

HTB Biathlon Update- December 2011 News

Jen Scholte

Our biathlon program is in full swing with lots of energy, enthusiasm, prepared athletes and keen volunteers.

Bears Program:

We began the program 2 weeks ago and like the December start (this year with fresh snow on the first day!) and also the later start time. The program is full with 22 Bears. We have 3 coaches (Jen, Mike and Chris), and 5 Jr. Leaders (Alex, Mackenzie, Matt, Ben and Jasmine). This year has a leader training focus that will enable us to expand our program next season if we choose to do so.

Cadets:

The Creemore Cadet Corp is joining us on Wednesday nights and we have set them up with a Highlands Nordic package as well as a \$500 range fee for the season. This affiliation will offer future athlete development that will move into our Jr. and Sr. teams, additional coaching and shared official resources. We are only working with one corp this season to determine how the programs can coordinate efforts before we consider opening the opportunity to other corps.

Jr. Race Team:

With Ontario Winter Games as the highlight event our crew of 8 athletes is working hard! The set up for their training involves 2 shooting times- Saturday afternoons (with Mike) and earned opportunities to attend 1-1 coaching sessions at Blue Ridge on Sundays (with Mike and Chris). Skiing with Larry and the full O'cup group on Saturday mornings is at the moment the extent of their ski training. Wednesday ski practice before Biathlon Bears will start with the arrival of some snow! Jen and Gord Salt will skiing with the Jr.s on Wednesday nights before Bears.

Sr. Race Team

Our .22 program has 6 ambitious athletes! We had 4 of our athletes, Erin, Patrick, David and Isaac attend the high performance camp in Canmore and race last weekend at the first NorAm. We offered a one day shooting camp to our Jr. and Sr. race team in November to focus on position and precision shooting. With Kris Herbert as a guest coach. The athletes paid \$10 for the day which covered half of Kris's coaching fee and the balance was paid by HTB. Erin Yungblut and Patrick Skelton have received full Quest for Gold carding and Cj Moogk has received a half card from Biathlon Ontario. A full card offers the athletes \$8000.00 toward their sport. It is mandatory that these athletes are affiliated and registered with an Ontario club as part of their carding agreement and will attend all events in their Biathlon Ontario uniforms.

Regular practices include range time at Highlands on Saturday and Blue Ridge on Sundays and ski practice with the O'cup team on Saturdays and Sunday mornings.

Range Crew:

We have a productive range crew that have created an precision range around the perimeter of the groomer bay and further developed the upper stadium. All we need is snow! Both ranges are evolving weekly! Chris Skelton, Perter Tukasaari and Valentyne Dismah have been instrumental in the range development. Signage is next on the agenda! This signage will need to be ordered for Ontario Winter Games and our O'cup and must be made in accordance with the IBU rules and regulations.

Races:

Each athletes regardless of their level have a minimum of 4 race opportunities this season. This is a huge improvement for the sport in our province. Several of the races offer both .22 and air in the same event and this will enable us to attend the races as a full contingent with our Jr. and Sr. teams together. Each race that we attend will require 2 coaches and a race manager. With our initial commitments we have 8-12 athletes attending each race. We are waiting to find out from Biathlon Ontario how many of the 30 race cards our club will be awarded. We expect that as a club we will need to create a qualification process for these cards due to the number of athletes in our Jr. race program.

Communication:

We have set up a process for communication within the program and Ivor Shapiro is instrumental in communicating,organizing program registrants, gathering race intentions and initiating social media with our facebook page and pulling all the pieces together as the program develops. Ivor is my right hand!

Officials:

In November we offered a basic officials course with 19 in attendance from our club. This certification now enables us to meet the O'cup race criteria as a hosting club. Our plan is to offer an advance course in the fall. With the season underway the general consensus was that an advanced course interferes with the coaching and race commitments of our athletes this winter.

Events:

HTB is hosting 3 events the Candy Cane Challenge Dec 17th, Cadet Regionals Jan 28th, O'cup#4 Feb 25-26 and Ontario Winter Games March 8-9th.

Our program is entering year 3 and we have evolved quite significantly moving into this season. Our focus this season will be on athlete and volunteer development rather than growing the club in numbers. Our program goal this season was 16 bears, 4 Sr. and 6 Jr.'s and as you can see we have exceeded this expectation. Our affiliation with Biathlon Ontario is very positive. In future we have the numbers to start looking at further grant opportunities and sponsorship.

Happy Trails!
Jen Scholte