



Kivitski

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SASKATOON NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.saskatoonnordicski.ca

April 2024

A look at the Winter that wasn't!



Eb's Day was enjoyed by many inspite of the lack of snow on the trails

Photo courtesy of Sheryl Riis



The sad reality on Eb's Trails Winter 2023/2024

Photos courtesy of Kate Germin



SASKATOON NORDIC SKI CLUB

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Geoff Meinert

Well, that was an interesting year! The Club celebrates another successful season of cross country skiing, but it was a significantly trying year with the weather. The snow came very late, got super cold, melted, eventually coming back a month later, then melted again. For those of you who regularly got out and skied, kudos to you. Although the snow was mostly missing this year, our dedicated volunteers worked miracles, to have the best trails possible in Saskatoon at Holiday Park, Wildwood and Kinsman Park.



Geoff Meinert

At Eb's Trails the snow never really came and never stuck around, but we did manage to have a successful Eb's Days with over 100 people attending the event.

I want to thank our volunteers and board for successfully delivering another cross country ski season for our members. Your hard work and dedication to the sport of cross country skiing does not go unnoticed.

EB'S TRAILS NEWS By Kate Germin

This season of skiing at Eb's Trails was disappointing indeed. Some years we have groomed as many as 10 to 13 times, but this year we did a full grooming only twice! We wish everyone a wonderful summer and hope for more snow next season.

See photos on cover!



SKI-AT-SCHOOL by Jan Sedgewick

Ski-At-School has completed the 2024 season, such as it was.

We had 67 classes registered, due to start on January 8th. With weather/snow issues and later STF sanctions we were only able to hold 25 sessions. But those 25 classes or 750 students had a blast and left tired but exhilarated.

This year we applied for and received a \$750 grant from the Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon to subsidize the bus cost (approx. \$125 each) for Community schools who would NOT attend due to other draws on their classroom budgets. In those cases, we also offer to waive their \$50 per class registration fee, if that poses a barrier.

We had four Lead Instructors who did the advance contacting of each registered classroom teacher and received class lists with student names and measurements so that we could pre-assign, and therefore hasten, the gearing up process.

We budget for one hour per session and we pay coaches even if the session does NOT go ahead. The work has been done and should be paid for.

We also had a team of nine instructors who formed teams with a Lead to teach and encourage the students. While it was sad to have so many cancellations, I believe these instructors enjoyed their time and will be back again next year.

As the Coordinator, I was very happy with the team that has formed over the past seven years.

This job includes the following assignments:

- ⇒ recruit instructors and ensure certification and criminal
- ⇒ record checks are done
- ⇒ set up the online registration (we use Signup.com)
- ⇒ liaise with both the Saskatoon Public and Greater Saskatoon Catholic school divisions
- ⇒ organize equipment maintenance (waxing and repairs)
- ⇒ set up & take down/put away equipment
- ⇒ deal with scheduling changes
- ⇒ apply for and do follow up reports for grants
- ⇒ deal with the indoor facility staff and trail groomers
- ⇒ countless other things that arise in a season like this one.

We continue to be successful in accessing funding from:

- ⇒ CrossCountry Saskatchewan (CCS),\
- ⇒ The City of Saskatoon Grants dept.

- ⇒ The Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon.
- ⇒ Eb's Source for Adventure has been our ski waxing sponsor since the very beginning.
- ⇒ The SNSC also supports this program as a vital part of outreach and "Skivangelizing" for our wonderful winter sport/activity.

If you think you might like to be part of this next year contact Jan Sedgewick @ skiatschool@saskatoonnordicski.ca

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YOUTH PROGRAMMES by Dan Fuller



Jackrabbits had a great season this year. Despite the variable weather conditions the athletes learned a lot and had a great season.

First, I want to thank all of the coaches who were involved in the program. We had 28 coach volunteers who prepared lessons with no snow, braved the cold, and organized super fun lessons for all of the different age groups. Thank you, coaches.

Second, we had over 220 athletes participate in the program with many families turned away due to lessons being full. The program continues to grow and there is a great club atmosphere at all lessons. Our cookie and hot chocolate spending was over \$600 this year, a testament to the athletes love of hot chocolate.

Last, this will be my last year as the Jackrabbits coordinator. The club is looking for someone to take on the coordinator role. The coordinator role comes with a \$5000 stipend from the club. I estimate that I spent around 60 hours per month in October and November (Registration, TeamSnap setup, recruiting coaches). Once registration is closed it takes 10 hours/week including coaching/being at lessons. I can help coordinate the TeamSnap and registration stuff for the next person but would like not to have to organize each specific practice and communicate about cancellations, etc. I have a very detailed Google Drive with all the emails, timelines, and things that need to be done during the season. If you are interested in taking over this role please email youth@saskatoonnordicski.ca.

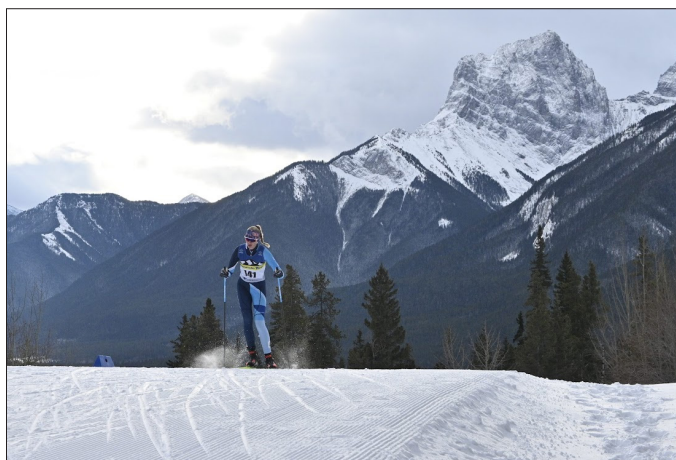
HIGH PERFORMANCE UPDATE by Alison Meinert and Geoff Meinert



Our Club's high performance (HiPer) skiers have made it through a very tough and challenging season. Only a few weeks rest before a new training year starts at the beginning of May!

From training camps, local races to national competitions, the season has been packed full of events. HiPer participants competed in the provincial Sask Cup Race Series with great success. Our team was consistently on the podium at the races held in La Ronge and Saskatoon.

A big highlight of the season was watching the best skiers in the world compete in the FIS World Cup races held in Canmore in February. Many Saskatoon skiers took in the four days of racing at the Canmore Nordic Centre. Lots of photos and autographs with the likes of Jessie Diggins and Johannes Klabeo!



For the first time in many years, maybe decades, Saskatoon Nordic sent a team of 11 athletes to compete in Nordiq Canada's Ski Nationals, this year held in Gatineau, Quebec from March 9th-16th. As has been the story this season, the

weather was a challenge. A major rain storm cancelled the first day of events and positive double-digit temperatures made for extremely challenging conditions. The organizers worked miracles and managed to pull off three races on a shortened 2.5km course.

Athletes: Julia Bourassa, Maria McCartney, Natalie Meinert, Riel Shakotko, Heidi Wall, Abbey Zimmer, Alistair English, Graham Farthing, Jamie Farthing, Pano McCartney and Isaac Zimmer.

Full results can be found on Zone 4
<https://zone4.ca/event/2024/plkLW8/>

Interested in high performance??

For new members interested in high performance or young athletes transitioning from our youth programs, the SNSC high performance programs have 2 steps. The *Youth* program is an introduction to racing program with a focus on developing ski skills, physical literacy (agility, balance, coordination), speed and approaches to racing. It introduces 9 to 14 year olds to the fun of competition, different types of races and exposure to training. Participants in the program need to have intermediate classic and skate skiing abilities equal to completion of at least one year of Jackrabbits Level 4 program. The program runs from September to March, starting with rollerskiing

and other dryland activities until the snow flies.

As skiers progress, they can graduate to the senior program. Athletes are typically 15+ years of age, have strong fundamental ski skills, good physical conditioning and are motivated to improve their personal skiing performance. The emphasis at this stage is on developing physical conditioning and ski technique in a training and racing environment. Athletes are encouraged to train year-round, with multi-sport activities in the off-season. Participants will be encouraged to race in the Saskatoon Grapefruit Cup race series, attend Sask Cup level races, and attend out-of-province races including Westerns and Nationals.

If you are interested in finding out more about the program please contact us, our contact info is below.

To check out photos from our season please visit <https://nordicphotosk.weebly.com/>

Thanks as always Cory Farthing for being our team photographer!

For more details about the programs please visit the Ski Club website.

Alison Meinert
saskatoonyouthhiper@gmail.com

OUTREACH - TRY IT OUT ADULT INTRODUCTORY NORDIC SKI LESSONS by Gail Motsi

The Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club added a new outreach program this season for adults who wanted to try out cross country skiing. The Club provided equipment and a brief introduction on how to ski and participants practiced under the guidance of certified instructors.

Lessons were held on Monday nights, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the K&S Facility, Gordie Howe Sports Complex. Due to weather and snow conditions, only three lessons were delivered with a total of 23 participants. Registration was managed through Event Brite, the cost was \$20, and the lessons were promoted in the Winter Leisure Guide and the Kiviski and on the Club's Facebook page as well as through other relevant social media.

There was a keen interest in the lessons and participants enjoyed them. Most were able to ski out to Holiday Park's trails to give them a recreational ski experience. Many indicated that they intended to continue skiing in the future.

We plan to offer the introductory lessons next season to continue to promote cross country skiing in Saskatoon. Thanks to the instructors, Ed Kozowy, Brian Thorstad, and Gail Motsi for helping to deliver the program.



SUNDAY HIKING 2024 by Sheryl Riis, Touring Co-ordinator 306-382-9462

The skis and snowshoes are put away and now it is time to get outside and enjoy spring hiking!

We usually hike about 10 – 12 km, at a relaxed pace, with rest stops for water and lunch. We meet at 9:45 a.m., at various locations, according to which direction we are headed. The Saskatoon arrival time is about 5 – 6 p.m.

Hikers should also be Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club members. Newcomers may attend one “free” hike to check out the club, before signing up.

Please bring a lunch, lots of water, clothing layers, sunscreen, hat, a sit-upon..., and wear sturdy shoes. The weather and terrain can vary throughout the day. Up-to-date information is posted on the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club website calendar, and the SNSCTouring@groups.io club group. The group can be reached under the website drop-down for “Lessons and Activities”, then “Hiking,” and then SNSC Touring Group.

* When carpooling we pay the driver \$10.00 per person for gas.

* Members may also post additional hiking tour possibilities.

See you on the trails!

Sheryl Riis

Spring Hikes Schedule

Sunday, April 28 – Douglas Park Sand Dunes

Meet: 9:45 a.m., at the Saskatoon Field House parking lot, off Preston Avenue

Leader: Hardy Menke 306-477-0593

⇒ hiking the Douglas Provincial Park nature trail, and sand dunes, located south of Elbow

Sunday, May 5 – Miner’s Creek

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot, by the park

Leader: Hardy Menke 306-477-0593

⇒ hiking about 12 km through forest, with some open areas, and vistas

Sunday, May 12 – “Mother’s Day” - Borden Hike

Meet: 9:45 a.m. across from the Lawson Civic Centre, in the Lawson Heights Mall parking lot, by the park

Leader: Sheryl Riis 306-382-9462

⇒ hiking about 12 km through grassland, over sand dunes, and through wooded areas, near the North Saskatchewan River, with lunch beside the river

Sunday, May 19 – “Victoria Day!” – No Hike Planned

***People are always welcome to organize their own walk/hike. Please let others know via the Google Group.io.**

Sunday, May 26 – To Be Announced

Leader: Jeff Thorpe 306-250-9266

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED SKIERS REPORT by Stanley Windels

The Saskatoon Blind Skiers have had the shortest ski season that I know of, in what I believe is my 41 year history with the Club. We think we had only six Saturdays of skiing. The good news is that I can say, probably along with many others, that I didn't fall once on the ski trails all season.

Thanks again to Lorelei Ehman and Lauren Miranda for the training session, held on January 27 and to the Saskatoon Nordic Ski Club for their ongoing support.

We are again grateful to the CO-OP For the success of our club fundraiser.



One of our skiers, Ron Walsh, attended and enjoyed "Ski for Light" held in Kananaskis Alberta at the end of January.

Our last ski, and Spring AGM was on March 9, with almost all of the executive remaining in their positions for the coming year. We are encouraged by the addition of some new blind skiers and guides this season.

Our spring walks will continue along the Meewasin Trail, Saturday mornings from 10 to 11 AM, until May 11. We start and end at the Broadway Roastery, on the corner of 12th Street & Broadway Avenue, where we have coffee after the walk.

For more information about guiding, or participation in the Saskatoon Blind Skiers programme please email Joanne at Joanne.Ferguson@Sasktel.net

Have a good summer, and hopefully we can be in good shape for a longer ski season next winter.

ADULT INSTRUCTION UPDATE by Bruce Simms – brucesimms@sasktel.net

Adult Ski Instruction

Like other club programs, adult instruction faced serious challenges due to the late coming of snow and the cold weather. No snow before Christmas led to very limited registrations and on-going postponements. Classes were further delayed by the cold weather snap. Many course fee refunds were processed due to either insufficient registrations to hold a course, or folks being unable to attend re-scheduled courses. In the end we were able to put on two learn to classic ski courses and downhill skills. This was three out of our typical seven course offering. Instructors taught few private lessons for similar reasons.

We'll have to look to next year country for a better season. I hope everyone enjoyed the trails when available. It's a wonderful sport.

Get Bendy for Better Skiing, Fitness and Longevity

Ilvo Niskanen of Finland and the Russian Bolshunov are sometimes identified as the two best male diagonal stride technicians in the world. They seem to get a little bit more than their competitors on every stride. For one skate you might look to Norwegians Simon Kreuger or Johannes Klæbo as the very best. Focusing on the technical skiing attributes of World Cuppers, we observe some common traits that should be of interest to all levels of skiers.

Their whole-body positions are more forward, their legs bend more, and they display great balance on one or both legs. Observing them over several stride cycles we see that motions are smooth and coordinated, and they've the ability to apply timely power to drive forward momentum and relax unused body parts. It's true that genetics plays a huge role in determining potential to rise to elite levels of sport, so, why should the rest of us care what these skiers do? A key reason why we ski and do other physical activities is to maintain and improve our health over the long term and slow decline. This short article touches on improving joint mobility, strength, balance and coordination.

What to focus on:

- Ankle and hip mobility and strength help achieve the deeper forward leg bends we see in elite skiers. This also serves to take pressure off your knees and contribute to long term joint health. One thing to think about is deep single leg strength and balance training where the knee goes over and even beyond the toes. This is typically done with lighter weight and higher repetition. Body weight only often works as you can vary intensity by utilizing different exercises and variations. Single leg work make sense as both skiing and life are mostly on one leg at a time. You may want to search “Knees Over Toes Guy” or some of the body weight training proponents on YouTube for training ideas.
- Core strength and a bit of core engagement is needed to stabilize body position in skiing and life and help prevent injury. Don’t forget to train your obliques and low back in addition to your abdominals.
- Is tightness holding you back? Decent flexibility is required for more effective and efficient skiing. Hips, legs, back and shoulders are key areas to consider. A body part can be weak and tight at the same time.
- Train balance to improve skiing, general athleticism and help prevent falls. A limited amount of this can produce significant improvement. Begin to challenge balance from whatever level you’re at.
- As skiing is a whole-body activity, your training should include movements that utilize multi body parts and build several athletic attributes. You’re more apt to stick with fitness that you find playful and fun.

Physical therapists and qualified personal trainers and coaches can help you determine your areas of improvement and develop a suitable training program.

brucesimms@sasktel.net

Adult Instruction



Courtesy of Bruce Simms