



**OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE**  
January 30, 2016

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**NDC Thunder Bay Men SWEEP Podium in Quebec**  
Mont Sainte-Anne QC

It was an excellent day at the Haywood NorAm Cross Country Ski event in Mont Sainte-Anne Quebec for National Development Team Thunder Bay athletes. With weather conditions at a comfortable -6C and plenty of snow, the men raced 10km in classic technique on the hilly terrain about 50km east of Quebec City. This weekend's racing counts towards qualifying for "Ski Tour Canada", a World Cup event styled after the Tour de France which will be held in Quebec and Alberta this coming March.

Coming out on top was Bob Thompson who edged his team-mate Andy Shields by a mere 0.2 seconds. The third NDC TBay athlete on the podium was Michael Somppi, 14.4 seconds back. Coming in 4<sup>th</sup> was Whitehorse athlete Colin Abbott and the 4<sup>th</sup> NDC TBay athlete in the top 5 was Evan Palmer-Charrette who was also the top "Under 23" skier. David Askwith, also of the NDC Thunder Bay team, finished 13<sup>th</sup>, exactly one minute behind the winning time.

After the race Bob Thompson was quoted as saying "I felt very good today and was able to push well through the early hills of the course. I am very pleased to get my first NorAm win in a distance race." Head Coach Timo Puiras was pleased saying "I am excited for our team that we swept the podium. We were close to a sweep in December when our women's team finished first, third and fourth in a NorAm race in Alberta. It is something the team has been working together toward and today we did it!"

Sunday's race is a 15km skate technique with a pursuit start. The pursuit start is unique in modern cross country ski racing as the athletes head out on course in the order they finished today's race and the first person across the finish line wins. With the great racing today, NDC Thunder Bay athletes have positioned themselves well for another successful day tomorrow.

Other NDC athletes in action today were Julian Smith, Sam Greer and Mia Serratore who are racing the Junior B Europe Tour in Germany this weekend. Julian was the top Canadian on the men's side finishing 33<sup>rd</sup> in the Open category 10km Classic. Sam Greer was 50<sup>th</sup> in a field of 80 men. Mia Serratore raced to 42<sup>nd</sup> position in the Open women's 5km classic.

Back in Thunder Bay, the remaining NDC athletes are training for the World Junior and Under 23 World Championships to be held in Romania in late February. Jenn Jackson, Alannah MacLean, Sadie White, Scott Hill and Angus Foster will participate in the Kamview Tour this weekend.



(l to r) Andy Shields, Bob Thompson, Michael Somppi, Colin Abbott, Evan Palmer-Charrette

# National Development Centre Thunder Bay

555 Dunlop Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6S1  
(807) 624-4249



(l to r) Andy Shields, Bob Thompson, Michael Somppi, Evan Palmer-Charrette

Please contact:

Eric Bailey

National Development Centre – Thunder Bay

Email: [admin@ndctbay.ca](mailto:admin@ndctbay.ca)

Cell: 807-633-4455

[www.ndctbay.ca](http://www.ndctbay.ca)