



Snow Dance



**A Quarterly Newsletter
of the Maine Winter
Sports Center**



Ski Center



Maine Winter Sports Center



Maine Winter Sports Center



US BIATHLON ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS MOVING TO PORTLAND WILL HAVE POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE COUNTY

When the MWSC was created, an important aspect of our mission was to build infrastructure and local support that would allow biathlon and skiing to define a new economic model for Aroostook County. We also believed that to be successful in that effort, it would be important that biathlon and skiing engage the interest of the entire State.

The 10th Mountain Center in Fort Kent and Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle are considered by the Europeans to be among the best skiing facilities in the world. The events that have been hosted at these facilities are also considered among the best in the world and have put very favorable images of Aroostook County into millions of European homes. Each of these impressions is a potential visitor to The County and a solid business opportunity for the private sector. When you combine all of this with the fact that the US Biathlon Development Team and Maine Winter Sports Center's headquarters are also based in Aroostook County, it is clear that biathlon is having a positive and potentially significant impact on the economy of Aroostook County.

Banknorth agreed last month to become the title sponsor of the national governing body of Biathlon in the United States – the US Biathlon Association (USBA). This is a 6-year deal and will mean over \$1million to the USBA. It will also mean that biathlon will be the first Olympic sport ever headquartered in Maine.

It also means that a significant amount, in fact, a substantial majority, of funding for the US Biathlon Association is coming from Maine. More Maine companies have expressed an interest in signing on as well and it appears the percentage of funding coming from Maine will only increase. In order to be in a position to fully support the USBA, and to ensure that this partnership has its maximum impact on northern Maine, Banknorth requested that the headquarters move to Southern Maine.

This move will not only impact the USBA, it will also have a powerful impact on Aroostook County. For biathlon to reach its full potential as an economic engine for Aroostook County, it needs to be perceived as the official sport of the *whole* state of Maine. The World Cup was a huge success because of the incredible efforts of thousands of tireless and selfless volunteers and corporate sponsors from Aroostook County. Northern Maine media also did an exceptional job of informing and covering the event and its impact.

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THE SIT-SKI



by Sherry Dubis
Tenth Mountain Ski Club

Would you still pursue your same daily activities and hobbies if challenges were added to the equation? What if you ski in a sit-ski and there is fresh powder waiting to be skied upon, but your guide was unavailable? Would you chance tipping over into the deep powder on the side of the trail during a solo training run? It could take an agonizingly long time to get back up alone. These and other challenges are no deterrents to the athletes we are about to welcome to northern Maine this March. While there are many individual needs within this competitive sphere, there are some general considerations for each classification group. The sit-ski information is particularly interesting.



A sit-ski is a highly customized piece of equipment. Each one needs to be outfitted with belts to hold the skier firmly in place. Depending on the height of the skier's center of gravity there may be three or four belts with quick release buckles in case of a fall. Sledges must be padded and fitted properly for each individual to prevent injury from pressure points. With paralysis, exposure to cold needs

special consideration. Some sit-skis include additional upholstery for protection from the elements. The sit-ski height is anywhere from 3 to 4 inches off the snow, which is perfectly functional on a well groomed track, but snow that accumulates quickly can cause drag slowing the skier significantly. Imagine the upper body fatigue!

Equipment selection is important. Athletes rely on the double pole technique for propulsion and train to develop their upper body strength. Ski poles reach to the top of the head or higher. The angle of the pole plant is important so that the athlete can have maximum power. Racing baskets are a must. Round touring baskets don't work even for recreational sit-skiers because round baskets won't allow for the poles to hit at the proper angle for a good, hard push.

I'll bet you're thinking that a sit-ski course must be straight and flat. Not so. There are plenty of turns and hills to keep things interesting and challenging. There is no steering device on a sit-ski. Skiers control direction by dropping one shoulder toward the opposite knee as in alpine skiing. Athletes can slow down by dragging a palm or fist in the snow. Control can be tricky when the terrain slopes so that in slick conditions sideways sliding can occur. The higher the center of gravity, the less stable the skier, and chances of side slipping or tipping on a slope or corner increase. During competitions ski guides are available to help fallen competitors get back on the tracks in the same location in which they went off the tracks, but may not propel the skiers in any way. Ski guides are recognized and receive awards along with athletes, but the main spotlight is on the sit-ski athlete.

Most of this information was gleaned from the Guide for Mobility Impaired Program published by Ski For Light, Inc. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

US Biathlon Association moving continued from page 1...

But it is important to note that the World Cup was also a success because of the contributions of central and southern Maine based sponsors like the Libra Foundation, Peoples Bank and the Bangor Daily News. Southern Maine media also did a tremendous job of covering a northern Maine event. In fact, the result of the state-wide media coverage was hundreds of spectators traveling to Fort Kent from outside Aroostook County, filling hotels, restaurants and shops.

If all of the operations and infrastructure of biathlon were in Aroostook County, it would be much more difficult to continue to count on this kind of support from the whole state. With all of the biathlon facilities, the training, the teams and the Maine Winter Sports Center headquartered in Aroostook County, it is logical to locate the headquarters of the USBA in Portland, in close proximity to the headquarters of those supporting the sport financially.

I believe it is through statewide approaches like this that the concept of *two Maines* will eventually disappear, to be replaced by one Maine, with many partners, sharing a common goal.

Written By Andy Shepard
President & CEO of MWSC



Visit the
2005 Paralympic
Nordic World Championships
at the
10th Mountain Center
Fort Kent, Maine
March 9-21



“SHOULDN’T YOUTH SKI FESTIVALS BE A CELEBRATIONS OF KIDS BEING KIDS ON SKIS? AROOSTOOK YOUTH SKI FESTIVAL WILL BE A GROUNDBREAKING EVENT THAT DOES JUST THAT!”

By John Farra

Ski festivals for kids have historically been about bibs, anxious kids and overwhelmed parents. They typically boil down to one thing – proving who can get from point A to point B on skis in the shortest amount of time. The Maine Winter Sports Center and the Northern Skiers Club will take a dramatically different approach on Saturday March 5th at the Caribou High School ski trails. The first ever Aroostook Youth Ski Festival will give the event back to the kids and let them do what they would do if we left them alone for the day on skis.

Instead of focusing just on ski racing, this event was designed so that all different types of youth skiers can display their skills on skis instead of just how fast they go. With events like a XC Radar Speed Skiing , XC Power Ski Drag, Double Pole for Distance, XC Slalom Course, XC Standing Jump Turns, XC Distance Event, Super Short Barrel Sprints, Tandem Skiing Relays, Big Air competition, Laser Rifle Demo, Obstacle Course, Games and other skiing challenges available ALL-Day for skiers.

With thousands of youth skiers getting introduced to xc skiing all over the county all winter long in ski clubs, schools and community recreation programs there are plenty of kids who might find this a fun and exciting way to spend a winter weekend day! Learn more at www.aroostookskifest.org .

Entry to all events, which will include a lunch, is only \$10. Skiers age 5-13 are encouraged to register for the event either through their local ski program or online, by March 1st.



OFF TO FINLAND

By Annelies Cook

After a week of high hopes and expectations, athletes who came to Presque Isle for the 2005 World Championship Team Trials were able to go home having experienced a fantastic and competitive races series. Beautiful sunny weather, amazing volunteers, great coaches and race organizer all helped to make this years Team Trials a great success. With athletes coming from all over the U.S., World Team Trials were a great experience for many of the local Maine Winter Sports Center Athletes. Though there is a fair amount

of pressure in these races to garner the top four spots in the Youth and Junior categories for World Championships, athletes from the county kept their calm and



did the job they had to do. Locals, Russell Currier and Newt Rogers filled the top two spots in the Youth Men’s Category while Continental Team imports, Annelies Cook and Bjorn Bakken ranked in the top for the Junior Men and Womens Categories. This year, athletes will be heading to Finland on March 3rd to Race in Kanti Lahti with all the best Junior athletes in the World. For youngsters like Newt and Russell, these races will be amazing stepping stools for growth of their biathlon careers and also important race experience for the 2006 World Junior Champi-
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ALFOND CVA SCHOLAR UPDATE



DOMINIQUE CYR

He was the overall winner in his first USSA competition at Shawnee Peak on January 2nd, racing against Maine's best 13-14 year olds.

Dom was invited to compete on January 9th against J1 and J2 men in a USSA Giant Slalom race at Sugarloaf/USA. Racing on the world renowned Narrow Gauge trail Dom lost precious time in his first run hiking a gate but returned with a dramatic spread eagle turn in the lower section of the second run posting the fastest run time earning him the fastest result for the J3 boys and, despite his first run hike, finished 28th against the J1 and J2 men. Speaking with Dom's dad after the race Alan said, "There's no way Dom could have pulled that recovery off last year. There's no doubt CVA is where he belongs."

In two weeks Dom will be traveling to Whiteface, NY for an Eastern Regional Series where he will face the best in the Eastern United States in GS and Slalom. Dom's immediate goal is to reach the Junior Olympic Qualifiers in late January and February. Three times a year CVA conducts athlete physical testing. In his first two rounds of testing Dom has met or exceeded the goals he set with each coach.

Academics

Dom is taking a typical freshman class load consisting of English 1, French 2, Health, taught by CVA's full-time Athletic trainer, Algebra 1, and World Cultures, which involves a trip abroad in the fall for early season on snow training as well as cultural enrichment. Dominique's teacher's stated that he is a self-motivator and works incredibly well independently, and has a great understanding of literature.



MATT BAKER

Matt's passion lies with boarder cross. He has very high expectations for himself this year and a good sense of the work it will take to get him to where he wants to be in the competition world. Matt's past training has been primarily at Big Rock Mt. in Presque Isle. Being at Sugarloaf affords Matt riding time in a park with jumps, a half pipe and Sugarloaf's new super pipe, this is all terrain he has not had the opportunity to train on in the past.

Matt aspirers to compete on a world cup level. Competing in the US snowboard Grand Prix at Mt Bachelor, OR in early January along side Olympic medalist Ross Powers and Kelly Clark, CVA's own Seth Wescott and other world cup athletes gave Matt a feel for the hard work it takes to compete at such a high level. The Chevrolet US Snowboard Grand Prix will be televised on NBC sports January 16, at 5:00pm EST and OLN, time to be yet announced. This competition features top riders America vying for \$300,000 in cash prizes and spots on the Olympic snowboard team.

Matt's coaches comment that "Matt displays an eagerness to learn and pushes himself to reach new levels on his athletic journey."

Academics

Academically Matt is taking college prep classes such as physics, English IV, Calculus, Digital media, and psychology. According to his teachers Matt is producing excellent work and is consistently prepared engaged and respectful in class with honest and insightful comments.



BENEDICTA SITZMARKERS

THE LITTLE SKI CLUB THAT COULD



By Lisa Ammerman & Dannette Moddy

In Southern Aroostook County, Katahdin commands the western vista. Snow blankets the rolling fields and ski trails criss-cross them until April. This is home to the “Benedicta Sitzmarkers”.

Benedicta Elementary School serves 24 students, from prekindergarten through grade six. Here, in 2001, school staff hatched an idea to integrate a cross-country ski program into the curriculum and form an extracurricular ski club. Supported by the Maine Winter Sports Center, and guided by the WinterKids Outdoor Learning Curriculum, students develop their skills during Physical Education classes, and enjoy free-ski practice during their recess period. The curriculum is further integrated to include Nutrition with the support of the Maine Nutrition Network. A constantly growing ski-resource library includes video, periodicals, books and catalogues.

The Club, known as the “Benedicta Sitzmarkers”, (“sitzmark” being a Scandinavian term for the impression one leaves in the snow) was aptly named. What an “impression” these little athletes have made! The community has embraced this fast-growing and highly successful enterprise, and now enjoys a free ski equipment loaner program in addition to regular weekly meetings and special events. Benedicta citizens are encouraged to attend “Sitzmarker” meetings, and the volunteer Cocoa Guardians always provide a smorgasbord of snacks for hungry skiers. There were many cameras on hand for “Goofy Ski Costume Day” on January 26th, when Benedicta Elementary School’s ski park hosted a parade of cleverly costumed revelers.



The Bene-Skiathon for Tsunami Disaster relief, on January 14th, raised a total of \$2,259 for UNICEF as participants skied into the night, and the hills were alight with headlamps. The response from the surrounding communities was overwhelming, with generous donations of cash for Tsunami victims, and a delicious picnic for the fundraisers.

Benedicta is eagerly anticipating its third annual “Benedicta Fun Cross-Country Ski Day”, in partnership with the Maine Winter Sports Center, on February 19. Staff from the MWSC arrives with ample ski equipment for everyone to enjoy clinics, loppets, ski terrain park and trails. A ski museum, the Sitzmarker Ski Shop, ski swap, demonstrations, door prizes and healthful refreshments have grown the popularity of the club by leaps and bounds. In 2004, 175 people enjoyed the day of family-friendly fun, up from 93 the year before.

The Benedicta Elementary ski park and adjacent trails stay neatly groomed by a snowmobile on loan from the MWSC. In the summer of 2004, a local contractor donated fill and bulldozer services to create two training hills. In addition to

well-attended student fundraisers, the Maine Support Network has awarded the ski program two “Teamwork For Kids” grants. The Wal-Mart foundation has bestowed the club with a Community Grant. In recent days, Maine Handicapped Skiing has provided the “Sizmarkers” with an affordable Bi-Ski, an adaptive ski device that facilitates seated participation.

We, the parents and friends of Benedicta Elementary School, are exceedingly pleased and proud of our “Sizmarkers”, who are developing a love for a lifelong sport and healthy winter lifestyle.

*Off to Finland
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onships to be held in Presque Isle, ME. For last year Juniors, Annelies Cook and Bjorn Bakken, World Champs in Finland will be a last chance to show their mettle among the best before entering the world of Seniors. This year, World Junior Championships will be held in Khanti Lahti from March 24th through the 21st. Athletes will be heading to Finland on the 3rd of March in order to adjust their bodies from the stresses of travel, time changes and simply being in a foreign country, as well as, to make sure that they are in top form for the upcoming races.

For Senior athletes, World Junior Trials doubled as North American Cup # 6. MWSC Continental Team athletes, Haley Johnson, Beth Ann Ellingson and Walt Shepard were all able gain vital racing experience for success in Europa Cups later in the season.



POST SEASON SKILL DEVELOPMENT



By Will Sweetser

As the ski racing season draws to a close around New England, most of us look forward to a few weeks of R and R. Putting the feet up on the couch, flying south for a week on the beach, or spending some time starting the garden are generally accepted as the appropriate end to training year. We all need a rest, both mentally and physically, from the wear and tear of traveling and racing. Almost every physiologist I've ever spoken to suggests a sustained 2-3 week period of light activity as a regeneration phase before resuming training for another year or competitive season.

But hang on a second. Let me try to convince you to put those plans on hold! For skiers who are developing racers or for those who are trying to add new techniques to their repertoire, spring offers some of the best ski training of the year. In Maine's western mountains and in Aroostook County, snow often lasts well past the racing season. Those two, three, even four weeks beyond the last race of the season can give junior racers a chance to really focus on ski skills without the pressures of racing. Weekend trips to an area with decent snow cover can easily account for an additional 10-15 hours of skiing while an athlete transitions to spring training, track, cycling, tennis, etc. While 10 hours may not seem like a lot, think for just a minute about how many hours of real technique training you've done this whole season. Those 10 hours in the spring could account for a quarter, a third, even half of your technique training on snow this year!

So what should you do on snow during this time? My suggestion is to focus on your weaknesses and make sure that this is skill development training, not just another excuse to pad the training log with hours of distance or unnecessary

intervals. Assess the areas of technique where you need the most work. Common areas are uphill classic skiing, V1 skating, downhills, corners and terrain transitions. Determine the factors that limit your performance in these areas—do you struggle with balance, are you stronger on one side than the other, do you have a difficult time with rhythm? Once you know where you need to improve and what is holding you back, you can



formulate a plan for skill development that is both fun and rewarding.

First, remember that the point of these spring skiing sessions is enjoyment and skill development, not "training". Keep your warm up and cool down easy. If you want to bushwhack through the woods for warm up, do it! If you've always wondered what's just over the hill on that snow covered logging road, go find out—just make sure that you're having fun and not going too hard.

Second, focus on only one or two specific skills in each session. If you need to improve your uphill classic skiing, don't try to do uphills, downhills and corners all in the same day. Use each session to repeat the same skill in several different ways. Working on classic technique uphill could involve 20-30 repetitions of the same hill with varying skill elements involved. For example:

- 2x up the hill normal striding
- 2x up with only left pole
- 2x up with only right pole
- 2x up with no poles

- 2x up with very short strides and choppy arm movement
- 2x up with very long strides and full follow through
- 2x up alternating 5 long strides with 5 short strides
- repeat the entire sequence

A similar approach could be applied to downhill training, involving tuck practice, tuck skating, touching alternate hands to the ground on downhills, tucking very low or somewhat higher, etc.

Third, remember that you are trying to teach your body a new and improved movement pattern. Each skill development task should be relatively short, less than 1 minute, to minimize fatigue. Even though you may not be going particularly hard, your body is trying to develop a new neuromuscular pathway and the demands are fairly high. The entire skill development portion of each session should probably not last more than 30-40 minutes. Make sure to include adequate rest between focused efforts. 2-3x the length of the skill section, especially if it involves uphills, is not unreasonable. Skill training demands that you are fresh, so whenever possible, perform the skill development drills early in each session.

Finally, keep in mind that old training adage: practice makes permanent, perfect practice makes perfect and permanent. Enlist some help in your quest to improve. Get a friend to come along to watch and offer suggestions. Bring a video camera along. Check your shadow on a sunny day to get an idea about body position. Ask a more experienced racer—or coach!—for suggestions. Better yet, do all of the above.

Hope to see you on the trails this spring!

MORNING HEART RATE TEST

By Kate Whitcomb

It is easy to wake up on a rainy, cold morning and decide that an extra few hours would benefit your body more than a workout. Vice versa, it is easy to wake up with a sore throat and decide to train. One method of double-checking your opinion of your health with your body's is to take your morning heart rate. By recording your heart rate daily, your decision to train or not to train will be clearer. This is how I take, record and compare my heart rates each morning.

I wake up and go to the bathroom whether I really have to, or not (It is important to keep the routine the same each morning. If I walk to the bathroom one morning and not the next, it will show in my heart rate).

- I take a small drink of water, put on my heart rate monitor and lay back down.
- I have my monitor (Polar S610i) set for 7 minutes with a beep at 5 minutes and it records my heart rate every 5 seconds. I start my watch.
- 5 minutes later it beeps and I stand up.
- 2 minutes later it beeps again and I am finished.

I then go back (in my watch) to the 5-second intervals and record them on a weekly graph. Once you have a few days of data, it is easy to compare how your body was feeling day to day. Take a look at the graph below (a full week of monitoring) compared to what I did and how I felt each day.

The first 5 minutes let you know how rested you are (relative to sleep). How high your heart rate jumps when you stand suggests how healthy your body is. Finally, the last minute and a half shows recovery (how well your body has recovered from previous workouts).

Monday – The graph shows that I got enough sleep (9 and a half should be)

and 95 is a fairly healthy max (6 minute mark). Recovery is good too, but since Monday is a scheduled day off, I take it. Total hours, 0.

- Day off.

Tuesday – Plenty of sleep, health and recovery good (It should be since I took a day off on Monday).

- Strength in the morning, bounding intervals in the afternoon (level 5). Total hours, 2.5

Wednesday – Sleep and Max look good, as does recovery, game on!

- Easy freestyle roller ski. Total hours, 1.5

Thursday – Enough sleep. Max is getting a little high but the recovery is good, I'll pay attention to how I feel, but I'm not going to get excited about it yet.

- Strength in the morning, run with over-speed (80 meter level 5 sprints) in the afternoon. Total time, 2 hours 15 minutes.

Friday – The graph reminds me that I have not had enough sleep (which was 6 hours), max is getting higher (99bpm) and my recovery is minimal. I take a 2 hour nap rather than working out.

- 2 hour nap, day off.

Saturday - Sleep is back to normal (that nap helped). My max and recovery look good. Apparently taking Friday off was just what I needed. Intervals are a go!

- Roller ski intervals (2x1min, 5x4min, 2x1min) all out (level 5) switching between classic and skate each set. 2.5 hours total.

Sunday – Not enough sleep and my max and recovery have gone crazy. This is an easy week and although tomorrow is a planned day off, I don't want to get sick. Any workout I do today would be less than 100%. I would rather start next week fresh.

- 1 hour nap, day off.

Give it a shot. 7 minutes isn't much to ask for such helpful information. Just remember, the more mornings recorded, the more accurate your predictions can be. Also, compare your heart rate to your own (not to others!). You may find that 55 beats per minute suggest plenty of sleep (where as mine should be below 45). Have fun!

FITNESS STATION AT NORDIC HERITAGE CENTER



By Colin Rodgers

General strength is a necessity for skiers of all levels. Here at the Nordic Heritage center we welcome skiers of all abilities and want to aid in their improvement. Therefore, for my community service project I wanted to create something that all could benefit from. In conjunction with the Maine Winter Sports Center administration and coaching staff we decided that a fitness station at the Nordic Heritage Center in Presque Isle could be beneficial to both the general public who simply visit the venue and to those training at the venue on a regular basis. The fitness station incorporates a set of dip bars, pull-up bars, an incline sit-up bench, a roller board, a slack line and hopefully by next spring a rope climb and gymnastics rings. It is envisioned to provide an alternative to general strength training in the weight room and with any luck will get people outdoors and allow them to incorporate a general strength routine into a running, rollerskiing, or skiing workout.



Maine Winter Sports Center

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MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR COMING EVENTS!!!

Feb 25th NHSC Skiathlon & Full Moon Party 2.5km CL & 2.5km FR - Presque Isle

Mar 5th Aroostook Youth Ski Festival - Northern Skiers Club -Caribou

Mar 6th Madawaska Valley Ski Sprints – 5km FR – Madawaska

Mar 9-21 2005 Paralympic Nordic World Championships at 10th Mt. Center - Fort Kent

Mar 12th Himie Towle Memorial Race – Sprints & 7.5km FR – Presque Isle

Mar 13th Big Rock Ironman Uphill/Downhill Race - Mars Hill

Mar 14-20 2005 World Jr. Biathlon Championships - Kontiolahti, Finland

Mar 19-20 3rd Annual Arooski Ski All County Trails in 24 Hours

Mar 24th Season End Celebration – 6pm-10th Mtn Ski Club Host -Fort Kent

Mar25th NHSC Full Moon Party - Presque Isle

10th
Mountain
Ski Club
Wins
Governor's
Award



The 10th Mountain Ski Club has been selected by the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, Health and Wellness as a winner of a 2005 Contest for Communities Award in the Youth-Community category. This is the second consecutive year a Healthy Hometown program has won this award. Congratulations to Sharon Chasse and the 10th Mountain Ski Club.