headed to Southern Vermont, and they are so excited about showing everyone great skiing and a great time!

It will be held March 8-9 in Putney.

For more information see the NENSA website, www.nensa.net. Everyone send some photos and reports to us so we can print them in our Spring issue -- thanks and have fun!!

CRAFTSBURY MARATHON

Craftsbury is always an epic heroic journey...

by Rob Bradlee

...We leave the safety and security of the civilized world, head into the wild, savage, unknown wilderness of the Northeast Kingdom, face many difficult challenges, and return home to our families triumphant. I have done the race for many years and had many challenges. One year I did the race as a day trip from Boston and blew a spark plug right out of my engine while speeding through the Vermont darkness at ten below zero. I limped on, "not firing on all cylinders," and still made the race. Another year I stayed with a friend who neglected to mention that there were no beds in his new house. Sleeping on a hardwood floor was not the best race preparation. Yet, the challenging climbs, deep snow and expansive vistas of the race course make all these difficulties seem like absurd, minor details.

What would this year bring? My wife Barbara and I had hotel reservations right in Hardwick for the night before the race. I tried to take a relaxing shower before bed. The hot water disappeared after five minutes. I spoke to the hotel manager. A rotund Russian émigré, he assured me jovially that we merely had the last room in a long row and the water would come in a moment. I tried to sleep, but the sheets were like sandpaper. On race morning there was no hot water at all: no shower, no shave. Another Craftsbury pre-race fiasco to add to the long list.

When the ship's bell rang we charged out of the starting corral. Is there a harder first 10K in any ski marathon in the world? We started climbing, climbed some more, and then hit the big uphill. The downhill was wild, but skiing in around 20th place I was fortunate to have smooth, well-packed snow to negotiate the corners. A skier named Mike caught up to me and introduced himself. He was clearly having a good day and I let him ski ahead of me. One of the tight right downhill turns caught him by surprise and he did a full Superman, diving crash. I barely avoided him. He had discovered how quickly a great day at this toughest of all races can go sour. For me the first half was a difficult slog with over-waxed skis and a sluggish body... But a marathon is a lifetime. You get second chances.

I rallied when I left the Highland Lodge ski trails and entered the more hard-packed Craftsbury Nordic Center trails. My skis were faster, my body woke up, and I made a charge to catch the pack of Masters racers ahead of me. All was right with the world. I was skiing fast through woods and there was no other place I would rather be. I caught Abigail Larson, the lead female, and passed her in my frenzied chase of my rivals. Skiing around the big field below the Center I saw the group I was after about two minutes ahead of me. I had a chance! But the kilometers were ticking by, and those men ahead of me were warriors who would not quit. I faced the monster of the final two kilometers of side-hill climb to the finish. Gone were my thoughts of

HIS AND HERS

catching others, and mere survival my only goal. The kick wax barely worked in the warming temperatures and double poling was increasingly painful. I pushed myself across the finish line. Another year I had faced the dragon in his lair and brought home the prize of a golden experience.

My Craftsbury 25K Tour

by Barbara Bradlee

When you plan to tour the 25K half-marathon you still have to prepare yourself mentally as well as physically for the challenge. The joy is that the process becomes so much more fun than frantic when you plan to tour, rather than race, the distance.

I have never yet skied 50K, that goal is still in my future, but I have skied 25K a number of times over the years. In fact, I skied the same event last year. The benefit of that is that I knew what to expect this time. The extra effort and mental gymnastics required to do a point-to-point event where you drive to the finish and bus to the start can feel very anxiety provoking. Your mind gets flooded with questions and indecision: What should I bring to the finish area? What should I wear on the bus to the start? Which gloves do I want? Did I remember my waxes? This year I was much more calm about this and laid everything out the night before.

In the morning, my husband and I got an early start off to Craftsbury Common. We carried our skis and our clothes bags into the gym and registered. We went through our mental checklist – skis, boots, poles, hat, gloves, glasses – and off we went to the bus.

At Highland Lodge the pace was picking up. You could begin to feel the excitement in the air. The racers were starting to act tense. The 9:00 mass start was approaching. In line at the portable-toilets one racer called out "I'm racing, can I cut?" I replied with a smile, "Sure, I'm just touring."

The racers took off at 9:00 and I have to admit it was a beautiful sight, watching hundreds of skiers work gracefully up the hill and off. Nonetheless, I was glad not to be in that crowd with adrenaline surging and stomachs churning as each pushed and jockeyed into the best position. That's not for me. I took my time with my last minute preparations. I even brought a radio to listen to and tuned into a good station. I was ready to begin my tour.

The first hill reminded me of why I was happy I wasn't racing. I worked steadily, but not frantically, to make my way up the hills. I am happy going at my own comfortable pace. I can enjoy the experience and the scenery and have a good time. I could even remember to be considerate and say thank you to the volunteers as I went by.

The gourmet food stations were such a treat. One

HERS AND HIS

was even set with a tablecloth and flowers.

Having done the event last year, I was also prepared to know that there were going to be some killer downhill to deal with. I knew the snow conditions and the grooming were much better than last year, so I was psyching myself up to convince myself I could make the downhill.

My first major fall didn't hurt. I got my ski caught in a rut on a gradual turn in a field and went right off the trail into deep powder. It cost me time, though, but time wasn't the point for me that day, so why did I care?

My second major fall hurt a lot. It was one of the long, hairy downhill that didn't seem to end and required a stiff turn to the left at the bottom. Alas, another poor soul had landed in a heap right at the critical moment for that left turn and I got psyched out. Down I went hard on my left shoulder. My glasses and my radio went flying. I took a moment to collect myself and on again.

After my third major fall I decided I was never skiing Craftsbury again! What, are they masochists? Why don't they have the 25K be the second half of the trail instead of this extraordinarily difficult first half? Whine, whine, whine.

Gratefully, the course became a little easier and more manageable. I didn't fall any more and I began to have a good time again. The last kilometer or two always seems the longest. My back was tight and I was tired. I was grateful to take the turn toward the finish and not off to do the second 25K. The final hill up the field was difficult. My wax wasn't working and I didn't know if it was my fatigued technique or a change in the waxing conditions, but it was frustrating. The finish was so close yet still so far.

The finish line is always a welcome sight... As I crossed the line and was handed my pin I got teased for having my radio, but I didn't mind... I had had a wonderful time. I achieved the challenge of skiing a difficult 25K and I enjoyed the process, not just the result of a finish time. It was a great event, and I know I'll be back.

The John Sackett Award

The first annual John Sackett Award was given at this year's NENSA Masters Championships. This award, a perpetual granite plaque that will be engraved with each year's winners names, was given in honor of John Sackett, continuously the best masters skier for many years running, who died tragically and prematurely in an auto accident in January of 2002. John's spirit lives on with all masters skiers, and we celebrate him with this award. The award goes to the top male and female finisher of all masters age groups each year at the NENSA Masters' Championships. This year's recipients were Natalie Cartwright and Jon Arne Enevoldsen.

MASTERS

Minus zero temperatures, but pluses for sunshine, powder snow and many Masters smiles!

by Dorcas Wonsavage

The thermometer often read in the minus digits, but everything else about the Banknorth New England Masters Championship weekend was a plus! The site of the weekend of racing and fun, Ole's XC Center in Waitsfield, VT, is perched high above the Mad River Valley, with quintessential Vermont views as far as the eye can see. We skied through orchards and fields, against a backdrop of silos and barns, and the rolling Green Mountains.

Ole's put on a superb weekend of racing, and easily handled the event on their racing trails, while touring skiers up for the long weekend enjoyed the gentle trails by the glider airport. Several weekend skiers came over to watch the fun, attracted by the bright tents, banners and public announcement system roaring out Bruce Springsteen and polkas, race updates and sponsor advertising.

Saturday's same-day pursuit was not unlike any parent's day: The morning rush - to find the wax and make the start of the 5km classic race in the morning, a brief pause to cheer on fellow skiers, have lunch, do some ski work, chat with friends, and then the afternoon rush to complete the 5km freestyle races began. But the work was sure a whole lot more fun! In the men's race, M3 Jon Arne Enevoldsen departed to the sounds of "Born in the USA", and maybe it threw him because M4 Chris Nice (Ford Sayre) finished second, only 3 seconds behind. M3 Alex Kahan (Ford Sayre) was third with a time of 13:32, but then the times were close: M5 Keith Woodward and M3 Andreas Halvorsen, only a second apart in 4th and 5th, M3 Richard Powell (Ford Sayre) and Rob Bradlee (CSU) only a second apart in 6th and 7th, M6 Peter Davis (Mt. Mansfield), M3 Joe Holland (Putney) and M2 Andy Milne (CSU) only 2 seconds apart in 8th-10th. M4 Ben Haydock (Stowe) and M7 Bob Gray (Putney) were 3/10ths second apart in 12th and 13th, and the list continued. It was going to be an interesting afternoon pursuit for the men.

In the afternoon, Chris Nice went out fast and hard to try to catch Jon Arne, but was unsuccessful, and Alex Kahan was able to power his way past his Ford Sayre teammate Chris to catch the second place finish.

The women's race had a few close finishes in the first stage of the pursuit, too. M2 Dorcas Wonsavage (Atomic) was only 3 seconds ahead of M1 Natalie Cartwright (Alpina/Madshus), with M4 Harriott Shea in third. M4 Gina Campoli (Craftsbury) was just 6 seconds back in fourth, with M4 Carol Van Dyke (Stowe) in fifth, one second ahead of Ole's own M3 Marilyn Ruseckas. M5 Jane Banks snuck in at 7th ahead of M3 Donna Smyth (Stratton) and Mary Lou Lowrie (Rangeley) who were just 2 seconds apart. The women's pursuit ended with Dorcas in first, Natalie in second, Marilyn Ruseckas moving up to third, Carol Van Dyke twenty seconds back in fourth, and Gina Campoli ending up in fifth, about thirty seconds ahead of Jane Banks who took sixth.

Saturday evening's dinner was a chance for everyone to chat NE Masters, cont'd on pg. 6

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NE Masters, cont'd from pg. 5

and meet the visiting Banknorth representatives, in the newly-renovated Green Mountain Valley School. It was a wonderful time for the over-30s to enjoy a weekend of their own.

In Sunday's 20km freestyle race, Alex Kahan(Alpina/Madshus) was able to get 15 seconds ahead of Green Mountain Valley School coach, Jon-Arne Envoldsen in the grueling climbs of 16 to 18 kilometers only to see his lead evaporate in the final two kilometers with Jon Arne beating him at the line in a dramatic finish. Perennial strong man Murray Banks parlayed a conservative start into a strong finish, passing many to end up in 6th place. On the women's side Alpina/Madshus' Natalie Cartwright opened a daunting lead in the first 5k and cruised to a victory in the women's 20km freestyle race.

The Banknorth New England Masters Team was named by the weekend points in each 5 year age group, and the winners received classy Olympic style berets to wear proudly celebrating their victories. The overall winners, Jon Arne and Natalie were awarded the first annual John Sackett Award as overall winners. Their names will be engraved on the back of the perpetual granite trophy to be passed on from year to year. Many NENSA sponsors contributed generously to the prize table, and the winners received brand new Rossignol racing skis. Many other prizes were raffled, with most competitors taking home a prize.

The Banknorth New England Masters Team:

Men:

M1 - Kurt Perham
 M2 - Andrew Milne
 M3 - Jon Arne Enevoldsen
 M4 - Chris Nice
 M5 - Keith Woodward
 M6 - Murray Banks
 M7 - Charles Kellogg
 M8 - Dan Karig
 M9 - Edmund Brelsford

Women:(who competed in every event)

M1 - Natalie Cartwright
 M4 - Carol Van Dyke
 M5 - Jane Banks

Inspiration from Dorcas Wonsavage:

"Skiers! Even in the middle of winter - but don't forget to run! Going for a 15 minute jog after your freestyle races, and running an easy 20 minutes on your day off from skiing every week, will keep you fit, and keep your joints ready for the transition into spring."

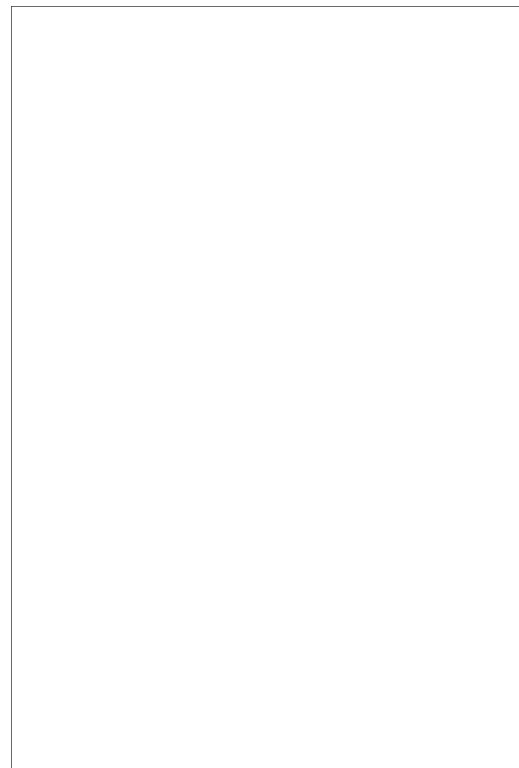
Performance Kick Waxing

by Rob Bradlee

What does it take to have great kick wax for a classic race? Working for a wax company I have people asking me all the time what the wax is. I tell them what I find to be working well, but they often come back with complaints about not enough kick (mostly) or slow skis (occasionally). In this article I'd like to address the correct process of finding the right wax and describe some common mistakes and their cure.

The Basic Process

For either an individual or a team, the process of finding the right wax is the same. The first and most important step is a close observation of nature. Use one thermometer to take the air temperature, and insert a second thermometer a centimeter below the snow to take the snow temperature. Closely examine the snow crystals. Do you have fine-grained new powder, old, well-packed powder, wet powder, old, icy transformed snow, or wet corn snow? The older, transformed snow will require klister. If in doubt, give stick wax a try. Icy snow covered with a small amount of fine-grained snow may require klister covered with stick wax. Having taken the temperature of air and snow, and examined the snow crystals, pick the appropriate stick or klister wax for the air temperature. In borderline situations choose the colder choice to start.



Great support from our ski industry - Atomic, Rossignol, Fischer, Swix, Toko/Yoko on snowy NE Women's Ski Day. See pg. 11 for more! (photo by Anne Donaghy)

WAXING FORUM

First, sand the kick zone of your classic ski. Second, for hard wax conditions apply a thin layer of binder. Third, apply two thin layers of the recommended wax. If the wax isn't kicking, first try adding layers of the chosen wax. Only change to a warmer wax after you've tried a thick layer of what is recommended.

Common Mistakes

Each wax job will vary depending on the skier's weight, the flex of the ski, and the technique of the skier. The biggest mistake most skiers make is using the wax suggestion of a coach or wax technician without factoring their own particular needs. If possible have a professional ski grinder flex test your skis and mark out the wax pocket. If you know your skis are stiff, you will have to put the wax on thicker than what is suggested. If you know you are having trouble with your technique you might have to put on a warmer wax for better kick. Don't be passive. Only you can dial-in the perfect wax job for you. And you must watch the weather. At a recent JOQ we had all our junior racers set up for good kick well before race time. As the start times approached snow began to fall heavily. The softer track required another layer of wax, but those who didn't add another layer complained after the race about poor kick. Coaches and wax techs do their best to provide you with the answers, but knowing your skis and fine-tuning your wax is ultimately the racer's responsibility.

For best kick the wax must be completely smoothed on the ski. Many times skiers come to me complaining that my recommendation does not kick. I always ask to see their skis. More often than not, they have a mountain range of wax bumps on the base of their ski. I cork their wax smooth and they ski away happily kicking without changing their wax selection or even adding wax. Remember, you need to have maximum surface area in contact with the snow to get a good grip. To get a smooth wax job be sure to put on multiple thin layers rather than try the illusory short-cut of one thick layer. Also, cork lightly at first to warm up the wax to make it easy to spread. Let the cork do the work.

If you have a smooth wax job with a wax that should be correct for the snow temperature, but you're not getting enough kick, what should you do? Most folks immediately grab the next warmer wax. Most likely though, they have a ski too stiff for the conditions or inadequate technique to press down the ski they have. Before changing to a warmer wax I always suggest adding a layer or two of what I believe to be the correct wax. For example, at a recent National Masters Championships, a former Olympic skier making a comeback to racing approached me complaining of no kick with the recommended wax. I tried her skis, and, although I weighed more than she did, I couldn't get kick either. I flexed the skis in my hands and saw that they were very stiff. Upon questioning she did confess they were klisters, but they were all she had to race on in the freshly fallen powder. Rather than go warmer, I added a very thick layer of the recommended wax. She skied away smiling and won the race.

Special Tricks

What would skiing be without a few clever tricks to outfox the competition? Everyone has their favorites, but here are a couple of mine. First, if you have the right amount of the right wax, but don't have quite enough kick, or you are worried about warming conditions, you can add a layer of the next warmer wax, and then cover it with a layer of the cooler wax. That will give you the softness of the warmer wax without its drag. Another trick, used only in certain conditions, is to wax very far forward on the ski. This year at the famous Bogburn race in VT we faced a hilly course with snowmobile-set tracks in three feet of powder. Everyone was scrambling to get enough kick and often going two wax temperatures too high for the conditions. Wily veteran Bob Gray assessed the situation and waxed with the correct temperature wax right to the tip of his skis. With this special wax job he bested men twenty years his junior finishing 12th out of 70 racers.

Finding that perfect kick-wax is one of the great challenges of ski racing. Try your best everyday to find the best wax and more and more you will be rewarded with the pleasure of solid kick and great glide.

2003 NENSA SPRING SERIES

Remember -- March 20-25 is the NENSA Spring Series in Presque Isle, Maine, hosted by the Maine Winter Sports Center. \$16,800 in cash prizes. Races for everyone. Only one week after Eastern High School Championships. FIS/USSA/NENSA Points. And lots of fun!

New XC Media!

Andy Newell has just produced a 30 minute video, *Generation X-Ski* that portrays our sport in a new light and should be interesting to non-skiers as well as xc skiers. For info. on ordering, contact akn@hotmail.com.

Beckie Scott -- Olympic Medalist CD-Rom produced by David McMahon and Lise Meloche of XCZone Films contains more than 100 photos and 80 pages of text, offering an inside view of Beckie's preparation for the 2002 Winter Olympics. All proceeds from the CD go to Beckie Scott to support her continuing career as North America's most successful female xc ski racer.

NENSA

NENSA Points and Team Qualifying

by Pat Cote, NENSA Program Director

I get lots of emails. Amongst the list of daily emails, there is almost always one questioning the practice of using NENSA Points to qualify athletes for Junior Olympics. The purpose of this article is to defend this practice and further explain how NENSA points work to rate an athlete's performance.

First, how are NENSA Points determined? NENSA Points are equal to Race Points plus the Race Penalty. Race points start at zero for the race winner and rise depending on the time of the racer compared to the time of the winner. In other words, the closer you are to the winner, the better your race points will be. Race Penalty is the way that we grade how strong the field is at a given race. It is more difficult to be closer to the winner if the entire US Ski Team decides to show up (like at US Nationals,) thus the race penalty from those races will be low. At our most recent Eastern Cup races at Prospect and Notchview, very few elite-level senior athletes competed. This caused the race penalty to be relatively high. Race points and race penalty work together to fairly rate an athlete's performance.

Where did the formulas come from? NENSA uses the same formulas that are used by FIS and USSA. Gaining familiarity with NENSA Points equips our athletes for the ski racing world beyond NENSA. While NENSA athletes qualify for JO's based on NENSA Points, elite-level Americans qualify for World Championships and the Olympics based on USSA Points, and top World Cup skiers qualify for the red group based on FIS Points.

Why has this system worked well for New England? This system, in my opinion, has allowed the Eastern Cup Series to flourish. It allows skiers of all ages to compete with each other and breaks down barriers based on age groups. Our developing juniors are able to test themselves against top local senior athletes, and occasionally even a member of the US Ski Team. In short, the points system allows us to welcome skiers of all abilities to compete in the Eastern Cup Series. Since often the top racers in an Eastern Cup event are not juniors, it takes the focus away from just doing well compared to other juniors and encourages our athletes to go as fast as they can and finish as close as they can to the very best in each race.

One final note on qualifying for teams. There are always going to be athletes on the bubble of making a team. The fortunate ones will just make it, the unfortunate ones will fall short. This will happen no matter what qualification criteria is used. At the end of the 2002 season, I re-scored the JOQ's on the straight percent back system (the system used by many regions for JOQ's) and it changed ZERO of the women and only two of the men who would have qualified that year. I ran a few other formulas, place points, World Cup points, and even the Eastern college qualifying formulas. Still this ended up only changing the bottom 1 or 2 athletes at most. The people who fall just short of making a team are always going to feel that things are not fair. They are justified in feeling this way since it is true that they may deserve to make the team as much or more

than someone who is on the team. At the same time, "fixing" or changing qualification rules will not help. Training well, taking care of your body, preparing your equipment, focusing on skiing fast, and a little luck are what is needed to avoid this fate. In short, if you ski fast enough, you'll make the team no matter what formula is used. This will be the case in trying to qualify for school teams, state teams, NCAA's, JO's, World Championships, and even the Olympics.

What It's All About

by Fred Griffin, NENSA Executive Director

I see them at Women's Day, getting lessons, doing relays with their moms. I watch them crowd a billboard to study results, a Brownian movement of bodies. At races they migrate to my tent and wax table for tips, or to use a form or scraper or brush -- or just maybe, possibly, to borrow some wax -- if I could? Please. Oh, thank you!

I attend high school races and marvel at the passion, at the intensity. I watch Eastern Cups and I marvel at the passion, at the intensity. I watch BKL-ers practicing in a snowstorm. I marvel at the joy.

I receive emails from them daily on countless different topics. They always thank me when I give them advice. When they gather at races I watch them angle their ski hats just so, wear Carharts, put on glitter, covet certain clothes, eye certain equipment. I watch them hang out. I watch them be cool. They make me feel young. They make me feel old.

I watch them warm-up, I watch them practice, I watch their minds wander from the lesson, I watch their minds snap back to task. Every Eastern Cup, every high school race seems to be a reunion of friends. I see them share food, share equipment, share clothes. I watch them run about in a dither at the Festival, swarm at the banquet, tug at too-large lycra suits at the startline.

They fill my Suburban and we take adventures to St. Anne's Quebec or Maine Winter Sports Center, or the next race, or the next practice. I see them gag and rebel when we go into a smoking environment. I listen to them make fun of peers who drink. I take them bowling. They are horrible bowlers.

They come to my camps from all over New England eager to learn, ready to work, focussed on their success. They want to please so badly I have to be careful what I ask of them. They want knowledge. They want skills. They love being outdoors. They love working hard. They love being tired. Tired children and tired dogs are a good thing. I make them tired.

I am helping a dozen middle-schoolers here in Fairfax learn the sport for the first time. I watch them fall, I watch them laugh. They have no clue about cross-country skiing beyond our

U.S. NATIONALS

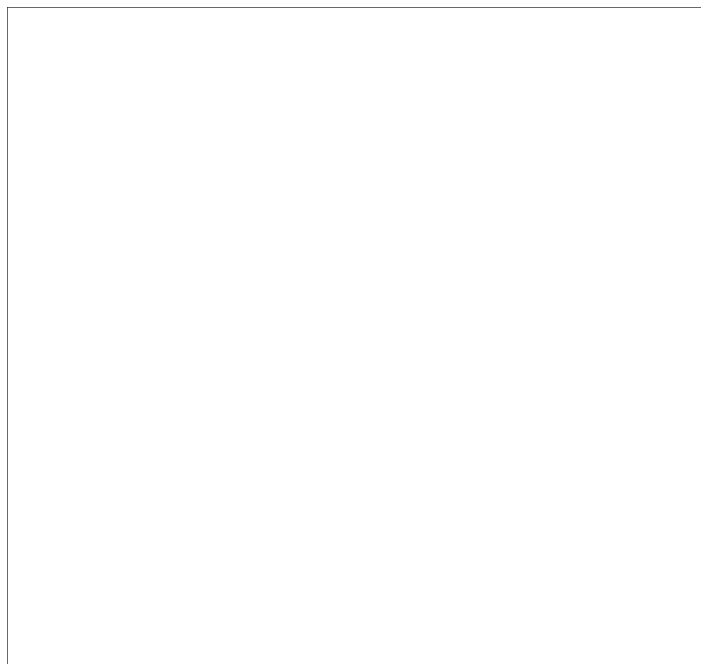
practice sessions. They believe what I tell them, which most people would agree is a disturbing thought. They love what they are doing. I listen to them when their fingers are cold, when their feet are cold, when they're having a bad day, when they're having a good day. They are very rough on my new used Suburban.

All over New England, I see them learn sacrifice, value hard work, develop long range goals in adolescence and hunker down to achieve them. Many do. Those that don't still learn something about themselves, something about life. They learn how to travel, learn flexibility, learn self-reliance, learn how to marshal their resources, how to effectively discipline their time earlier than most of their peers. Even though they are busy around the clock through the week, week on week, they do well in school.

I watch them watching the planet -- they love being outdoors. They love weather -- any weather, all weather. They develop a sensibility for forest, field, mountain, river, the things that inhabit them and their own place in it all. They pick up more litter than they make.

I see them develop a sense of self based on intrinsic rewards. They love applause as much as anyone but they don't need it. I watch them grow up. I see them come back as coaches. I see them come back as parents with their own kids. And in the end, that's what it is all about -- that's what NENSA is all about, and that, absolutely, is what my job is all about.

It's all about the kids.



Andy Newell, U.S. Jr. Sprint Champion, between sprints, U.S. Nationals, Rumford Maine. Andy earned berths on both the World Junior Championships and the U-23 Championships teams. (Dorcas Wonsavage photo)

Chevy Truck U.S. National Championships at Black Mountain in Rumford, ME. by Dorcas Wonsavage

Roger Arsenault began smiling on Thursday, after the Sprints. Four National events had gone off like clockwork, mother Nature was on his side, and he simply had an Eastern Cup race on Saturday and the 30 and 50km freestyle National races on Sunday. Piece of cake for the Chisholm Ski Club.

Whether it's the filing system for the week's worth of results, the PA system mounted to a pair of retired alpine skis and pulled to the new mass start staging area on another pair of recycled skis, or it's the volunteers handing out smiles and coffee at Muriel's kitchen, or moving the A boards that delineate the course, an event at Black Mountain is often more a showcase of the Club members than it is of the racers. And the racers know and love it. They're guaranteed a challenging, well-run race, one that will showcase their skills. And indeed it did that week. The East sent several athletes to the World Championships, that began February 18th in Val di Fiemme, Italy, several athletes to the World Junior Championships in Solleftea, Sweden in early February, and athletes to the U-23 Championships in Valdidentro, Italy in mid February.

The 2003 U.S. cross country team for the World Championships:

Men	
	Dave Chamberlain, 27, Bethel, ME
(2001 Worlds)	Lars Flora, 25, Anchorage, AK (2002
Olympics)	Kris Freeman, 22, Andover, NH (2002
Olympics, '01 Worlds)	Justin Freeman, 26, Andover, NH
	Andrew Johnson, 25, Greensboro,
VT (2002 Olympics)	Torin Koos, 22, Leavenworth, WA
(2002 Olympics, '01 Wlds)	Carl Swenson, 32, Boulder, CO (2002
and '94 Olympics, 3 Worlds)	Justin Wadsworth, 34, Bend, OR (3 Olympics, 5
Worlds)	Women
	Aelin Peterson, 28, Fairbanks, AK (2002 Olympics)
	Kikkan Randall, 21, Anchorage, AK (2002 Olympics, '01
Wlds)	Aubrey Smith, 22, Seward, AK
	Kristina Trygstad-Saari, 18, Bozeman, MT
	Wendy Wagner, 29, Park City, UT (2002 Olympics, '99
	and '01 Worlds)

To the World Junior Championships in Solleftea, Sweden, February 4-9:

Men

Andy Newell (19; Shaftsbury, VT; Stratton Mountain School), Leif Zimmerman (18; Bozeman, MT; Bridger Ski Foundation)
 Steve Scott (19; St. Paul, MN; Minnesota Biathlon)
 Ryan Foster (19; Weston, VT; University of Vermont) Glenn Randall (16; Collbran, CO; Grand Mesa Nordic) Brent Lowen (19; Fairbanks, AK; Univ of Alaska Fairbanks)
 Bryan Cook (19; Rhinelander, WI; Northern Michigan U.)

Women

Kristina Trygstad-Saari (18; Bozeman, MT; Bridger Fndation),

U.S.Teams cont'd on pg. 11

NE WOMEN'S SKI DAY

U.S. Teams, cont'd from pg. 9

Lindsey Weier (18; Mahtomedi, MN; Northern Michigan U.);
Alison Crocker (18; Poughkeepsie, NY; Dartmouth College),
Carina Hamel (18; Southampton, MA; Burke Mtn Academy),
Lindsay Williams (18; Hastings, MN; Northern Michigan U.), Katie
Ronsse (17; Anchorage, AK; Alaska Winter Stars).

To the U-23 Championships Feb. 14-16 in Val d'Isère, Italy:

Men

	Kris Freeman (22, Andover,
NH)	Andy Newell (19, Shaftsbury,
VT)	Torin Koos (22, Leavenworth,
WA)	Chris Cook (22, Rhineland, WI)
	Leif Zimmermann (19, Bozeman, MT)
	Ethan Foster (21, Weston, VT)

Women

Kikkan Randall (21, Anchorage, AK)
Lindsey Weier (18, Mahtomedi, MN)
Aubrey Smith (22, Seward, AK)
Kristina Trygstad-Saari (18, Bozeman, MT)
Melissa Oram (22, Taberg, NY)
Erinn Whitmer (21, Fairbanks, AK)

(Women's Ski Day photos by Anne Donaghy)

Thanks to the New England weather, we had a blowing snowstorm for the whole day, but that didn't dampen anyone's enthusiasm or energy... Olympian Joan Benoit Samuelson (now a cross-country skier!) joked with us that on her drive from Maine she thought it was a good thing that it was a women's event, because she knew that women would still venture out on the bad roads to make it... Thanks to Joan, who spent the whole day with us in clinics, participating in the relay, handing out raffle prizes, signing posters, and inspiring every one of us who talked with her, a Huge Thank You to our sponsor Banknorth for making it possible for her to join us... Thank you to Bretton Woods, a great location for our event, with its rolling fields for our clinics, good food and warm, spacious indoors complete with fire to dry us and warm us up... Thank you to our clinic instructors who were busy all day because so many of our participants wanted to attend so many clinics -- Jen Caldwell, Gina Campoli, Kathy Maddock, Leslie Krichko, Sara Donahue, Tracey Cote, Natalie Cartwright, Sally Swenson, Kathy Swanson, Sarah Dominick, Margaret Caldwell, Marianne Lucy, Dorcas Wonsavage, Mary Heller Osgood, Trina Hosmer, Martha Rockwell... Thanks to our ski waxers Jim Levins, Dave Boucher, Rob Bradlee, Geoff Hurwitch and Kurt Perham who worked away all day long under the tents, not only waxing skis but coaching how to wax... Thanks to Isis for Women, Patagonia, VOMax, MSHO Sports and Shredbetty for the wonderful clothing they brought to demo and the donations of raffle prizes... Thanks to Fischer, Rossignol, Atomic and Swix for the demo equipment they brought for the day, and for the great raffle prizes... Thanks to Cliff Bar for the Luna Bars, to radio station MIX 98.5 from Boston who handed out free Oceanspray juice... Thank you to Dave Hosmer and Chris Osgood who did all the behind-the-scenes work from registration to track setting... Thank you to Ammonoosuc Health Services of Littleton, NH, who we supported with our entry fees this year and who helped us with registration... Thank you to Fred Griffin, NENSA's presence, who arrived before anyone else to set up banners, sold hats, kept us on track and as always was one of the last to leave... and the biggest thanks of all to Trina Hosmer for her unflagging energy, enthusiasm and vision -- she has made our Women's Ski Day possible. See you all next year!

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