

Sandpoint Nordic Club

Newsletter - February 2021



Race Team Update

Ski racing during a pandemic can certainly look and feel different but it still demands the same hard training and dedication that a normal race year does. The Sandpoint Nordic race athletes started their season last May; running, roller skiing, weight/strength training and mountain biking 6 days a week. Led by coaches Lee France, Dan Patterson and Ross Longhini, these athletes built their race foundation this past summer. Most transitioned in fall into middle and high school sports, making their mark as leaders of their respective teams. Thanksgiving marked the transition to on-snow training and the countdown to the first races of the season.

But, as the pandemic numbers started to soar, ski races started to cancel. One by one, races the team planned and trained for were deleted from the schedule. Even races within our NW ski division (No ID, Washington and Oregon) were not open to our team as states closed their borders to out-of-state racers. Avoiding the impending "all dressed up and nowhere to go" situation, Ross Longhini quickly started reaching out to other divisions and coaches he knew to find races for the team to compete in. Thanks to the very tight and caring community of XC ski racing, he was able to secure a competitive and somewhat unique race schedule for the team this season. While it's meant a lot of miles of travel to out-of-the way venues in OR, MT and ID, some crazy logistics due to COVID, improvising meal prep in parking lots of hotels; race team parents have been over-the-top supportive this season; working with the coaches to get their athletes to both training sessions at Schweitzer every week and races on weekends. In spite of a challenging season of crazy weather and a crazy schedule, the team this year has really delivered some strong results. Led by their captain Jett Longanecker, teammates Callahan Waters, Fletcher Barrett, Grace Rookey, Jonas Benson, Fiona MacDonald and Izzy Waters, have placed top in their respective age groups in almost every race.

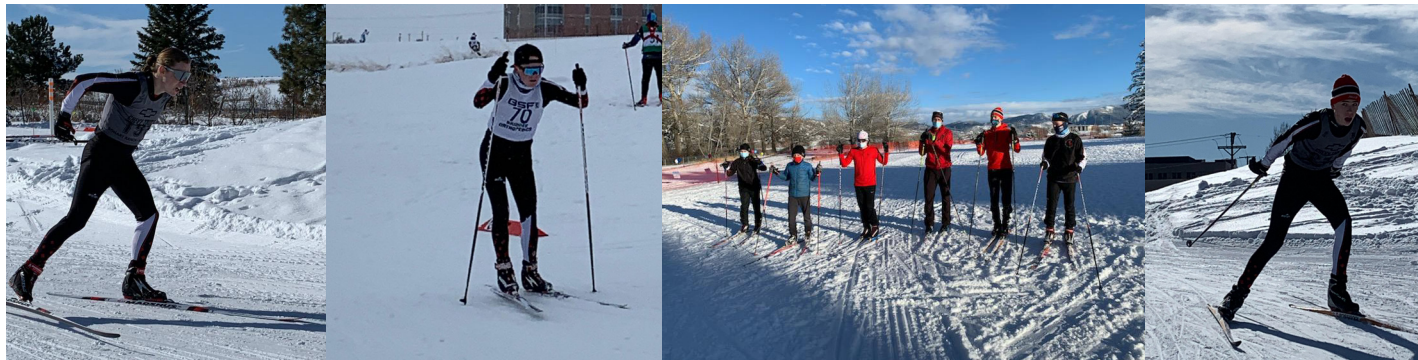
The team will finish off their season in early March at either the Western Region Youth Championships for U14 skiers and younger in Jackson, WY or the Western Regional Junior championships in Soldier Hollow, UT. Even though national competitions were cancelled this year due to COVID, the team is feeling good about their accomplishments and growth as ski racers. They are definitely a dedicated bunch!! When you see them out training on the trails, be sure to give them a "WHOOT WHOOT" as they are putting Sandpoint Nordic on the map!

Upcoming Events

Register for events online at sandpointnordic.com

TBD - Women's Skate Clinic @ Pine Street Woods. The clinic will include skill level specific technique development. Bring your own lunch and enjoy a glass of wine around the fire pits to end the session. This will be rescheduled once there is snow to groom at PSW.

Feb. 26th, Friday - Full Moon Ski @ Pine Street Woods. Join us for a moonlit ski and games from 5-7pm. No need to sign up, just show up! This full moon is a Snow Moon, so there must be snow in the forecast, right?





Random Thoughts While Nordic Skiing

by Bill Tregoning

I tend to drive 10 miles an hour slower returning from skiing than I do on the drive to Schweitzer. I'm just too tired to drive fast.

Your kick wax may not last until you get back to the village.

It is a treat to stop and listen. Birds are everywhere out there, but you don't hear the full impact unless you pause for a moment. If you stop during a snowstorm you can even hear the snow fall.

The wax of the day is not what it was yesterday or will be tomorrow.

Pinecones deter forward motion.

The dark stuff in the snow isn't always bear moss.

Goals change. Goal 10 years ago, to be one of the faster skiers out there. Goal 5 years ago, to be out there with the fast guys even if it was only to say hi when they passed me. Current goal, to find my car in the parking lot.

You can tell that people that don't Nordic ski when they start naming their favorite ski runs and chairlifts. In addition, I am not sure what they are talking about.

Nordic skiing cleanses not only the body but the soul. It is a great character builder and puts a glow on the rest of the day.

Everyday is different. I've had as much enjoyment breaking trail in 6" of new snow as skiing on a sunny day with great grooming.

Since I started Nordic skiing I tend to pay a little more attention to maintaining my fitness level during the summer in order to more gracefully return to Nordic skiing. I have noticed however, that there is still a break in period.

Falling on Nordic skis feels a lot like falling on Alpine skis.

Nordic skiers generally wear a smile.

Whether you are a new skier or have been skiing since childhood, whether you ski 5K or 30k in an outing, whether you are 20 years old or 75, there is no other sport that gives you what Nordic skiing does. Bask in it!

From personal experience I have found that being a Nordic skier does not give you license to eat anything and everything without purchasing new ski pants.

Enjoy the view, when available. There aren't many like it.

I discovered who I would like to emulate when I grow up. While skiing at West Yellowstone several years ago I saw my hero, a gentleman at 96 years old who was out skate skiing and who skis every day.

I have found that days that look uninviting from inside aren't necessarily so. If I can talk myself to the other side of the door it is generally better than I imagined.

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USA World Cup Women

Whether you are a lifelong Nordic skier, beginner, or not a skier at all, one thing is for certain; you should be paying attention to the USA women in the World Cup and their phenomenal performances this season. Rosie Brennan had the yellow leaders bib early this season and has since handed it off to teammate Jessie Diggins who is making waves in historical ways for the US ski team. A few weeks ago Diggins became the first American to ever win the Tour de Ski, and she continues to ski strong into the last period of the season with a chance of taking the overall World Cup title this season. Follow along by watching on Peacock or read race recaps on [Fasterskier.com](https://www.fasterskier.com)



Boulder Mountain Tour - A Virtual Race

As with most "events" this year, the Boulder Mountain Tour, the gem of Sun Valley ski racing, has gone virtual allowing skiers to participate from anywhere around the world. Join a loosely organized group this Saturday Feb. 6th, at the Schweitzer Nordic Trails and challenge yourself to skiing 15k or 30k. The official registration for the virtual race closed on Jan 31st (links included below for where to submit race times), however if you didn't get a chance to register, this is still a great reason to push yourself to get out for a long ski or to ski a little harder than normal.

When to Ski:

- We are launching from the start of the Schweitzer Nordic Trails on Saturday, February 6th at 8 a.m. and I invite you to join us.
- That time doesn't work for you? Then start any time that works for you. The BMT will accept race times any time from Feb. 1st to February 7th.
- Here is more info on submitting race times. <https://bouldermountaintour.com/race-information/>
- Sandpoint Nordic Ski Coach Kasten Grimm will be at the "start line" at 7:45 a.m. taking photos, then out on course after that capturing moments of our Nordic community doing what it does best - ski.

Where to Ski:

This part is totally up to you. The mileage, or in this case, kilometerage can be covered in whatever route you choose. Just pick a 15K or 30K route. Laps and loops on the same trail are absolutely permitted. You can also opt to do this at Mount Spokane or other local Nordic Centers.

Consider how difficult you would like your course to be.

- Black - Laps on Coyote Canyon
- Blue+ - Ski all of Schweitzer's 32K
- Blue - Laps on Cloudwalker
- Green - Out and backs laps on the roundabout trail will provide the least challenging terrain in our area and is an excellent option for beginners looking to feel successful in their early distance efforts.

If you thrive in competitive environments, make a course plan with some friends beforehand so you can push each other to have an energetic race experience.

What to Bring:

- This is a self-supported, virtual distance race. Here's are some tips on how to have the best possible time
- Wear a watch to track your distance and clock your time.
- Carry water and fuel. If you are going out as hard as you possibly can, consider fueling with gels. If you are taking more of a distance tour approach, real, actual food should be fine.
- Feel free to wear previous race bibs, BMT hats, and race suits.
- And wax your skis, folks.

Other Considerations:

- This is not an official Schweitzer event. Other skiers and bikers will be on the trail. Please be polite and yield to other recreationists while on the trails.
- There will be no food, water, or course markers. Please come prepared to self-support while on trail.
- There is no race sweeper. Pay attention the trail maps.
- Make sure you have purchased your Schweitzer Nordic trail pass prior to the event. <https://www.schweitzer.com/plan/nordic-lift-tickets/>



A Lesson on Playing in the Woods

The Pine Street Woods Outdoor Recreation center was built with money from High Five Grant from the Blue Cross Foundation. We received the grant because of our commitment to get the youth of Bonner County skiing. Part of this commitment is our Youth Ski League afterschool program and our race team. Another part is our school program. This year our program is being held on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings when we shut down the road to downhill traffic so the school bus can make the exciting drive up to Pine Street Woods.

Third, fifth, and sixth grade classes from Southside, Sagle, Washington, Farmin-Stidwell, and Northside, Elementary schools make their way up one class at a time. When we have enough snow, we ski. In most classes we find that two thirds of the kids have never been on cross- country or downhill skis before. There is lots of laughing and learning how to fall and get back up. By the end of the morning most kids have a good mastery of the basics.

When there is not enough snow for skiing, we snowshoe or go for a hike. We talk about lifetime sports, and the importance of regular exercise, but mostly we move around Pine Street Woods and enjoy the fresh air. All school participants receive a coupon for a free rental for them and half price rental for the rest of their family. This encourages a return to Pine Street Woods and gives them a chance to show their newly learned skills to their family.

A big part of our program is our volunteers. Over a dozen folks have joined us helping kids get outfitted, hooked into their skis, and giving pointers when out on the trails. A special shout out goes to our Uber Volunteers, Chuck and Margaret Hepner, who have been up with the kids almost every week since the program started last year. We are always looking for more volunteers. If you are interested please contact us at sandpointnordic@gmail.com.



Dear Ski Curmudgeon

Have a question for the Ski Curmudgeon? Email it to sandpointnordic@gmail.com

Dear Ski Curmudgeon, I'm having a very difficult time keeping up with my wife while Nordic skiing. We usually part ways at the Y on the Schweitzer trails as I watch her gracefully skate down Low Overland and disappear into the woods. We reconnect on Cloud Walker where she is patiently doing laps waiting for me. I've tried doing a crappy wax job on her skis and even forgetting her poles, but nothing seems to slow her down. I even thought she would get old and slow down, but realized I'm getting older too. This has been going on for over 25 years and I'm extremely frustrated. Any suggestions? Slightly Depressed

Dear Depressed, Fortunately, for you I have just the solution. There is a wax product that, according to ancient rumor was left here by aliens. It is called klister. If you apply it to the bottom of your wife's skating skis, I guarantee it will make you feel like a speedy Norwegian. The only problem is that it's not very easy to contain. She will end up with it all over her poles, clothes, your car and probably her hair. Sorry, I don't do marriage counseling. SC

Dear Ski Curmudgeon, With the invention of e-bikes and other cool science stuff, do you think someone will invent magic Nordic skis that will make hills less steep? Somewhat Lazy

Dear Lazy, They're probably already in the works, along with "effortless running shoes". SC