

HUNTLY NORDIC SKI CLUB

www.nordicski.co.uk

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PRE-SEASON ISSUE



Editorial

Obviously our home snow last winter was so bad so as to give us plenty of time to watch all the exciting racing leading up to the Sochi Olympics themselves. OK Mr. Weather, are you listening? No Olympics this season, so you jolly well give us a big dump of snow, but maybe not quite as much as they are getting in the States at the moment.

*Although this isn't an Olympic year, there is still plenty of competition for our junior & senior squads. There will be the World Champs for the seniors, at Falun in Sweden, next February. And there is always the Tour de Ski & World Cups on TV. The World Juniors are in Almaty in Kazakhstan – that will be an interesting trip. And several Huntly juniors will be attempting to qualify for the European Youth Olympics in Steg, Liechtenstein. **So guys, I expect to receive a lot of interesting reports for the next newsletter.** Although the Sochi may be a fading, but very pleasant memory for us, for the athletes & support staff the build up for Pyeong Chang 2018 started just weeks after those Games finished. Will some of the new crop of juniors be challenging for those Olympic slots in four, no, three years time?*

OK most of us won't be in the running for Olympic selection but we can follow in the footsteps of those guys by getting up to the Clash & skiing this winter, perhaps even racing. We probably won't progress any further but we might just witness another junior taking their first awkward strides on the trails. It is always good to be able to say you beat an Olympian in a race once, you just don't have to let anyone know how old they were!

I'll finish with my usual early winter comment – we just need some snow.

COACH OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Roy Young who was awarded Snowsport Scotland Coach of the Year 2014. Roy has coached six different athletes to the last two Winter Olympic Games but this award was not only for his outstanding leadership of the British Cross-Country Ski team but also recognition for his long & dedicated service coaching both locally & nationally.



Roy has a background in education and trained as a teacher. He was a recreational cross country skier who was part of the Huntly Nordic Ski Centre's Community Management Team when the Centre was first built in 1992 & went on to become a founding member of the Huntly Nordic Ski Club in 1998. Roy has been the club's most influential coach guiding complete novices of all ages right through to elite seniors. His ski games are legendary & he is the inventor of the "roy-polloy".

After the tragic death of the former coach, Bob Lacy in a motorbike accident, Roy stepped in to help continue the work already started. He guided an enthusiastic British Junior Squad through European Youth Olympics & World Junior Championships. At first he did this while still teaching but as the coaching workload increased Roy went part time & then left his job to coach full time leading his maturing athletes to World Senior Championships & World Cups. He was appointed National Head Coach in 2010 in time for the Vancouver Olympics. The three male & one female at the Sochi Olympics set the best ever results by cross-country skiers.

None of this has happened by accident it has been the result of the hard work of many people but the main driving force has always been Roy. One of his most important achievements was developing a pathway model from primary school to elite & this tied with structured training plans meant the athletes knew where they were & where they were heading. The squad approach fostered by Roy has been a major factor helping our skiers "punch above their weight" when you consider the limited resources they have had. His engaging personality, open behaviour and desire to learn have prompted many foreign coaches, particularly Canadian and Norwegian, to voluntarily assist the GB squads. "Building World Class Systems" was an objective for the 2010-14 cycle. Roy made that journey recreational skier to one of the leading sports coaches in the country. Well done mate.

Clash 2005



At one time he was a contender....

RAF Kinloss 2002



A man of many talents

ROLLERSKI RACING

Huntly Rollerski Championships, Sat 6th Sept.



A powerful start by Jack Nicholls

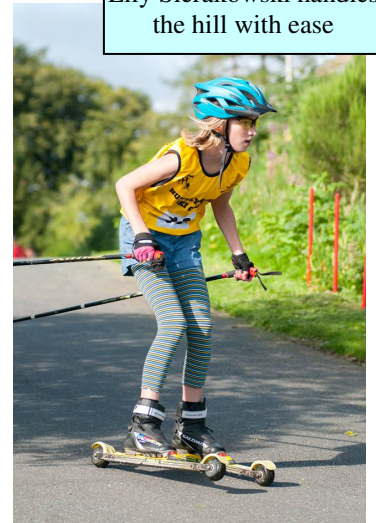
A disappointing field of only eight for the senior race, and one of those was an U18 racing up an age category. However this was made up for by sunny weather & the usual large turnout of juniors.

Cairngorm had a clean sweep of the top three places in the men's 7.1km race with Robert Sircus leading that trio home. Gregor Young was the best placed Huntly skier in 4th, while illness forced Duncan Gibb to retire from the race. Dave Horsley won the battle of the vets, keeping ahead of Steve Young. Sarah Young made a welcome return to take the Ladies title. OK, she may have been the only lady racing but she had to do enough make sure she finished in front of the old men –she did, and quite comfortably as well.

A closely fought U18 5.1km race was won by an impressive Jack Nicholls ahead of Brodie Murray, Fergus Newman & Oliver Newman. Lynne Gray held off the Cairngorm challenge to win the U18 Ladies event. It was a good day for

the Roberts family in the U14 boys/girls 3.7km races with Felix taking the boys' title and Flossie the girls'. Of particular note were David Massie & Lily Sierakowski who, for the first time, moved on from the novice category to race in the main U14 event, both putting in confident displays over the challenging course.

Lily Sierakowski handles the hill with ease



David Massie

David Massie was so up for racing he did the Novice race as well, where he comfortably set the fastest time. However, not being a novice any more he didn't win the Novice Boy's trophy. That went to Tom McGowan of Huntly who proved all his hard work at club training sessions has been worthwhile. An ever-competitive Elspeth Cruickshank won the Novice Girls race ahead of Madeleine Cruickshank and Kirsty & Nicola Beaumont.

A determined Huntly relay team of Fergus & Oliver Newman, Brodie Murray & Jack Nicholls won an exiting relay race ahead of the CBNSC 'A' team that contained the top three from the earlier men's race. A Huntly Grumpy Old Men's team that lacked finesse & technique, put up a spirited & somewhat noisy performance and achieved its aim of not

coming last. Finally particular praise should be given to Luke Nicholls (U8) who had a bad day in the office in the earlier Novice race where things just didn't go right (happens to us all). However he demonstrated real pluck in entering the relay & was more than a match for the bluster of the Grumpy Old Men.



Tom McGowan

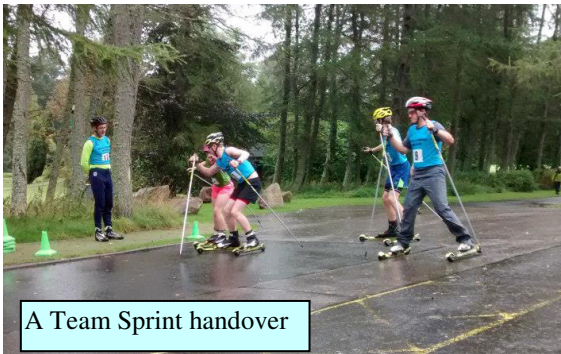
3-Lap Challenge & Team Sprints, Sun 7th Sept.

This event, following on from our Rollerski Championships, is now a regular fixture in the calendar. Once again it proved to be an exciting format that gives lots of close & competitive racing. The 3-Lap Challenge is a time trial over a 1300m course of the Inner-Middle-Outer loops of the track. The finishing order of this race is used to make the pairings for the Team Sprint event – the fastest paired with the slowest & so on through the field. The intention being to produce evenly matched pairs – will a slow & fast pairing match two medium paced skiers?



Alex leads off a 3-Lap heat

What a difference 24 hours can make, the Sunday turned out to be very wet & the skiing conditions very character building – not a day for new course records. In fact it was so wet that the timekeepers moved the start/finish so they could shelter under the veranda. Oliver Newman made up for what he may have considered not a great day on Saturday by setting the fastest time of 3:41 just one second faster than Jack Nicholls. The top five finished within 12 seconds of each other. Included in that five and in 5th place was Alex Standen – should I tell the readers why Alex? I'm going to – he got lost on a three lap race! To be fair to Alex he wasn't planning to race but we need an even number of skiers for the Team Sprints & he was basically dragged onto the start line. Flossie Roberts was fastest lady in 5:12 and split the racing vets. Rick Newman & Steve Young battled hard for the wooden spoon which Steve claimed by skiing just two seconds slower than Rick.



A Team Sprint handover

The Team Sprints were run as two semi-finals with everyone progressing either to the 'A' or 'B' final. The 293m Inner Loop was skied three times by each skier, a total of six laps. The first semi saw the first real casualty of the day when Cameron Cruickshank took a nasty tumble and was forced to retire from further competition that day. His partner Alex Standen thought that was the finish of his racing for the day. But no such luck, as Alex was progressed to the 'B' final where he had to ski all six laps by himself and was pressured by team Oliver Newman / Steve Young to ski quite hard to win that race. The 'A' Final saw all three teams in contention but the pairing of Fergus Newman / Dave Horsley won through in the end to take the Team Sprints title for 2014.

The Huntly Series 2014 / Clashindarroch Cup & Quaich.

Because there were no local on-snow races last winter, and following the practise of previous years, the Clashindarroch Cup & Quaich would have been awarded to the winners of the Clashindarroch Hill Climb. However, after discussion, your Committee decided that:

1. If these trophies were being awarded for rollerski races only Huntly members would be eligible to win them;
2. The trophies would be awarded not from the results of one race, but to the Huntly rollerskiers that perform best over the series of our four races.

Thus the Huntly Rollerski Series was born – a competition specifically for Huntly members. To explain how it works: each skier collects the points as awarded for the three British Rollerski Series races. The fourth & final race, the 3-Lap Challenge – skiers are awarded points using the GB Series points system but with no separation into different age categories. The reason for this is that it would be possible for a senior, U18 & U14 skiers all to enter the final 3-Lap Challenge with 150 pts. Doing things this way lessens the chance of skiers ending up with the same number of points.

So to sum up the current rules for the Clash Cup & Quaich:

1. Open to Huntly members only.
2. Awarded to the winners of the long race at the Clash HNSC Open Championships, or then the Clash Dash, or any backup local on-snow race.
3. If no on-snow races take place, the trophies are awarded to the winner of the 4-race Huntly Rollerski Series.

This is in keeping with the spirit of these trophies – you have to put in some effort & be a good skier to win them & it is possible for any club member of any age category to win them. Thus it is even possible for me to win the Cup, although it would require a far-fetched set of circumstances for it to happen – I can only dream.

The mantelpiece in the Roberts house must be groaning under the weight of trophies. Congratulations to brother & sister Felix & Flossie Roberts (both U14) for winning the Clashindarroch Cup & Quaich 2014. Felix won a close men's competition by just three points while Flossie had a bit more of a margin in the ladies Huntly Series.



Felix & Flossie Roberts

The accompanying tables show that just 39 Huntly skiers took part in one or more of our home rollerski races. With a membership of 136 I'm sure we can do better. Get practising.

If you want to have a chance of getting your named engraved on the trophy then your first chance is at the Clash Dash on Sun 11th Jan. But even if you win that, the winner of the Huntly Open Champs on Sun 22nd Feb (or backup date) will steal it from you.

British Rollerski Series 2014.

Gregor Young kept the senior men's British Rollerski Series title in Huntly, for the second year in a row, holding off a strong challenge by Lachlan Cowie of CBNSC. As always the Senior Ladies title went to Fiona Crossley (CBNSC) for the 11th year in a row – will she ever be deposed? Jack Nicholls kept the U18 men's title in Huntly for the second year in a row but Lynne Grey missed out to Carla Sermanni (CBNSC) in the U18 ladies. Lynne needed to head to a race south of the border to have had any chance winning. Flossie Roberts tied for first place with Beth Ireland (Thames Valley) in the U14 girls series but Felix couldn't match his sister and ended up second to Charlie Harrigan (LRNSC) in the U14 boys.



Gregor Young getting airborne



CLASHINDARROCH – THE SEASON AHEAD.

As you must all be aware, the 18 turbine Clashindarroch windfarm is almost complete. It is expected to be generating electricity by the end of the year & will be fully commissioned by March

2015. It has a capacity of 36.9MW and each turbine has over 1,000 tons of steel and sits on a tennis court sized slab of concrete. At least that is what I learnt on recent public site visit. With all the felling and groundworks it looks a bit bleak up there at the moment but the plan is to replant with slow growing native species such as birch, so hopefully it won't look so stark in a few years time. There is no denying the Clash has changed & the turbines dominate the skyline. The Club never made any statement either for or against the windfarm, our members have a wide range of views on the subject, but we made active representations to ensure as little disruption & harm to the ski trails as possible. The initial plans by AMEC of first 60, then 47, turbines would have seen large scale clear fell around the ski trails. This didn't happen and although the nearest turbine is within two hundred metres of Herringbone Hill, the trees still border the trails. There has been some felling/thinning in places that actually may prove beneficial for snow.

Vattenfall, who took over from AMEC, have been more sympathetic to the skiing and have given the Club sponsorship over the last few years (£2,000). There have been no strings attached other than the acknowledgement of the grants

which is standard when any organisation hands out money. For the record others who have sponsored the Club are RiserTec & MTL (both oil related companies) which is why their logos appear on this newsletter. Then there are charitable or governmental organisations such as The Big Lottery, the Jo Walters Trust & the Glens of Foudland Windfarm Community Fund which have all given us generous sponsorship. I mention all this just in case anyone has concerns. Everything should be out in the open. I, for one, wouldn't feel able to accept sponsorship from a tobacco company, for example. Once the Clash windfarm is operational, a Community Fund worth £180,000 per annum for the next 25 years becomes available and I'm pretty sure the Club will make applications to this fund to support our activities.

I don't think that the skiing has been directly or adversely affected by the windfarm. There may be new opportunities for skiing by accessing the new windfarm roads. If you come on the Secret Clash (Sat 7th Feb – assuming there is snow) I'll show you how to get there and maybe let you into my master-plan. Intrigued? Then I'll see you then.

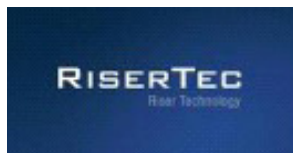
New Members

Welcome to Lily Sierakowski – another success of the JDS & Sunday Kids Club 7 whose skiing is coming on in leaps & bounds.

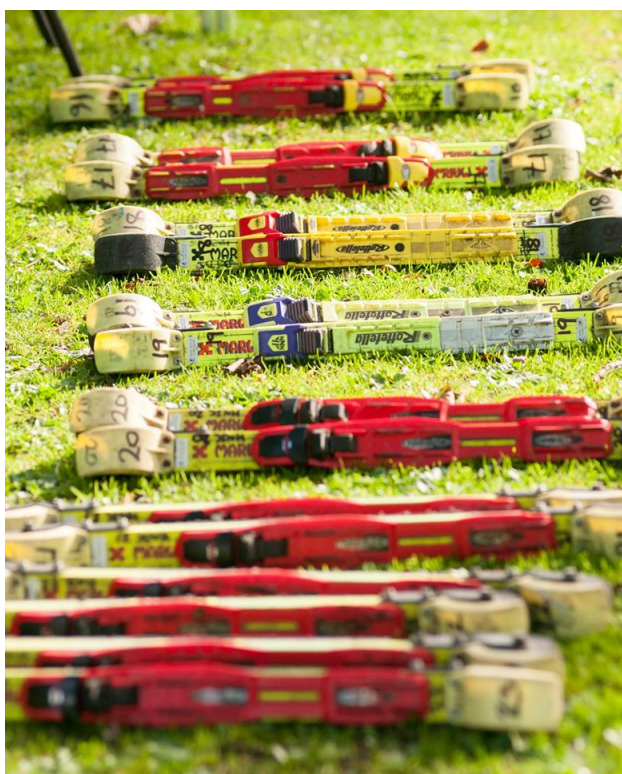
A few reminders.

- Sat 6th Dec – Full Moon Stomp.
- Sun 21st Dec – Winter Ming & mince pie party.
- Sat 3rd Jan – Ski Orienteering – a chance to get lost.
- Sun 11th Jan – The Clash Dash – a chance to ski very fast.
- Sun 22nd Feb – The HNSC Open Champs – a chance to win the Clash Cup or Quaich.

CLUB SPONSORS:



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