

HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.nordicski.org.uk

NEWSLETTER No. 32

November 2009

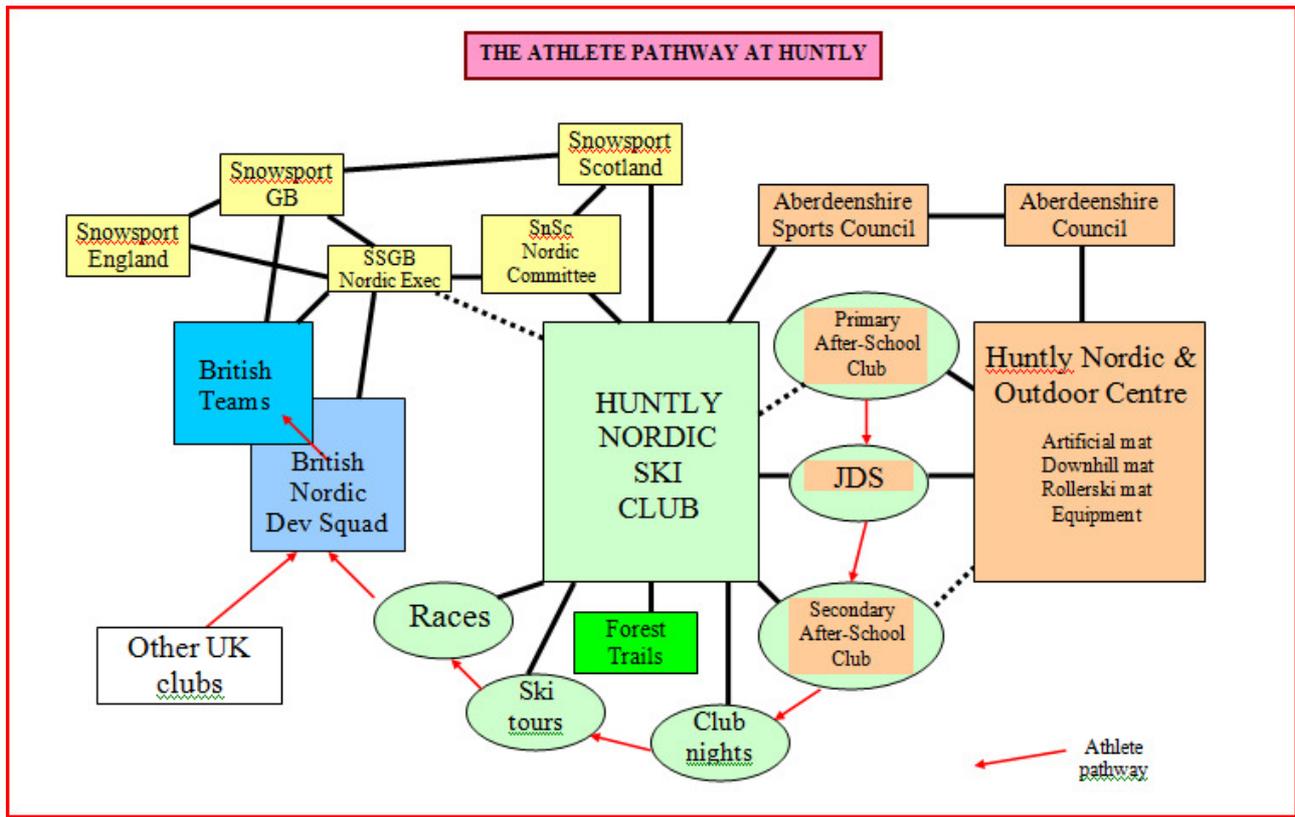
PRE-SEASON ISSUE



Editorial

This is the time of year that skiers start getting excited looking forward to the snow & season ahead. It is an Olympic season which always generates more interest in snow sports by the general public. And there is even greater interest than usual for us with the possibility of several Huntly skiers competing at Vancouver, but more of that below. This is the opportunity for all of us to try & attract more people to have a go at cross-country skiing. You never know, that 6 or 10 year old kid that you get out on the snow may be a future Olympian, but even if they're not you may have given them a life-long passion.

Before stepping down as Chairperson Frank Musgrave gave a great motivational presentation at the AGM highlighting the successes & how far the club has come in its 10 years of existence. He produced one slide which I have reproduced below. It shows how the club interacts with the Local Authority, Ski Centre, governing bodies & national squads. Overlain is the athlete pathway that has been set up in Huntly that takes primary school children right the through to national squads. It is a model that many sports would love to emulate & we should be very proud of it. But of course the club is more than just ski racers & that is an added bonus. All something to think about while you fill out your questionnaires.



F.I.S. VISIT

In August we had a visit in Huntly from Sarah Lewis, Secretary General of the International Ski Federation (FIS). She had been visiting Scotland & wanted to see places & people that were at the leading edge of skiing in the country. The activities of our juniors have raised Huntly onto the FIS radar. Sarah, a former British Alpine skier who competed at the 1988 Olympics before going on to captain the team at two further Olympics, was elected Secretary General in 2000. She was keen to meet & talk to some of the British juniors & also to GB Nordic Head Coach Roy Young. She was very interested in the facilities at Huntly & had a very interesting talk with several of the juniors. A subsequent news article appeared on the FIS website (www.fis-ski.com).

RECORDS TUMBLE.



Callum Smith

Despite flooding just the week before, bright sunshine heralded the Huntly Rollerski Championships in September. Course records were set in both the Men's & Ladies 7.1km races. In fact standards have improved so much that the first 10 men & first 9 ladies were inside the original respective course records set back in 2005. Callum Smith set the new standard at 17:24.0 & Sarah Young the ladies at 20:10.0, which incidentally was also inside the original Men's record of 20:20.4. The sub-20 minute barrier awaits the ladies. The event was the second largest of the British Rollerski Series with 66 competitors, only the British Championships at Castle Coombe exceeded these numbers, just, with 67 skiers. Large contingents from the RAF & Army always boost our numbers.

As usual the races were well supported in the junior categories with skiers from the Cairngorm & Highland Nordic clubs. A strong performance from Calum Irvine of Cairngorm held Ruaridh Newman at bay in the U18 Men's 5.1km, while Deborah May took the U18 Ladies title ahead of Katy Homyer of Highland (1st U16). The U14 boys 3.1km race was particularly close with the first five within 20 secs of each other Robert Sircus of Cairngorm coming first with Stuart Gray the best of the Huntly boys in 3rd. Catriona Dudgeon took the U14 race from Iona Gatenby. The day was finished off with the relay which was spectacular with 14 teams on the track!



Posy Musgrave chases Sarah Young

On the Sunday racing moved over to Aviemore for Highland Nordic's inaugural Cairngorm Classic Hill Climb. Andrew Young returned to form to take the Men's climb ahead of club teammates Callum Smith & William Newman. In her favoured technique Fi Hughes (York Dales) turned the tables on Sarah Young in the Ladies race. Keeping on the same theme Ruaridh Newman beat Calum Irvine in the U18 Men's while Iona Gatenby managed the same in the U14 girls race by beating Catriona Dudgeon. Deborah May won the U18 Ladies climb.

British Rollerski Championships.

PJ Barron was the only Huntly representative in the Senior Men's race at the British Rollerski Championships at Castle Coombe in October, coming 5th. Ruaridh Newman pipped Michael May to the top spot in an exciting U21 Men's race where they were separated by the thickness of a wheel (or 0.1sec) ! Deborah May was 3rd Senior & 1st U21 lady. Sandy Snowball had a very good U14 boy's race, coming third. This was particularly impressive as his family have moved from the Huntly area but he has obviously been keeping up his training down in Perth.



I might not be the fastest but I claim the biggest medal

Despite numerous individual victories in the 6-race Snowsport Scotland Rollerski Series & 11-race British Rollerski Series there were only two outright winners from Huntly. Iona Gatenby won the U14 Girls & Lynne Gray the U12 Girls in the Scots Series. As usual Dave Horsley was the best of the Huntly senior men with a 3rd in the Scots Series & a 5th in the GB Series. Sarah Young went one better with a 2nd in the Scot Series with two wins & two seconds. Ruaridh Newman missed out on the U18 Men's Scots Series by just three points.

WORLD CUP BIB

At a small informal ceremony at the Ski Centre in August Andrew Musgrave presented a framed race bib to the Club from his first World Cup race in Kuusamo in Finland. Andrew wanted to do this as a way of saying thank you for all the support he has received from numerous individuals, Club, Centre & other local organisations that helped him achieve this milestone of becoming the first British skier in 14 years to race at a World Cup event.



As well as club members, also attending were Local Councillor Moira Ingleby & Kenneth Gibb, Chair of Aberdeenshire Sports Council. Alan Telford observed that “this achievement would not have been possible without the support of Aberdeenshire Council & Aberdeenshire Sports Council as well as the National Lottery for the Rollerski track”. A 5-minute video with clips of an 11-year old Andrew racing in the Clash, doing jumps & finally racing at the World Juniors gave our guests a flavour of cross-country skiing & no doubt causing Andrew a little bit of embarrassment.

I’ll leave the final word with Roy Young who described this achievement as just a step in longer term ambitions for British cross-country skiing. The bib takes pride of place at the Centre, hopefully acting as an inspiration to others.

Like buses, no sooner do you get one World Cup skier than you have five qualified to race in World Cup events, four of whom come from the Huntly Club: Andrew Musgrave, Andrew Young, Alex Standen, Callum Smith & from England Simon Platt.



THE RACING SEASON AHEAD

I will not cover all the racing activities that affect Huntly skiers this winter but will briefly highlight the main events. Roy Young is now working fulltime as British Nordic Head Coach. His responsibilities cover the British Nordic Development Squad (BNDS) right through to the senior British Nordic Team that will be present at the Vancouver Olympics (12-28 Feb 2010). A year ago the target was to have at least one cross-country skier at the Olympics, because of the performances last winter Britain could now have three skiers competing. No one skier is guaranteed a place & there will be nine skiers challenging for those three places. Already several Huntly skiers have headed off to Norway to prepare. Races kick-off on the 14th November Bruksvallarna in Sweden. We should see British skiers in action at the first World Cup race at Beitostolen in Norway on the 28th November. Further races follow thick & fast & in December the team will move to central Europe. The performances from these races will be used to select the Olympic team. The official notification on the team will come from the British Olympic Association on the 23rd January. I take this opportunity to wish all these athletes the best of luck. Meanwhile there is the chance of another Huntly skier racing at Vancouver when PJ Barron will be seeking to race in the colours of Ireland.

Prior to the Olympics a team will head to the World Junior Championships at Hinterzarten, Germany (25-31 Jan 2010). There are no World Senior Championships this year.

Meanwhile younger members of the BNDS will be attending the Austrian Championships & also the British Championships in Ruhpolding.

Biathlon.



Olwen Thorn continues to train with British Biathlon Squad based out in Ruhpolding for the summer. She is able to do this with sponsorship from MilSys Ltd, a name you may recognise from sponsorship of the British Cross-Country Ski & Biathlon Championships. As part of her training this summer Olwen took part in the World Biathlon Rollerski Championships in Oberhof in front of a huge crowd, the Germans take this sport very seriously. The squad has now moved to Scandinavia for their selection races.

TRAINING OF COACHES & OFFICIALS

This new Snowsport Scotland Nordic Performance Coaching Scheme was officially launched this year. Already Frank Musgrave & Dave Lamb from Huntly have attended a Level 1 course given by Roger Homyer of Highland Nordic SC. One of the primary aims of the scheme is to get more coaches out there actually teaching both juniors & adults. You have an ideal opportunity in Huntly to start learning how to teach skiing as well as improving your own ski skills with the Club’s own “Coaching for Coaches” course which run every Thurs from 7:30pm at the Ski Centre. We are always looking for more coaches to assist with the JDS & after-school clubs so you will never be short of victims on which to practise.

The previous Newsletter told of eight Huntly members qualifying to Level 1 Nordic Official. The intention was for everyone to be re-assessed at the end of the Rollerski season. So far Jim Davidson has assessed Peter Thorn as Level 3 Event Organiser Home Nation TD & it is hoped that others will move up to at least Level 2.

If you are interested in learning more about obtaining either coaching or Nordic Official qualifications please contact the Club Secretary. Or, if your interest is more directed towards coaching, speak to Club Coach Eileen Young.

FLOODING.

The flooding in September was a mere trickle compared to the flood pulse on the evening of November 1st. Although I have seen the Ski Centre surrounded by water on a couple of occasions in the past this flooding far exceeded anything seen before & the river levels were the highest in living memory. These photos show the damage. Particularly impressive is the high-water mark on the cut through indicating at least 5ft depth as the water rushed past demolishing a section of fencing by the golf driving range. The artificial track escaped serious damage but the rollerski track did not fare so well with a large section of tarmac undercut & washed away. Gravel banks need to be bulldozed away & then a few days spent power washing artificial & Rollerski tracks. Obviously this comes a bit lower on the Council's priorities with road & property damage elsewhere in the town.



AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS.

The Primary-After School Club restarted this autumn & is proving very popular with over 40 children attending every Tuesday evening. Special praise in particular should be given to Eileen Young & Clair Newman for making this such a success.



New for this autumn is the Huntly Youth Ski Club for secondary school children. We have been able to start this with a sponsorship deal of £500 per annum for three years from RiserTec Ltd (thank you to John Shanks for arranging this). The Youth Ski Club is every Thursday from 6:30-7:30pm & the coaching is being led by Andy Miller. Things have started slowly so we need all of you to spread the word & make the Youth Ski Club as successful as the primary one.

Starting these clubs means we need more coaches to help out & that is where the "Coaching for Coaches" comes in. Both these clubs rely on the close interaction of Club & Ski Centre. Remember the Huntly pathway model at the start of the newsletter.....

New Members

The rollerskiing bug seems to have bitten our newest member **Anita Weidmann** & she is regularly attending the Thursday sessions.

Final Bits & Pieces.

- Thursday Club Nights & Coaching for Coaches continue at the Ski Centre – 7:30pm.
- Primary After-School Club – every Tues P1-3 3-4pm, P4-7 4pm-5pm.
- Huntly Youth Ski Club – every Thurs, 6:30-7:30pm.
- Gear sale/exchange + JDS registration – Thurs 3rd Dec.
- Be sure to visit the club website www.nordicski.org.uk. You can now sign up to get news updates emailed automatically. Thanks Alan the site is looking really good.

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