

December 1, 2001

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# Snow Dance

A Quarterly Newsletter  
of the Maine Winter  
Sports Center

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## RE-ESTABLISHING SKIING AS A LIFESTYLE IN MAINE

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*By Andy Shepard*

The weather experts are predicting this to be another banner snow year, and in spite of an unseasonably warm fall, The County has still been able to squeeze in its traditional November snowstorm. It wasn't enough to get the whole County on skis yet but when it comes we are certainly ready for it.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Lodge and its roller-ski loop in Fort Kent are complete and will be considered one of the premier nordic facilities in North America. In its third season of operation, the center is again ready to host a full slate of state, national and international competition this winter.

Our newest venue, the Nordic Heritage Center, located between Presque Isle and Fort Fairfield is scheduled for completion in March although the trail system and lights will be in full function throughout the winter. It, too, is preparing for a full competitive calendar highlighted by the Verizon Nordic Heritage Sprints in March. This is going to be an exciting two days of competitions with some of the top racers in North America going head to head for over \$8,000 in prize money. If our efforts to host the 2003 US National Cross Country Championships prove successful, this will also be a great opportunity for the competitors to preview the courses.

Bigrock alpine area continues to make impressive strides in its efforts to bring exceptional skiing at exceptional prices to the community. MWSC has added Tim Prather as General Manager of Bigrock. Tim comes to us with over 25 years of ski area management experience at Big Sky and Red Lodge in Montana. He and his staff have been busy with upgrades to the lodge, a new rental shop, trail maintenance, and best of all, a new paved parking area.

Quoggy Jo Alpine Area in Presque Isle also continues to offer the essence of the community ski area experience. Everything they do is done well, with the family in mind and all at a great value.

Take all these skiing facilities and add the 11 community cross country ski trails located throughout Central and Northern Aroostook County and you have a critical mass of some of the best skiing available in North America. For those of you from The County, I hope you get a chance to get out and take full advantage of these exceptional resources. For the rest of you, I hope you get a chance to come up and visit this winter and see what all the excitement is about. In any event, please check out our website at [www.mainewsc.org](http://www.mainewsc.org) on a regular basis throughout the winter for news, updates and race results.

See you on the trails!

## HIDDEN REWARDS - BROADENED PERSPECTIVES

By Walter Shepard, MWSC  
Continental Team Athlete

During the last weeks of my year spent living and training at a ski academy in northern Sweden, my coach, Per Nilsson, and I sat and reflected on the time I had spent at the school. We agreed that I had made considerable progress in the sport of biathlon but that I had still had much work to do in order to achieve international success. As the meeting came to a close he wished me luck with my training and offered his support if ever it was needed in the future. Before I left, Per, also a coach for Sweden's Junior National Team, said to me with a chuckle, "Next year the junior world championships are in Siberia, I hope to see you there." Though I had already set my sights on earning my first U.S. Junior team berth that coming winter at the world junior team trials, the moment inspired me, and I was given new focus. To this day there have been few experiences more rewarding than when I called Per and the other coaches at the school in Sweden to tell them I was on my way to Russia.



Touching down in Kahnty Mansisk in the early hours of morning you could see that it was bitterly cold outside. Snowdrifts piling up over a foot tall in some places were barely evident along the dimly lit runway, causing some concern as to the safety of our landing. As they opened the cabin doors and we began exiting the plane, a few members of the community stood at the foot of the stairs to greet us. Blanketed in fur from head to toe, and obviously much warmer than any of us, we all looked on in envy as we made our way across the runway to the terminal. Once inside, we were greeted by two sleepy customs agents who proceeded to check every passport with painstaking detail. This process took an average of five minutes per person, but for me it was a different story. The passport I was carrying was almost six years old at that point, and since its issue date my physical appearance had changed quite dramatically. Not to mention the fact that I had platinum blonde hair at the time, remnant of my high school state championship from the month before. For a moment, I thought they might not let me in the country. The customs agent must have stared at my passport for a few minutes scrutinizing every detail of my picture only to look up at me and do the same. They let me in eventually, though, I think mostly because of the anxious line of two hundred athletes behind me waiting to get in. Once inside the main terminal, bags were collected and grouped by national-

ity and taken directly to our wax rooms at the venue. We were then directed towards buses that had been lined up outside the building and driven to our hotel. At this point it was five o'clock in the morning and I had been up all night. Settling into my hotel room I took off my clothes in a messy heap next to my unpacked bags and went directly to sleep.

The next few days were a huge culture shock. Jogging through the city during my morning runs before breakfast, I got a small glimpse of the city. On Main Street there wasn't much by way of commerce, just a mix of small stores offering things from small souvenirs to Russia's staple export, Vodka. Mixed among them were huge apartment buildings, seeming to house most of the city's forty thousand inhabitants. As I would pass people on the street I'd be lucky to get any type of response from my cordial hellos. Once back at the hotel and around the biathlon venue, however, I was elevated to a rock star status. Walking to and from the biathlon stadium became a chore as all the athletes, especially the Americans, were surrounded by throngs of kids (mostly age twenty and under) wanting autographs and "presents" as they called them. I was even awakened from a nap one afternoon in my hotel room to find a group of young women at the door asking my teammates and I if we had girlfriends.

*Hidden Rewards continued on page 3*

*Hidden Rewards continued from page 2*

And then there was the racing, by far the most valuable part of the trip. I was competing against the world's most elite juniors in the sport of biathlon, and I was gaining much-needed experience and perspective to become an international competitor. Walking out to the start area of my first race, I was surprised by my demeanor. Neither too nervous nor too relaxed, I was calmed and focused. This was an unfamiliar feeling for me. As I made my way through equipment check (a process that allows officials to check the rifle and skis to make sure they are within the allowed specifications) athletes stood by their rifles stretching and preparing to start. The group was quiet and uninviting. Each athlete was in his own world, and I was inspired to do the same. Taking off my warm-up suit and walking toward my start, two officials placed small timing devices around my ankles, which would allow the television network to display times as the race progressed. As I stepped up to the starting wand I focused on the long straight away through the stadium that led to the trail. Hearing the beeping of the clock as time expired, I pushed off and began striding with a powerful skate, ignoring any previous strategies I had about pacing. Propelled by the cheers of thousands of excited Russians, I pushed harder and harder through the stadium riding the adrenaline rush and not feeling the pain. It remains one of the greatest feelings I've ever had on skis.

The race that day was an amazing experience. The course was very difficult and the shooting even more so. I only hit thirteen of twenty targets and as a result was given seven minutes in penalties on my overall time. I finished in fiftieth place but wasn't

too disappointed with my first international performance. For the relay most of the team was tired from a long season racing in Europe, and we couldn't improve on our previous sixth place finish. Still, it was another day of valuable racing experience for me, and I realized for the first time how rare consistent shooting is at the junior level, a valuable weapon in races to come.

After an elaborate closing ceremony and reception most of the athletes returned to the hotel to pack. A few hours later we put our things back on the buses and were driven to the airport. Employing a painfully inefficient process of boarding and packing the plane, our departure for Munich was delayed several hours. Many of the athletes were anxious to get home to our western lifestyles and creature comforts. Once in the air and on our way back to Germany, though, I thought heavily on my experience through the previous ten days. I reflected on the opportunity to have been in Russia, a place that I probably wouldn't have been to in my lifetime had it not been for biathlon and was happy I had the opportunity. Then, thinking about the races, I was pleased just to have been a part. Though I hadn't done exceptionally well at the championships, I realized that there would be more biathlon to come in my lifetime, hopefully including another Junior World championships. Looking around, I noticed the smiles of those who had met their goals, and the disappointment of those who didn't. At that point I recalled a sign that has hung on my bedroom door for several years now. It is the slogan of the Olympic Games, *"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important*

*thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."* Focusing on that, I was happy, and I began to think of my training for the upcoming season and how I would once again be able to say I was glad just to have taken part.



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## TIPS FOR EARLY WINTER

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By Eli Brown

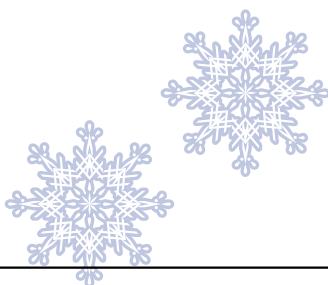
\*SCHEDULE. If you haven't already, it is time to plan out your winter in terms of races and training. I like to work backwards from the most important races to see how other races and training should fit in.

\*TECHNIQUE. It is important to spend the first few weeks on snow getting comfortable on skis. There are a lot of small muscles that haven't been used for a while (even if you have been rollerskiing). The majority of the on snow training needs to be easy to build up these balance muscles.

\*EQUIPMENT. This is the time of year to make sure every thing is in working order. Get all your skis out and get them cleaned and waxed. If there are things you need to get like gloves, long underwear, poles...try to prioritize them and get what is most important now.

\*WAX. Every serious racer needs a wax iron that is made for skis, not laundry. The basic necessary tools are plastic scrapers, nylon brush, brass brush, ski ties, and a form bench for waxing on. **(Lee Bard of Woodland is making custom wax benches to sell. Call him if interested at; 492-1446).** For glide wax, it's not so important what you have, as long as you have some and you are using it on a regular basis (race skis should always have wax on them unless you are skiing on them...). For kick wax it is best to buy one full line of a brand like Toko or Swix, and of course get a few corks, wax remover, and a putty knife for cleaning the bases.

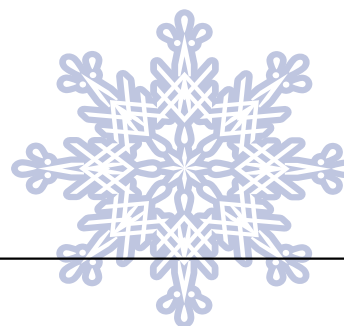
\*QUESTIONS? If you have ANY questions about skiing, drop me a line at [eli.mainewsc@ainop.com](mailto:eli.mainewsc@ainop.com).



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## MASTERS' PROGRAMS

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By Will Sweetser

**M**aine Winter Sports Center, in cooperation with local ski clubs, has formed two masters' training groups for Aroostook County skiers over 30 years old. In Caribou, MWSC and the Northern Skiers Club have recruited roughly 15 skiers to participate in regular training sessions. Additional interest prompted the formation of a women's group as well. Both groups met once a week for technique and strength training. In Fort Kent, a group of two to four met weekly for dryland technique and rollerski training.

With snow just around the corner, all three groups invite interested skiers to join their weekly workouts. Training is aimed at building specific strength, perfecting proper ski technique and having fun! Maine Winter Sports Center coaches will provide technique and workout planning advice at most sessions. For more information on masters training, trips and events, please check the Maine Winter Sports Center website at [www.mainewsc.org](http://www.mainewsc.org) or contact [will.mainewsc@ainop.com](mailto:will.mainewsc@ainop.com).

**MARS HILL  
CLIMB RESULTS  
11/11/01**

**Age 10 - 14**

- |                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| 1. Russell Currier  | 16:55 |
| 2. Garrett Stiles   | 23:05 |
| 3. Nicole McQuade   | 23:05 |
| 4. Courtney Lundeen | 27:42 |
| 5. Ethan Stiles     | 42:14 |
| 6. Ethan Garrison   | 43:48 |
| 7. Caleb Jewett     | 44:19 |

**Age 15 - 18**

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| 1. Jeffery Alden | 14:00 |
| 2. Brian Powers  | 15:24 |
| 3. Rob Underwood | 16:58 |
| 4. Josh Garrison | 17:49 |
| 5. Jesse Sayers  | 18:24 |
| 6. Ben McQuade   | 18:32 |
| 7. Kyle Taylor   | 20:39 |

**Age 19 - 29**

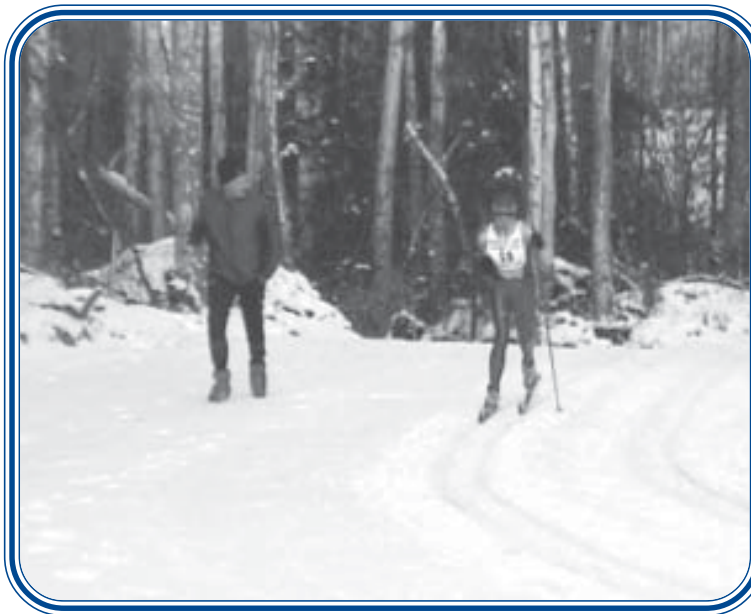
- |                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| 1. Sarah Dominick | 18:09 |
|-------------------|-------|

**Age 30 - 39**

- |                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| 1. Will Sweetser | 15:11 |
| 2. Karen Saenger | 20:45 |

**Age 40+**

- |                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| 1. Brent Jepson    | 18:29 |
| 2. Allyson McQuade | 29:50 |



**MWSC Continental Team member Sarah Dominick** getting split time information from Coach Eli Brown at the season openers in Fairbanks, Alaska Nov. 4, 2001.

**MWSC MISSION  
STATEMENT**

- \* *To re-establish skiing as a lifestyle in Maine.*
- \* *To leverage that lifestyle to create a new economic model for rural, isolated communities of Maine.*
- \* *To further leverage that lifestyle to create opportunity for the youth of Maine.*

## IT TAKES TIME TO BE A GOOD ENDURANCE ATHLETE

By Per Nilsson

To be a good endurance athlete takes time. It takes many years of consistent training and planning. You must be very motivated and willing to take responsibility for your own training.

The day you decide that you will try to reach a higher level, maybe the international level, or the Olympics it's good to have the facts. What kind of demand will it be concerning training? If you don't know what it takes, it is hard to take every little step towards your goal. You can never reach the top without a high volume of training.

The average age of the world's best cross country ski racers is 29 years for men, and 27 years for women. The average number of years that the worlds best skiers have been training year round is 13 years.

The best men put in 700 to 900 hours a year of quality training, while the top women put in 600 to 850 hours a year. The top racers train 10% of high intensity, 90% of endurance.

### Training for Teenagers and Kids

Now that you know what the best training in the world is like, it is important to see the steps one must take to reach the highest level. In research they have found out that the best athletes do not have a specialization in one sport too early. They have had a wide base, and a lot of training during their earlier years.

For younger athletes age 10-15, the training should be fun and a lot of variation of different sports. The most important thing is to get a base of

physical activity.

Here is a general progression in volume for younger skiers:

Age 16: 350 hours/year  
Age 17: 420 hours/year  
Age 18: 500 hours/year  
Age 19: 550 hours/year  
Age 20: 600 hours/year

### Training Philosophy

- Endurance training is simple. The hardest part is to carry out the training in a structured way with a long term perspective.
- Apply basic principles of physiology when you plan your training. Don't mix too many principles in one training session. Focus on high intensity, low intensity, upper body endurance, and strength in different training sessions. Each training session needs to have a purpose.
- Periodize the training for better stimuli and recovery.
- Try to plan the training with variation to keep it fun and challenging.
- Listen to your body. You know better than anyone else how you are responding to the training, and your level of fatigue.
- Work with personal skills and goals. One of the best ways to improve is to focus on your weaknesses.
- Recovery and restitution is important for a good progression.
- Don't train when you are sick.
- Have fun!



### PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Bronze: Do five regular pushups.

Silver: Do five regular pushups, followed by five "clap" pushups (clap hands in between each pushup).

Gold: Do five regular pushups, followed by five "clap" pushups, followed by five "clap" pushups in which you alternate from hands close to hands far apart.

Good luck!



*We hope to see you at the 10th Mtn. Division Cross Country Ski Championships and Grindle/Berghuis Ski Meister Festival which will be held December 26-30, 2001. \$4000 in scholarships will be awarded. Please check out our website at [www.mainewsc.org](http://www.mainewsc.org) for general information, event schedule and printable forms.*



## BILL KOCH LEAGUE

By Will Sweetser

The Bill Koch Youth Ski League (BKYSL) was established in New England to promote youth participation in cross country ski racing. Named after Bill Koch, a Vermonter who is, to date, the only American Olympic medal winner in Nordic competition, the BKYSL sponsors events around New England for skiers aged 5-14. Many of our country's best racers today started as Bill Koch skiers twenty years ago.

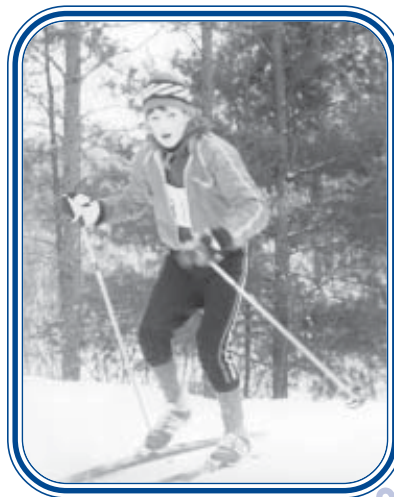
Through Maine Winter Sports Center, Northern Maine has been established as a separate BKYSL region. This means that Aroostook County youth who choose to participate will have their own start lane, relay team and coaches at the New England Bill Koch Festival in Farmington, Maine in early March. Aroostook County already boasts ski clubs and winter carnivals in almost every town. This infrastructure gives our kids a chance to develop into excellent ski racers. This year's New England Bill Koch Festival provides a perfect opportunity for us to meet young skiers from around the region and to test our mettle against them in friendly competition.

Maine Winter Sports Center will offer two Bill Koch race trips for interested 10-14 year olds this winter. On January 18-20, County youth are invited to race

in Farmington, Maine. On March 1-5, MWSC will offer a trip to the New England Bill Koch Festival. Races range from a 400m sprint to 5km individual races and a 3 km relay.

MWSC will host two informational meetings on Bill Koch racing and the trips outlined above: 6:30 p.m., December 11, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Lodge, Fort Kent; and 6:30 p.m., December 12, at the Riverside Park building, Presque Isle. Recreation Program skis will be distributed at that time.

For more information, please contact: Will Sweetser at 328-0991 or [will.mainewsc@ainop.com](mailto:will.mainewsc@ainop.com).



**MWSC Coach, Eli Brown** racing Bill Koch Ski League, age 11.

## AHEAD OF THE CURVE

By Eli Brown

One of the biggest challenges in this sport is to stay ahead of the curve. The best example of staying ahead of the curve is American XC legend Bill Koch. At twenty years old, "Kochie" won a silver medal at the Olympic Games, in Innsbruck, Austria. He stayed ahead of the curve through the innovation of skating techniques, which in the early 80s earned him various world cup wins, and two World Cup overall titles.

To be successful in this sport one needs to have this innovative spirit. A young racer should look way ahead into the future and ask themselves how the sport will change by the time they are 30 years old, then start preparing. One strong belief I have is that the sport is going to get faster and faster. One of the ways to stay ahead of the curve is to focus more and more on a strong upper body. Even on the world cup today, the best skiers V2 much further up hills than they used to. Racers are double poling in classic races more and more, even though the courses are getting tougher and tougher.

It is vital to study what the best skiers do: their training, their technique, waxing, equipment, etc. But, don't be afraid to try new things in practice. Balance your study of the best with your own creative and critical study of ski racing, and maybe someday you will get ahead of the curve.



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### *WHAT I LIKE ABOUT SKIING*

*By Sarah Dominick  
MWSC Continental Team Athlete*

I have given my love for skiing a lot of thought in the last few weeks. The season between the first frosts and real snow is the hardest of the year for a skier. It is foolish to wish time away, so I have been thankful for the nice days while I dance for the snow gods. Still, I find myself wondering why I put myself at the mercy of the fickle weather.

Perhaps I am eager for the quiet that comes with fresh snow, for the world to be covered with white, to be able to click into my skis—to put my roller skis away for the winter. For me, there is nothing so nice as a cold, crisp day on the cross-country trails. The

quick glide of my skis, my body cooperating with my mind's wishes, these make the wait for snow worthwhile.

As for skiing itself, I love to race down a hill, up the next one, along the track searching out the animals, birds, or other skiers. I can't wait for the temperatures to drop so I can put on my favorite hat, or mess with kick wax. Winter itself is inspiring with the glittering snow and clean landscape; skiing makes the frozen outdoors an unlimited carnival ride. A ski across the blanketed ground for a vista, or through a race for time, is accompanied by an uplifting of the spirit.

I can let the worries of the world fall away during a good ski. The swish of my poles, the way my body warms up as I move, the freedom of a ski trail ahead all make the hours of preparation and struggles with technique disappear into a vague memory, and I am happy to be skiing.

