



# LAPPE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2010/2011

[www.lappenordic.ca](http://www.lappenordic.ca)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Werner Schwar



Hello everyone, Welcome to what I hope is mid-winter. We have had 3 months of great skiing so far starting in mid-November, and hopefully we will have 3 months more finishing in mid-May! Most people think I am crazy for saying this, and yes I suffer from ski addiction, but what can be better than being able to ski for 6 months a year?

Our Club has hosted some very successful events this season so far. The World Junior Trials races held at the beginning of January went off incredibly well. Working together with Big Thunder, we hosted athletes from across Canada. I know those competitors among us were all incredibly proud to be from a Club that puts on such a first class event. A big thank you to everyone who helped out with the event.

In addition, the Club hosted the 32nd Lappe Invitational, as well as many Tuesday night races. Since we hopefully will have three more months of winter, make sure you get out and support the events we still have left, as there is no shortage. With Valentine's Day, Women on Skis Day, the 24 Hour Relay, the Run and Ski, as well as more Tuesday Night Racing there is something for everyone, not just racers. If competing is not your thing, consider coming out and helping with timing or another job that our race organizing crew will be happy to teach you.

Enjoy the rest of your winter; the best skiing is yet to come.

Werner

## HAYWOOD NORAM AT LAPPE

The World Junior & U23 Trials (also known as the World Senior Distance Trials, Ontario Cup #2, Canada Winter Games trials, Teck Sprints and Haywood NorAm races) were a resounding success. Volunteers from the Lappe Nordic and Big Thunder Nordic ski clubs as well as community volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure that everything was as perfect as could be.

The many months of trail work, building, planning and preparation did not go in vain. In spite of the seasonably cold weather, the three days of racing went off without a hitch. Racers and coaches were full of praise for the course and race organizers. From Olympian George Grey: "Another hard fought win today. Tight times are making the races exciting. Thanks Thunder Bay, great skate course." (<http://twitter.com/ggreyski>)



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## A REAL TASTE OF INTERNATIONAL RACING

### By Michael Somppi

The evening following the final race at the Thunder Bay World Trials event I was in a blissful daze, exhausted from the days efforts and in a sort of stupor from my recent success. All my years of training, the endless hours of running and rollerskiing, the countless interval sessions, have led me to this pinnacle. The goal I have worked so hard towards and never given up on was finally accomplished, I qualified to represent Canada at the World Under-23 Championships. What a feeling! And on my home course, the Lappe trails, of all places. It couldn't have been any more perfect.

One week later I was sitting on a plane flying over the Atlantic Ocean. My first destination with Canada's Junior & U23 Team was Vierumaki, Finland. A brand new Scandic Hotel alongside many kilometers of rolling ski trails greeted us upon our arrival. In my short three night stay in Vierumaki I managed to fit in 2 runs, 3 skis, 2 saunas, 1 game of bowling versus the U.S. Team, and the highlight, 1 trip to the Peltonen Ski Factory in Hartola.

On January 20<sup>th</sup> the Canadian Team split up with some athletes traveling to Estonia to compete in the World Cup races and some athletes remaining in Vierumaki to continue training. I joined the group traveling to Estonia. After a couple hours' drive to Helsinki we hopped on a ferry to cross the Gulf of Finland and land in Tallinn, Estonia. From there we drove across the rolling countryside to Otepaa, Estonia's winter sports hub. Apparently Otepaa had record breaking amounts of snow this season and the hefty snow banks provided proof; everything seemed to be covered in a glaze of white.

Two days later I stood on the start line of my first distance World Cup, and my first race in Europe ever, facing what is touted as one of the toughest World Cup courses on the circuit. The majority of the course was very flowing, with challenging, but manageable climbs aside from one monstrous climb. This particular climb started at the base of the Otepaa ski jump hill and ended right at the top. It was so steep even the best World Cup athletes were forced to step out of the track and herringbone. The boisterous crowd and TV cameras lining the side of the entire climb were intimidating and acted as motivators to get up that mountain of a climb as fast as possible. After 3 laps of the 5km course I crossed the finish line with a smile on my face. In my mind, I just conquered the hardest World Cup course; what else do I have to be afraid of now? I finished 62<sup>nd</sup> out of 75 competitors. Not exactly a noteworthy result, but hey, I've got to start somewhere right?

The next day I managed to climb out of bed and race the Classic Sprint World Cup. The race course was much tamer and had some cool elements with bridges and laps through the stadium (which by the way is massive). My race again was nothing spectacular, finishing 66<sup>th</sup> out of 77 competitors. At least I wasn't last! It was impressive watching Daria Gaiazova race to a personal best 8<sup>th</sup> place.



With only 4 days until my next race and the major focus of my trip, the World U23 Championships 15km Skate Individual Start, it was time to rest and utilize all the recovery techniques available to me: the cold tub, sauna, stretching, foam roller, and Normatech (a machine which massages your legs using air pressure). Thursday was the big day, the Skate 15km. Thankfully the race organizers did not include the monstrous ski jump climb in the Junior/U23 race courses so the 3.75km race course was much more manageable. I started strong up the first climb out of the stadium then settled into my race pace. The individual start format made it easier for me to dissociate from where and who I was racing and focus on myself. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> lap I was struggling to maintain a high pace. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, Kevin Sandau blew by me at the start of the final 3.75km lap. I knew this was a decisive moment in my race and my competitive instincts kicked in, go with Kevin. It was exciting skiing behind Kevin who was getting splits that he was challenging for a medal. I was careful not to step on his skis or poles because every second counted for him. We came into the finish with the

cameras trained in on us. I crossed the line and was surprised to see 7<sup>th</sup> place beside my name. I knew 15 fast guys were still coming behind me... how many would beat my time?

When all was said and done, I finished 14<sup>th</sup> place! Kevin finished a very impressive 5<sup>th</sup> place. It was a bittersweet result for me as the Cross-Country Canada selection criteria states you need to place top twelve to qualify for the National Team and I was only 10 seconds from 12<sup>th</sup>. Initially I was somewhat disappointed. Afterwards I took a step back and I realized I have to be satisfied with my performance. I did my best on that given day and 14<sup>th</sup> in the world isn't too shabby. I mean I was super pumped just to qualify to race here. I had never really given much thought to what my goals would be if I happened to actually qualify for Canada's U23 Team.

I was exhausted after the race, completely wiped. Though I desperately wanted to race the classic sprints, I knew one day off wouldn't be enough to recover and race fast again. I made the decision to skip the classic sprint and focus on the 30km Pursuit. It was exciting watching the U23 guys and gals duke it out in the sprints on TV. Jess, Lenny and Allyson had amazing performances finishing 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> respectively.

By Monday I was feeling very good again and ready to race fast. However, the 30km Pursuit did not go at all as I had hoped. Racing is a constant learning experience and I learned a lesson about classic ski selection the hard way on Monday. I took a chance selecting a pair of classic skis for a broken down, softer track.

Unfortunately the conditions did not align with my vision and Monday's track was rock hard and slightly glazed. Despite applying many layers of grip wax I still could not kick the skis well. After battling hard I crossed the finish line pale white and sick to my stomach with disappointment in my 40<sup>th</sup> place finish. It seems for every high moment in racing a low moment emerges to bring you back to reality.

Leaving Europe on such a low note was disappointing; however aside from the Pursuit race I had a phenomenal experience. The team was great, the coaches and wax technicians were very helpful and I gained a huge amount of experience and knowledge regarding racing at an international level. My first real taste of international racing was a delicious one and I am craving more. Thank you to Lappe Nordic for providing me with the financial means to cover my team fee for the trip. I am proud to represent such a supportive and passionate club.

Michael Somppi

## RACING TEAM REPORT

### By Paul Inkila

The Lappe racing team has been busy competing at numerous local and Ontario events and one US Supertour race. As the Ontario Cup season has ended, our older racers are currently in their final tuning and tapering for the Canadian National Championships.

Our best team results were achieved at the Canadian Eastern Championships held in Gatineau in mid-February:

1) Laura Inkila won Midget Girls 5K classic in a sprint to the finish against a pair of girls from Quebec (1/38).



2) Evan Palmer-Charette had his best skate race ever beating many junior boys, including all locals, for the first time in the 3K skate (19/94). He topped that with an unbelievable 10th in the 15K classic (10/68).

3) Mike Somppi continued his best ever season with a 3rd place in the men's 30K classic (3/109).

4) Jeff Budner was about to have his best skate sprint result until a competitor stepped on and snapped his \$300 pole, and he was stepped on from behind and crashed in the B final. Jeff finished (12/143).



5) Brady Harkonen finished middle of pack at his first Easterns in all three events he entered as a Juvenile Boy, while Katherine Hall and I finished similarly in the Women's and Men's Open.

The junior racing team's best performance of the year was a solid season from Evan Palmer-Charette. He qualified for the Ontario Development Team for the first time in his career. You'll see him after Nationals with the coveted red Ontario jacket.

Paul Inkila

## JACKRABBIT REPORT

**By Fiona McKenna**

**You know your Jackrabbit Program is going well when....**

Kids are becoming more self-reliant. One requested to ski by herself during the evening and then spent the Saturday session skiing with her friend.

Kids are "coming out of their shells". One suggested "Why don't we take off a ski and do this game with one ski on?", and so began the game of the Lappe screaming chicken.



Kids are listening and learning. The new coach has new results with an experienced Track Attack skier.

Parents are getting skills and confidence. Now they can ski *and* keep up to their kids. Families are obtaining good quality equipment. Moms and dads are waxing skis. Parents are looking hot in their fast and fancy Christmas duds.

The jackrabbit ski program families and friends operated a food kiosk at a major ski racing event. We enjoyed a pizza party and a magical ice lantern Christmas club potluck and a Valentine's Day party. We are having a Jackrabbits' Bring a Friend Day. The synergies in this ski community contribute to unprecedented opportunities for skiers and their families.

We have lots of incoming bunnies who can grow and learn to ski. We have a dynamic FUNdamental skills group of children, 6-9 years of age. There is another good little gang ready to continue with a Learn to Train lifestyle that will complement success in school and life.

This Jackrabbit Program coordinator would like to thank all the adults who get up every Saturday morning and muster the energy and action needed to get your little skiers out to Lappe. I would also especially like to recognize the parents who contributed to teaching and coaching as well as organizing the social events and advising me on how to keep the program moving in the right direction.

Finally, I would like to thank Reijo Puiras, Pauli, Jaana and Tom for providing a superlative Lappe Ski Centre facility where we can all build on our ski dreams.

Happy spring skiing everyone!

Fiona McKenna, a.k.a. Big Bunny

## PARANORDIC OPPORTUNITY

**By Berit Dool**

Are you interested in helping with Para-nordic skiing (also called disabled or adaptive cross country skiing), but are worried you don't have enough knowledge or experience? Is there someone who may be interested in adaptive skiing but you're not sure where to start? Would you like to learn more about Para-nordic officiating guidelines to increase the success at a race?

Para-nordic skiing is a winter sport, which allows individuals of various physical disabilities to participate in cross-country skiing by using adapted equipment and resources. Categories of para-nordic skiing include sitting and standing. The sitting category is designed for individuals who have limited use of their lower body, including (but not limited to) a spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, and spinal bifida. It involves a sit-ski in which the skier propels with his/her upper body. The standing category is for those individuals with visual impairments that may require support in guiding along the trails.

Join us for 2 nights (7-10 pm), Thursday March 24 and/or Friday March 25, 2011, with Jeff Whiting, expert and forerunner for Canadian Para-nordic, as he will share his knowledge and experience in the sport. The sessions are free to all interested individuals. Let's take a step forward in learning how to make our clubs, programs, and trails more accessible to those with disabilities.

To bring Jeff Whiting to Thunder Bay, we need to have enough interested individuals to make it worthwhile. No commitment, but if interested, please RVSP to Berit Dool at [lssd.paranordic@gmail.com](mailto:lssd.paranordic@gmail.com) so we can get a general idea of numbers. More information will follow later.

Please pass this on to any club members or individuals who may be interested!

Thank you,

Berit Dool, LSSD Para-nordic Coordinator

## RACING NEWS

Feb 5/6 – OUA Nordic Skiing (Sudbury): Britt Bailey and Katherine Hall were members of the winning LU women's team once again. Britt placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall and was named an OUA All-Star. Katherine Hall and Petri Bailey (Laurentian University) both had excellent 12<sup>th</sup> place finishes.

Feb 12 – Edmonton Birkebeiner: Tuija Puiras and Leila Metsaranta placed 12<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in their respective age groups in the 31km Tour.

Feb 13 – Mora Vasaloppet – Stephen Hart placed 4<sup>th</sup> overall in the 58km Loppet. Sarah Peters placed

Feb 26 – US Birkebeiner: Timo Puiras placed 8<sup>th</sup> in the 54km Classic and Sarah Peters finished 19<sup>th</sup> in the 50km Skate.

Mar 5 – Sleeping Giant Loppet: Many Lappe members too part in various distances and had excellent results. Timo Puiras placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the 50km Classic, while Paul Inkila finished 4<sup>th</sup>. Stephen Hart finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 50km Skate and Sarah Peters was the 2<sup>nd</sup> place woman in the 50km Skate. Great work to all skiers!

March 4-11 – Masters World Cup: Mark Thomas, Brian Berry and Werner Schwar are representing Canada on the world stage in Sovereign Lakes, BC. Best wishes to all of you and to any others who are attending! Mark Thomas placed 9<sup>th</sup> overall (and was 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian) in the men's M04 category in the 30km classic March 5<sup>th</sup>. See [www.zone4.ca](http://www.zone4.ca) for results.

## 24-HOUR RELAY

If you have never taken part in this epic event, this is the year to start! This annual event was born in the spring of 1996 when NTDC coach Pekka Kempfi decided to see how far he could ski in 24 hours. He skied about 350km (classic technique only). The following year, it was adapted into a team event and since then it has been run the weekend after nationals every spring that we have had snow.

There will be cash awards to anyone who can break a world record in the solo male or female category. Lappe president Werner Schwar was less than 9 km off the world record on his 2005 attempt. Local skier Kelly Henry has soloed 3 times, and has the women's record of 284.8 km. There are also records for mixed pairs, teams of 4 and teams of up to 10 skiers. See [http://lappenordic.ca/24\\_hour.html](http://lappenordic.ca/24_hour.html) for the records! We have had all-women's teams, Jackrabbit teams and this

year the Lappe Jackrabbit Moms are planning to put a team together! It is for anyone and everyone.



The relay is a fundraiser for the [National Development Centre \(NDC\)](#) and the Lappe Nordic Ski Centre Improvement Fund. Skiers are encouraged to raise pledges. This year the first 100 participants to raise over \$50 each will receive a Rex Putkihiivi (tube scarf, or "Buff" type headwear).

The relay begins at noon on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> and ends at noon on Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>. You must have a team representative at the pre-event meeting Saturday at 11 am at the ski centre. Finn pancakes will be available until 3 pm Saturday, followed by a 6 pm potluck for all participants, and Sunday morning we will have a breakfast prepared by one of our sponsors.

You may register your team by contacting Triin at 345-7892 or [triin.ilisson@gmail.com](mailto:triin.ilisson@gmail.com), or Becky at [btpuiras@gmail.com](mailto:btpuiras@gmail.com). Posters, pledge sheets, rules and registration forms will be available soon at <http://ntdc-tbay.on.ca/eventinfo.htm>.

We will also be looking for timing volunteers (two-person 2 hour shifts throughout the event), so if can give two hours of your time to support local skiing, please contact us as well, or sign up at the ski centre!

## PARTY TIME!

The Lappe Ski Club Christmas Party was held at the ski centre on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, on the winter solstice. Although it was snowing too hard to see much of the full moon, ice candles helped to guide skiers on a moonlit



