

NDC Thunder Bay Athlete Update Article By: Jenn Jackson



While we are still a long ways from the racing season, June is arguably one of the most exciting and interesting times of the year for the team. Having just come out of our Boot Camp, which was covered in last month's update, the coaches now had the testing information to build, with their own observations and feedback from our IST (Integrated Support Team), annual training plans for each athlete.

On the second weekend of June, our team and IST had a camping weekend out at Two Island Lake where we shared meals, swam, sauna'd, and were able to interact as a more cohesive group – rather than as a team of skiers and a team of support staff. Over the weekend we also had an organized mobility session with Sheila Sundell (massage therapist), a team psychology and brainstorming session with John Gotwals (sport psychologist), and the coaches and IST had time to review GAP analyses' for each athlete. The purpose of a GAP analysis is to identify the performance gaps of an athlete. It is a more formal measure of identifying what shortcomings we have between our current state and our theoretical

best state, in order to prioritize training focuses.

For now, our team is operating on two different strength plans: a "Max" plan and a "Bulk" plan. At a glance, you would see all the same exercises on both plans, but upon further inspection, you'll notice a subtle but significant difference in the rep and set ranges on the plans. Because strength and conditioning is such an essential part of a skiers training regime, head coach Timo and strength coach Paul Hemsworth have been investing more time and effort into developing and tailoring plans specifically for each athletes, to address the strengths and GAPs for each of us more effectively.

Outside of the gym, our team was into a regular of routine training; meeting up for easy aerobic sessions, anaerobic threshold intensity and even a re-run of the 3km Uphill test. Even after just two weeks of formal training, everyone posted improved times on the run and Katherine Stewart-Jones set a new women's course record! The rest of us girls will have to step our game up to challenge her new best time and the boys better keep running fast to stay ahead...



After those few weeks of regular training, our team parted ways; some athletes hopping in the team van, along with the coaches, while others boarded planes and headed westward where we were reunited in Canmore, AB for our first full training camp of the year. In Canmore we



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joined forces with the Quebec and Canmore training centres (CNEPH and the AWCA), as well as the National Ski Team and several local athletes for an All-Canadian training camp.

The camp was intended as an opportunity for all of Canada's most elite and top developing skiers to work together in a cohesive environment with more dynamic training groups and coaching exposure.

Overall, I think the camp was a positive experience

for our team. Being able to work with a more diverse group of athletes from with different backgrounds, who have different strengths and different training philosophies proved to be interesting and I think everyone on the team will have things to take away from this camp and apply to our training through the rest of the season.

While we were in Canmore, several of us were able to make use of the testing facilities that are run by the Canadian Sport Institute. Of those who did testing, some of the team re-testing for aerobic threshold on the running treadmills while a few of us did the same but on the rollerski treadmill. For me, it was my second time on the roller ski treadmill and while the testing I did was certainly valuable, it was also a lot of fun to "play" on the same equipment that our National Team athletes use for testing and training.



The camp wrapped up as the calendar turned over to July, and we are all on our way back for a bit of downtime to recover from the camp before getting back into the groove of summer training. Looking forward, our team will be out for the Big Thunder Camp, and likely at some of the Kamview Trail Races in the coming weeks. Hopefully we'll see you out there!

