

# NDC Thunder Bay Athlete Interest Article: Integration Camps

By: Bob Thompson



This year there was a renewed effort made by Cross Country Canada, the National Team and the three National Development Centres to organize joint camps that would allow all the best skiers in Canada to come together during the dry land season. These camps were held in Canmore, Alberta, in late July and Park City, Utah in late September.

Both camps were around 2 weeks long and gave ample opportunities to train with some of the other athletes outside our team. It also brought in all the top coaches in the country including Justin Wadsworth the National Team Head Coach, all of whom were happy to share advice, technique and support throughout the camp.

I felt this really showed how tight knit the racing community is. Despite all of us vying for the few spots on the National Team and on the podium, the different teams mix easily. During any workout you had a bit of variety with whom you could train with and everyone was a friend you might not have seen since the racing season and you could find out how their training was going (while keeping 100% focused on technique of course).



Left to right: NDC Thunder Bay (Blue), Alberta World Cup Academy (White) and the Pierre Harvey Training Centre (also white).



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This month we attended the Park City alignment camp in Utah with only six NDC Thunder Bay athletes. This was due to the altitude we would be living at and the high number of hours of the camp. For this reason, only the more senior athletes went down to join the full contingent of Quebec and Canmore Training Centres as well as the National/World Cup team. The benefit of staying in Park City is the altitude as well as the many options for mountain climbs. In total, we did five workouts of three plus hours, most of which involved nearly a kilometre of near constant climbing. One four hour combo roller ski and run workout had most of us finishing at the highest altitude we had ever gotten to with our own feet, over 3600 metres.

One of the best perks of bringing all the top skiers in Canada together is being able to do intensity workouts with all the athletes you can expect to be your top competitors come winter. It's also a chance to show the other coaches what you've got as showing speed in the summer on top of racing fast in the winter goes into selection decisions for races.

I feel there is a lot to gain from bringing all the Centres together in well organized camps as we had this year. Hopefully we can get a camp here in Thunder Bay to show them how we do things in this amazingly supportive community.



*Andy Shields and Bob Thompson during a 4 hour ski near Park City*

