

FAST TRACK

TRACKING SKIERS AND SKI RACING ACROSS BC

Catching Up With Wild Animals
A Tribute to BC Volunteers

Coaching The Best of BC
Meet The BC
Ski Team Coaches

Photo:
Ben Chaddock, BCST

Fit To Ski
Carl Petersen on
Injury Prevention

A Look At One Of BC's Top Female Skiers
Alison Leighton
BORN TO SKI



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BELL CANADA – BC ALPINE E-UPDATE

The Bell Canada BC Alpine E-Update is an efficient and easy way to stay in touch with Alpine news across the province.

Get program updates, find out what the BC Team and B2B Development Group athletes have been up to and stay on top of breaking ski news!

The E-Update is sent to your e-mail inbox every 2 weeks. To sign up, log on to www.bcalpine.com.

FAST TRACK

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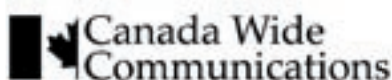
COVER PHOTO:

Ben Chaddock forerunning at the Lake Louise World Cup, Dec. 2005

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INTRODUCING...

THE COACHES OF THE 2005-2006 BC SKI TEAM

These three coaches may dedicate their lives to ski racing, but there is more to them than downhill and slalom. They do it for the love of the sport and they do it for the athletes. In return, they expect hard work and commitment.. Nancy O'Neill, Dale Stephens and Glenn Thomsen coach the eight members of the BC Ski Team.

NANCY O'NEILL



In her fourth season as coach of the Women's BC Ski Team, O'Neill has a total of 25 years of ski coaching experience to draw from. She has played an important role in shaping the development of ski racing in Canada, as she has also coached the Ontario men's team as well as both the Alberta men's and women's teams. The first female alpine coach in Canada to receive her Level 4 certificate, Nancy worked with the Canadian Ski Coaches Federation for many years helping to develop training materials and working as a coach examiner. Nancy loves the challenge of working with motivated and energetic athletes. She says it is an incredible experience as a coach to watch each individual develop as both an athlete and as a person. A true British Columbian, Nancy was raised here by her parents who ran a guide-outfitting company. Naturally, she has developed a passion for the outdoors and she is an avid fly-fisher. In fact, if you can't get a hold of her, she is probably in or on the banks of the Elk River near Fernie because it is the only place where she can get away from the constant ringing of her phone and surround herself in the peaceful, routine nature of the sport. Nancy resides in Fernie, BC with her big, furry pal Sadie, an Australian Shepherd.

DALE STEPHENS



This is Dale's fourth season coaching the BC Men's Ski Team. With over twenty years of coaching experience under his belt, Dale has had prominent coaching roles with the US and Canadian ski teams. From Williams Lake, B.C., Stephens began skiing when he was three-years-old and started racing when he was seven. His ski racing career lasted until 1981 and was topped by the fact that he was a member of the very first BC Ski Team. Stephens left the slopes to study engineering and geology at UBC, but after a few years he was persuaded to try coaching the national team. What started as a one-year deal has become a solid career with a considerable track-record. Dale says the best thing about his job is working with the athletes and seeing their excitement and development. He says it is fun to watch the skiers transform and change their attitudes as they progress. Dale has also developed life-long friendships with some of the guys he has coached over the years and he stays in touch with a lot of the skiers who have passed through his training programs. When not coaching, Dale likes to hang out with his girls Rylee and Carley. They spend the summer months waterskiing and wakeboarding.

GLENN THOMSEN



Glenn has been coaching ski racing for 26 years. Now in his 2nd year co-coaching the BC men's team with Dale Stephens, he has also coached in Alberta, assisted the Canadian women's world cup team and coached the men's national world cup downhill team. Thomsen became a ski racer by accident. As a boy, Glenn saw an advertisement on television that said the first 500 kids to sign up in Calgary would get a free bus ride out to Happy Valley to learn to ski. What he didn't know was that it was a ski-racing program. He sent in an application and it went from there. Thankfully, Glenn loved the sport from the get-go and continued to race for Alberta teams. Thomsen says the biggest reward with his job is seeing the racers do well and being part of their development as people and as ski racers. Glenn has two children. His son Ben skis with the B2B group and is an invitational member of the BC Ski Team. His daughter Kirsten is an ex-figure skater who is now into rodeo. Glenn plays old-timers hockey when he is not on the slopes and he is in the process of building a house in Invermere, BC. Officially a stonemason by trade, he operates his own masonry company in the summers.

FIT TO SKI

THE ABC'S OF SKI FITNESS & INJURY PREVENTION

- Carl Petersen BPE, BSc (PT)

Ski and snowboard injuries from both trauma and overuse are prevalent at this time of year. I would estimate that post-New Year, two out of every 10 patients will be suffering from some on-slope mishap. Even though the ski season is well under way, it is never too late to include some exercises into your regime to help improve ski fitness and prevent injuries.

After many years experience traveling the globe with Canada's finest skiers, including numerous Olympic and World Cup medalists, I finally sat down and wrote the book *Fit to Ski* last year (info at www.citysportsphysio.com). The guidelines that follow are selected excerpts from the book.

The most important thing to optimize your ski day and help guard against injury is to do a good dynamic warm up before any activity including skiing. Warm-up to ski, don't ski to warm-up. Doing simple exercises like leg swings, torso twists or slalom jumps helps work on your balance, as well as core, hip, knee, and lower leg strength.

Following the 'ABC's of Smart Training' will help you improve your ski specific fitness.



Try 2 sets of 10 repetitions doing front & back and side to side.



Hold your stretches for 30-40 seconds to the point of tension NOT PAIN and repeat 2-3 times.

A is for Alignment

A lot of our daily time is spent in seated or contorted postures, which can lead to asymmetrical stresses and put your body out of alignment. This may put abnormal tension on the muscles and prevent them from strengthening, stretching or recovering fully after exercise. This can lead to pain or injury. If you are not sure of your alignment status get a physiotherapist to check it out. Regardless, doing some simple stretches can help decrease problems.

B is for Balance

Good balance is a fundamental component of any sport, especially skiing. When you have been sitting at your desk all day and only walking on level ground, you need to work on strengthening your balance reactions to improve on slope performance. Skiing and other sports are 3-Dimensional in nature, challenge your muscles and joints to prepare for them. Most training facilities have some balance equipment available. Use them to help bulletproof your body.

C is for Core Training

All skiers and boarders need a strong core or torso as a base for the legs to work off of. Exercises that have a rotational component and work the upper and lower core areas in three dimensions are best. Most activities we do such as cycling, running, or weights are one-dimensional. Life and sports, like skiing, are 3-D so you must train for them. Thomas Grandi states " I have found over the years that my most important asset, physically has got to be the core. If the core isn't strong enough, powerful legs become useless as the power is lost when the skier breaks at the waist. Not to mention injury prevention!"



Add a rotational component with these exercises. Do 10 to the right and left.



Include some form of balance training daily.

D is for Deceleration Control

Skiing is all about controlling the forces of gravity and rotation on frozen water.

A typical giant slalom or recreational ski turn usually lasts approximately 2-3 seconds. That means you need lengthening or deceleration control to slow the forces of gravity and check your downhill speed for this amount of time. Do exercises that work the hips and legs in a slow controlled manner such as step ups, split squats and lunges. They mimic the forces of skiing and allow you to improve strength in a hip-extended position - the functional position for all sports.



Use the skier's edge to challenge your balance as well as giving you a good base of anaerobic work.

General Health and Safety Tips

Now that you're fit and ready to ski, here are a few health and safety tips to remember once you're on the slopes. Ensure your boots and skis are tuned and fitted professionally. Wear a helmet, sunglasses or goggles and sun cream. Start slowly and increase your on-hill aggressiveness as your strength and confidence increase. If you do fall don't try to get up until you have finished sliding. Avoid falling on an outstretched hand. Don't jump if you don't know where you are landing or how to land safely.

Eat well and stay well hydrated so that you have enough energy for the day ahead. Try recovery techniques like hot tubs, sauna, steam, showers and other hot and cold treatments like ice to help your body flush out the lactic acid from your muscles and decrease the next days' stiff muscles.

Have fun and stay Fit to Ski.

Carl Petersen PT. is a partner and director of High Performance Training at City Sports & Physiotherapy Clinics. He traveled with the Canadian Alpine Ski Team for 15 years. Info on his book Fit to Ski can be found at www.citysportsphysio.com.



Try 10-15 slow repetitions. Ensure your knee tracks are over your toes.

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How would you like to drive to the mountain in a brand new 2006 Pontiac Torrent? Worth over \$35,000, this SUV could add some comfort and convenience to your life, whether you are driving to the slopes, or just heading home! Here is your chance to support youth ski racing in British Columbia. Raffle tickets are available through your local ski club. With only 20,000 tickets printed, the odds are great and the price is even better at \$5 a ticket!

The Grand Prize Draw will be held March 25, 2006 (4:00pm PST at the Whistler Mountain Ski Club, 2028 Rob Boyd Way, Whistler, BC V0N 1B2).

Pontiac GMC is a proud supporter of BC Alpine and the BC Ski Team.



GAMING EVENT LICENCE NO: 866713

Alison Leighton: Born to Ski

— by Jennifer Laidlaw

For Alison Leighton, the ski gene was unavoidable. Growing up in Whistler, BC, with a father who works on the mountain and a mother who used to be a ski racer, her life was bound to be filled with the cold, white stuff.

Leighton learned how to ski when she was just three years old. Now 18, Alison is in her third season with the BC Ski Team. She says the first year she made the team was incredible; "It was such a big deal, I was so surprised, really." Leighton admits that now she sometimes forgets how lucky she is to be on the team because it has become a way of life. But when asked if there is anything else she would rather be doing, she just laughs, "I don't think so. It has just been such a cool experience and I don't think I have really missed out on much, besides I would be bored if I didn't ski!" Leighton says one of the best perks of being on the BC team [besides meeting all sorts of people] is the travel time. She has been to Switzerland twice and Chile three times for training.

Alison and longtime friend and teammate, Danielle Robson find life on the road challenging, but with positive team dynamics it can be very rewarding. Alison says that it is really important that everyone gets along, especially when they are on the road, "It really helps, especially when we are away from friends and family for a long period of time." Of course it can be tough when the girls are constantly competing against

each other, but Leighton says they all take it in stride, "One day, one of the other girls might place highest, the next day it could be me, but in the end that is why we are here."

Ali, as her friends and family call her, says that she is extremely competitive and not easily satisfied. "I love racing because it is great competition and I am always up for a good challenge", she admits. With sights on the next level, Leighton is working on improving her ranking; "I want to make the national development team at the end of this season and then compete in the Olympics one day". Ali is certainly headed in the right direction with some early season podium finishes.

For younger ski racers around the province, Ali has this advice: "never give up and always believe in yourself, no matter how bad it gets because it will get better." She knows that there are some tough times during training where skiers have to do things they don't like or don't want to do, but in the end, she says it is worth it, "For me, fitness was always the least exciting part of skiing, but now I can see how beneficial that training is and I can say it is totally worth it". Leighton thinks skiing is a really great sport for female athletes. She says it isn't like some sports where the male athletes get more attention than the female athletes, "In skiing, the guys and girls get treated equally, I think that is one of the reasons I like it so much".

In addition to her parents' involvement in the sport, Leighton's grandfather, Bob



Parsons founded the Weasel Workers and was a leader when hosting speed events at Whistler Mountain. The Bob Parsons Memorial golf tournament is held annually in order to raise funds to assist aspiring ski racers. Ali's grandmother helped found the Vancouver Ski Foundation. It looks like that family influence has paid off, as Alison Leighton has not only stuck with skiing, but become one of the top skiers in British Columbia. She has the attitude and technique to take her where she wants to go. Leighton is a must watch skier for 2006.



BCST members Alison Leighton, Lindsay Kraft and Danielle Robson play it up for the camera after a hard days work.

Tell us what you think and you might be in the next issue of *Fast Track* magazine!

BC Alpine would like your feedback!

What did you like about *Fast Track* this season? What didn't you like? What could we do differently?

What would you like to see in next year's issues of *Fast Track*?

Send an email to BC Alpine's Jennifer Laidlaw at jennl@sfu.ca and tell her what you think.

Your opinions are important to us and this magazine is for you! Who knows, your comments could end up in a future issue of *Fast Track*.

Marmots, Sundogs and Weasels, Oh My! - By Jennifer Laidlaw

There are a whole lot of wild animals running around the local mountains. Some can be found in packs, some can be found alone, but all can be found busying themselves on the ski hills around the province. These vermin share a strange habit of freezing their tails off and covering their tracks, all in the name of ski racing.

The ski racing volunteers of British Columbia will travel for miles in order to work for free on the side of a steep, slippery slope. They ensure the ski courses are safe, smooth and ready for action. They are up early in the morning and go to bed late at night. And what do they receive, besides a pat on the back? Most would answer: we do it for the kids.

There are three officially named groups of ski-racing volunteers in the province: The Marmots [Mount Washington area], Sundogs [Okanagan] and the Weasel Workers [Whistler-North Shore]. These are by no means the only volunteers on the slopes, as each ski club has a volunteer network of their own; however, the Marmots, Sundogs and Weasel Workers are some of the largest, identified volunteer groups in the province.

MARMOTS:

The Marmots have been around for about 25 years and currently have nearly 100 active volunteers. The name means “mountain mouse” and is representative of the small endangered rodent that lives on Mount Washington. The ski club has a policy that requires parents to sign up for four volunteer jobs per season. When a child registers in a program, the parents must put down a volunteer ‘deposit’. If the volunteer obligations are met, the deposit is refunded. Barry Peters, President of the Mount

Washington Ski Club, says the club has rarely ever had to keep a deposit. He says because everyone participates and shares some of the work that no one is overwhelmed or overworked. The group even has a Marmot Workers Award for long-time volunteers who have given many years of service and/or done something above and beyond what is expected of the volunteers.



A friendly group of Weasels smile for the camera. Back Row l-r: Bob Miller, Franco Serraglio, Ron Hunter, Rick Hume, Tess Herbert, Locke Brown and Bill McKee. Front: Andre Labine.

WEASEL WORKERS:

The Weasels have been scurrying around the Whistler area for more than twenty years. Named after a rodent found on coastal mountains, it seems fitting that the weasel is an animal that moves quickly and works hard. The Weasels pride themselves with their reputation. Known for their course setup and gate-keeping abilities, the Weasel volunteers have been invited to assist in races as far away as Bormeo, Italy. New member Richard Prokopanko says every metre of a course needs to have a net and for dangerous areas they may need to put in two or three nets. That includes both sides of the course. Prokopanko says for a 3.1 km course at Lake Louise, that means there is 6.2 km of distance to cover. With

approximately 50 to 60 volunteers, the Weasels are able to get the job done and have fun doing it.

SUNDOGS:

Over forty volunteers from Kamloops down to Penticton call themselves the Sundogs. An official group for more than ten years, the Sundogs aren't actually named after a wild animal! In fact if you are standing on a mountain on a very cold, clear, sunny day, you might notice some hazy rings around the sun. These are called dogs, or sundogs, according to Bruce Holliday, the Officials Chair and BC Alpine board member, and long-time Sundog. And don't be fooled by the reference to the sun, these volunteers would rather be fixing runs on the side of a mountain than basking in the sun on a tropical beach. The Sundogs focus mostly on hosting races in the Okanagan, but they also travel to other mountains if ski clubs don't have the manpower to host a race. The Sundogs are mostly made up of alumni [parents whose children no longer race]. These parents have a passion for the sport that lives on, even once their kids stop racing.

Ski racing depends heavily on the help of volunteers to provide top-notch races across British Columbia. It is a lot of hard work, but it is also an enjoyable time for most! Volunteering with local ski clubs provides an opportunity to develop long-lasting friendships and a sense of community and it also allows parents to play an active role in their children's lives.

Even if Marmots, Sundogs or Weasels don't populate your neck of the woods, there is sure to be some other wild animal looking to recruit you. For more information about helping out on the slopes, contact your local ski club.

AN ODE TO THE SKI RACING VOLUNTEER



Terri Serwa and a young American ski racer, Norquay 2005. Serwa and her husband Brad have been volunteering for over a decade: "There is nothing better at the end of a long work day than sharing stories with other parents, friends, ex-racers, coaches and die-hard race officials. It's a lot of hard work, but when we're out there, it doesn't matter where you come from, or how much money you make. We just share a love of the sport."



Arnie Erickson, Race Chair for the Mars Downhill and Super G, prepares the course at Apex Mountain Resort in February 2005.



Keven Dubinsky and Al Whitney in a timing hut on Blackcomb at the Mars Canadian Junior Alpin Championships, 2005.



Kerry Reimer assists John Stace-Smith, Chief of Timing for the super-G race at Troll Mountain, 2005.



Weasel Workers Rick Hume, Owen "Grandpa Weasel" Carney and Richard Prokopanko, relaxing at the end of a long race day. Prokopanko says the diversity amongst volunteers is incredible: "The Weasels range from 20 to 70 years old and come from all walks of life. There are senior bank officers, computer execs and mill workers and we all get along really well".



John Rea (Chair of the Sierra Wireless Whistler Cup), John Dunlop and Jeff Lay take a break from setting up a course, to bask in the gorgeous mountain sun.



From l-r: Brian Barrett, Kim Harvey, Doug Hughes and Brad Serwa set up nets at the Apex Mountain Resort for the Mars speed event.

CLIP AND WIN!

Every time a racer, ski club, event or sponsor is mentioned in a newspaper anywhere in the province, we at BC Alpine need to know!

There are only a few of us here in the office and hundreds of you out there, so we're asking for your help.

Get out your scissors and start clipping because you could win a Descente BC Ski Team jacket! For each article, photograph, race advertisement or list of results that you cut out and send to us, you will receive one entry into a draw for a Descente jacket just like the one worn by this year's BC Ski Team athletes. Coverage of our sponsors is extra important, so if you see any kind of media coverage featuring even the tiniest mention of a BC Alpine sponsor or logo, all the better!

The draw will take place at the end of the season at our Spring General Meeting in Kelowna. Please send original clippings to: Kathy Stahr at BC Alpine, 306-1367 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V6H 4A9