

Sandpoint Nordic Club

Newsletter - March 2020



Trail Updates

Pine Street Woods - What a great inaugural season! Thank you for supporting community groomed trails. We look forward to building on and improving trails at PSW. Currently grooming has been suspended. Skiing is still possible, however you may have to walk around bare spots.

Lakeshore Trails - There is still snow to groom and about 5km of trails in great shape for skiing! Continue to check sandpointnordic.com for an up to date grooming report.

Looking for an adventure?

- Priest Lake Nordic Club trails are still being groomed and provide a great day trip destination from Sandpoint. Visit the Priest Lake Nordic Club Facebook page for an up to date grooming report.
- Head to Mt. Spokane for the Spokane Nordic Challenge this Sunday, March 8th. Challenge yourself to a 20, 30, or 50k loppet. Go to spokanenordic.org for details. Day of registration available.

Youth Ski Team Season Recap

By Vicki Longhini



This season, 61 kids participated in the Sandpoint Nordic Youth Ski Team program, 55 in the Recreation program and 6 in the Race program. The Recreation program included an "intro to skiing" group, led by Katie Cox, with Autumn Lear, Kathi Crane and Berkeley Cox assisting; the "new to skate skiing and intermediate skate skiing" groups, led by Paula Lee and Chantal Howard; and new this year was a Race Development group, led by Rebecca Dussault, assisted by Katie Bradish and Clara Cave. The Recreation program ran 8 weeks and groups met Mondays and Wednesdays. The Development team also skied on Thursday and trained with the Race team. In spite of some very challenging weather, coaches never had to cancel practice and with the help of snowshoes and an awesome Outdoor Rec Center at Pine Street Woods, the kids always stayed active, even when they couldn't get out and ski.



The Race team, coached by Dan Patterson and Ross Longhini, started ski training in December, after a summer and fall season of trail running, roller skiing and nordic hill bounding. Skiers met 4 days a week for formal on-snow ski practice, often skiing on their own on other days. The team participated in several races in Canada, Montana, as well as the JNQ (Junior National Qualifier) races in the Pacific Northwest division. This season's race schedule also included two Biathlon events - West Yellowstone, MT and Libby, MT. The final race of the season for the team will be the Rendezvous Ski Race on March 7 in West Yellowstone, MT.

The team, made up of U12, U14, U16 and U18 athletes, pushed themselves hard this season and results delivered on this effort. Clara Cave (U18) ended her season ranked 53 out of 96 total U16/U18/U20 skiers in the Pacific Northwest Ski Association (PNSA, a division of US Ski and Snowboard). Jett Longanecker (U16) ended his season ranked 40th out of 96 total U16/U18/U20 skiers, missing being named to the national team by a single spot within U16 males. U14 boys - Callahan Waters, Kasten Grimm and Fletcher Barrett finished the season in 5th, 6th and 9th positions among U14 males. Jonas Benson, U12, ranked 8th in U12 boys and girls. Callahan Waters achieved high enough scores in 3 JNQ races to be named to the U14 championship team traveling to Minneapolis in March for races during the World Cup event taking place during that time.

All in all, a great season for junior ski training and racing!



World Cup Coming to USA

By Jared France

The city of Minneapolis is finalizing preparations for the first FIS cross country world cup event to be hosted in the USA in almost two decades. U. S Ski and Snowboard Association and the Loppet Foundation are set to sponsor the event that is to take place on March 17th. The freestyle (skate) sprint race will be run at the newly constructed "The Trailhead" as part of the Fastenal Parallel 45 Winter Festival. Organizers have been stockpiling snow since early January and the public will even have a chance to ski the course prior to the contest. As many as 15-20,000 fans are expected to line the course.



In a sprint Nordic ski competition, skiers generally race a 1-1.5 kilometer course which includes a couple of short, steep climbs, fast downhill as well as undulating terrain. Competitors begin with an interval start time trial to determine the fastest 30 skiers. These top 30 are then separated into quarterfinals consisting of five groups of six skiers with each group starting in a head to head mass start. The first two skiers in each group move into the semifinals as well as two "lucky losers" (the two fastest third or fourth place finishers). The six skier final consists of the first two placers in each semifinal as well as two more "lucky losers". The top three finishers in the final are on the podium. Sprint races are very spectator friendly since observers are able to watch the entire race from start to finish.

There are numerous tactics involved including starting fast, drafting, using a slingshot effect and blocking. Sometimes teammates can work together to achieve optimum positioning.

Olympic Gold Medalist, Jessie Diggins from nearby Afton, Minnesota was instrumental in bringing the World Cup event to her home state. After skiing the entire World Cup season in Europe to this point, she is extremely excited to race in her backyard. Jessie is one of the favorites to make the podium in this event as are fellow U. S. ski team members Sadie Maubet Bjornsen from the nearby Methow Valley and Sophie Caldwell from Rutland, Vermont. Jessie is ranked sixth overall in the World Cup and Sadie 7th. Sophie is ranked sixth in the sprint standing. Other skiers to watch include Linn Svahn and Jonna Sundling of Sweden, Anamarija Lampic of Slovenia, and Maiken Caspersen Falla of Norway. On the Men's side, Johannes Hosflot Klaebo is literally running away with the World Cup sprint title.



Following the World Cup sprint races in Minneapolis, World Cup competitors will convene in Canmore, Alberta. The final events of the season will take place March 20-22. These races will include a 10k skate/ 10k classic pursuit for women and a 15k skate/ 15k classic pursuit for men and ending with a 4x5k mixed relay. Canmore is an amazing venue to watch some of the world's most incredible athletes. If you have the time, it would be well worth the trip.

Ole and Lena

Ole is on vacation in Norway and is hiking along a trail leading across the steep wall of a fjord. Suddenly Ole slips on a wet rock and falls over the edge of a seven-hundred-foot cliff. But as he falls he grabs hold of a bush after falling only twenty feet. And there he is, hanging on that bush and looking down at this deep fjord down below him -- certain death. Now his hands start to perspire and he his grip starts to slip so he yells out, "Is anyvun up dere?"

Then he hears a deep voice ringing out over the fjord, "I'm here, Ole. It's the Lord, Ole. Have faith. Let go of that bush and I will save you."

Ole looks down, and then looks up, and he says, "Is anyvun else up dere?"



School Program Has A Successful First Year

By Rick Price

Sandpoint Nordic Club just wrapped up the first year of our new school program. Every Tuesday in January and February found school buses full of anxious children winding up the road to Pine Street woods to go skiing, or sometimes snowshoeing, and spending time outdoors. We hosted two different classes each week and got over a hundred local kids on skis, many for the first time. Our staff and an army of volunteers gave rudimentary lessons, teaching how to get up from a fall, and the all-important snowplow as students traversed the trails. This year we hosted classes from Farmin-Stidwell Elementary, The Waldorf School, Washington Elementary, Kootenai Elementary, and Clark Fork High School. We were also able to get some of the kids living at Kinderhaven on skis. The Pine Street Woods Outdoor Recreation Center was built with a grant to get kids outside. It is great to see it being used for the purpose for which it was built. Plans are in the works to enlarge the program next year and get even more kids outside on skis.



Stay Low and Leave Your Feet Behind

By Bill Tregoning

Nordic skiing is very dynamic, every part of your body is involved. Some movements increase efficiency and balance while others work against you. When I think about the best body position for Nordic skiing I tend to relate to a tennis or volleyball player. The player doesn't know where the ball is heading prior to the serve so they must be able to react quickly. Flexed ankles, hips slightly forward and the torso ahead of the hips allows for a quick reaction. If a player is on their heels then balance and reaction time suffer. The same is true of skiing. Whether you are skating or classic skiing, stay low and leave your feet behind.

Stay low? What does that mean. Lower your center of gravity by flexing your ankles forward, hips over your feet and a slight hinge at the hip to bring your torso forward. You should feel most of your weight on the ball of your foot ready for whatever the trail serves at you. It is natural to move up and down with poling and weight changes but resist standing up straight and pushing your hips forward as this disengages your core and you will lose strength and stability. Stay low, weight on the ball of the foot, efficiency.

Keep your feet behind? Won't I fall over? Yes, if you are standing still, however since you are moving forward when you ski, gravity can give you a boost. Remember that weight on the ball of the foot is the key to efficiency. When classic skiing, landing with most of your weight on ball of the foot during the weight transfer phase locks the ski more securely to the snow for your "kick". Skating with most of your weight on the ball of your foot prevents upper body rotation and loss of balance. Think about a volleyball player who stands on their heels. They just can't quite get to the ball.

Here are a few things to try at home:

1. Stand sideways to a full-length mirror. Flex your ankles, get your hips over your feet, and slightly hinge at the hips. You should feel the weight on the ball of your foot. Look in the mirror, what does that look like? It shouldn't look as though you are about to sit in a chair. Get comfortable finding that position.
2. Stand with both feet side by side. Now move one foot ahead of the other by 6" and try to weight it. Now move your hips over the forward foot. Feel any difference?
3. Get yourself into your new ski position. Flex your ankles enough until you feel yourself falling forward. Start walking but keep your feet slightly behind you. You may accelerate but if you keep up with your feet you won't fall. This is the gravity boost I explained above.

Play with these things in your own skiing. You may be surprised at what it can do for you.