
BIRKEBEINER BULLETIN



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Official newsletter of the Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club

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Club Website Thanks

A big thank you to Paul Gray for maintaining the Club's Website while Paul L'Huillier was on holidays in June and July. Top Job.

From the President

While Paul and I were enjoying a wonderful Kimberley tag-along tour in June and July, the club continued to offer many great activities including the mid-year dinner, Junior Joey and Junior Birkie programs, adult instructional days, some touring, some racing (Rocky Valley Rush and one weekend of the National Championship events) and a rescheduled Ski de Femme. While some events had to be cancelled or postponed, due to lack of snow or poor weather, many of you would have had some enjoyable skiing and made the most of our clubhouse facilities.

I would like to thank those club members who organised or helped at events, and congratulate our young people on their racing results and team selections.

I would like to commend Ronice Goebel and draw particular attention to all the work she has done this year in the area of development of our sport. Not only has she co-ordinated the Victorian Junior Squad and the Development Squad, a huge job, but she also organised our Ski de Femme day, plus accommodation for juniors and their families for the Nationals weekend at Perisher Valley. And these are just some of the roles Ronice has played. She is also a member of the Hoppet Board, and has just accepted a position on the Skiing Australia Cross Country Committee. Thank-you, Ronice, your enthusiasm is inspirational.

As the end of another ski season draws near, I encourage you all to get out and enjoy the spring skiing. The weather has been great and, although the snow is disappearing rapidly, there is still plenty to enjoy.

Helen L'Huillier
President

Kangaroo Hoppet (from the Race Secretary)

Congratulations to everyone involved in organising and conducting the Kangaroo Hoppet, and to all those who took part.

After a warm and wet June and July where each snowfall seemed to be followed almost immediately by heavy rain, the snow eventually arrived in August and things were looking pretty good as Hoppet week arrived. Then we had more snow and rain through Hoppet week resulting in a disastrous landslip on the Falls Creek Road just above Bogong Village just before 11 a.m. on Friday.

The folk who had gone up to Falls that morning to set up the course and the start area were stranded on the mountain without food, dry clothes and somewhere to sleep. With some ingenuity and lots of generosity by some of the ski clubs on the mountain, everyone found something to eat (thanks, Jim G, Bill and Hannah) and a place to sleep for the night.

Amazingly everyone woke up to a clear, cold morning and the Hoppet went ahead in ideal conditions.

Well done, everyone.

Thank you to all the people on the Hoppet Race Committee for their excellent planning, hard work and leadership, to all the volunteers who made it happen, either up on the snow at the set-up and on race day, and to all the volunteers who helped in other ways (working bees, Hoppet Shop, race office, etc.) down in Mt Beauty.

For more details, photos, etc. go to the Hoppet website, www.hoppet.com.au

Special General Meeting:

Purpose: to consider and adopt a new club constitution based on the Government's new Model Rules

When: 7 p.m. on Wednesday 16th October at the Mt Beauty Information Centre Auditorium.

Our current constitution sets a quorum as one-third of the memberships. This was fine when we were a small Mt Beauty club. But now we are much bigger and have far more members from further away, so we need your attendance or your proxy form.

If you are unable to attend, please go to the website: <http://birkebeiner.org.au/admin-2> and view the proposed new Constitution, then download the Microsoft Word proxy form located underneath it, fill in the file and email it back to the secretary <trishacross@bigpond.com> or print it out and mail it to BNSC, PO Box 192, Mount Beauty, Vic ,3699. Name your representative who will use your proxy vote at the meeting, or appoint the President who will direct your vote as you indicate, or if no indication, will vote it in favour of adopting the new constitution.

If you can attend, it would be appreciated if you could take the time to review the proposed new constitution (on the website) before the meeting.

Position Vacant Timing 2014

I am asking for someone to take over the timing tasks for the race committee next year. I will not be able to do the job next year. I have found some new software that is browser based and easy to use. I have documented all the tasks involved , all the hardware has extensive manuals and instructions. There is plenty of time between now and the next race season for anyone interested to undergo extensive training, without going to Falls Creek, although one trip would be worthwhile.

If you are interested or know of someone who could be pressured into the job please contact the editor. If we end up with no one taking on the job then the club will be hard pressed to run any races next year, and we would not be able to run any FIS races as hand timing is out of the question. The Mount Beauty Half Marathon would be an ideal event to learn how to do the job.

Grants and Subsidies

National teams and squads will be announced within the next two weeks.

BNSC members selected for National Teams are eligible to apply for club grants as outlined on our website. The link is <http://birkebeiner.org.au/admin-2/grants-subsidies/>

Applications close on October 9. Visit the website for more information and an application form.

CLUBHOUSE REPORT (Bron and Paul Gray)

The clubhouse has been very well utilised again this season by members, providing a warm, dry environment for us to refuel and socialise. Members have done a fantastic job keeping it clean and tidy for the enjoyment of everyone. The concept of taking your own rubbish home appears to be working well also.

The new chariot has been well received and used by families. There is a book situated near the chariot for members to record their usage of the chariot and pucks. This will let other members know what time the equipment can be expected to return.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for the clubhouse please let us know. Contact Bron on 0402105237 or Paul on 0403188481.

Race Results

The new software that I am using stores the results on their web site. The three races that we ran this year were the Freestyle Sprint, the 2.5,5 and 10km freestyle and the Rocky Valley Rush. The results are at the following respectively.

<http://my.raceresult.com/details/index.php?eventid=18214&lang=en>

<http://my.raceresult.com/details/index.php?eventid=18230&lang=en>

<http://my.raceresult.com/details/index.php?eventid=18980&lang=en>

Those links go straight to the events concerned. You can search for events from the website's home page.

Get well soon Phil Evans

Phil has been unwell for a bit and was unable to do his sterling job at the Hoppet. He was missed. We wish him a speedy and full recovery.

2014 World Junior Championship Coach Appointed

Congratulations to Nick Grimmer who has been appointed the World Junior Championship Coach to the Australian Junior Team in the lead-up to and at the 2014 World Junior and U23 Championships in Val di Fiemme in Italy.

Junior Joey # 2

Saturday saw about 30 juniors gathering in the Nordic bowl for the first junior joey session of the season. The conditions were perfect with sunny skies and fresh snow. The joeys enjoyed group games and downhill skill development. The session was concluded with some much deserved sugar – lollies and snow slushies.

Thank you to Jim Gargan for setting up the bowl with slalom and downhill running challenges. Also a big thank you to all the parents who got their children to the bowl, helped with skills and games and the making of the slushies.

A big thank you to my fantastic young helpers (two of whom were once junior joeys themselves!), Aca-cia Benne Keeble, Jarrah Forrer and Riley Day.

The final junior joey was the family fun day which occurred on September 1st. It followed the last Snowgum mini series at 11am.



Falling over and getting up
'Dead bugs'



Hannah Gray enjoying a well earned snow slushie



Belinda Phillips and son Mitchell in the Cougar sled after skiing the RV Rush.

A Little History.

Pictured is an original 'Track Setter' engineered in Australia from a Norwegian design back in the mid 1970's. The Club, of course, still has it and it is stored under the Race Hut - just in case. Well on the Sunday of the RV Rush Bob Cranage was conducting his Mini-Series Race #3 in the classical style and needed a 1km classical track. The Kassie had been put to sleep for the day so out came the old track setter connected it up to our Arctic Cat Skidoo and Bob had his track. This track setter was used for the first Australian Birkebeiner back in 1979. It still works well but usually needs somebody to sit on it to increase the weight so it 'cuts & molds' the track better.



Membership Renewal

There are a whole lot of you who have not renewed your membership. It was due back on the 1st of June. Please take the time to log on to the club web site and follow the link and renew. There are detailed instructions in the June newsletter on page 9. If you have trouble doing so, please send me an email.

Hoppet Helpers Thanks

A big thank you to all who helped in any way to make the event as good as it was. We were lucky with the weather, less lucky with nature.

Those of us who got to use the disabled skier beds at Howman's were very thankful. Thanks to Jim Gargan and his contacts. I believe the Gargan's lounge room floor was a little crowded with the people who were aiming to get to Howman's.

The pack up went smoothly and all skiers had something to ski home to.

New Members

Welcome to the following new members:

Lisa, Lucy, Tom McCluskey and Simon Hollis
Anthony Thomas
John and Michelle Kent
Kate, Stephen, Sophie, Luks and Ciara Dahl
Tina Cook
Nicole McCasker

Please make them welcome.

2013 Hoppet Shop

The Hoppet Shop could not operate without the wonderful volunteer efforts of Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club members and Mt. Beauty community volunteers.



The co-ordinators would like to thank Mary Pike, Jenny Farrington, Meg Crebbin, Gael Little, Jan Hergt, Rhonda Gargan, Jenny Flower, Karen Roberts, Joan Evans, Sue Tilley, Sue Hertzog, Liz Harvey, Liz Smith, Linda & Tony Crapper, Eileen Clark, Sandi Coleman, Beth & Ian Smith, Wendy McLelland, Ann Bellingham, Bev Bantick, Sonja Smith, Jill & Ian Harrowfield, Nola Skey, EmmaLee Still, Sue Veikkanen, Marian & Paul Sharman and Jane Derrick, Maggie Lyons, Suzie Cohn and Faith Lammin.



Beth and Ian Smith used their French language skills with competitors, Daniel Clerc and Dominique Thierry.



Valerio Leccardi and Esther Bottomley pick up bibs from Liz

Thanks to Trish Cross for this article



Liz entertains Russian visitors



Mark Gray towing his 4 nieces with the new Chariot

Jess Gray towing the new Chariot



Dead bugs at Junior Joey day

Clubhouse fun

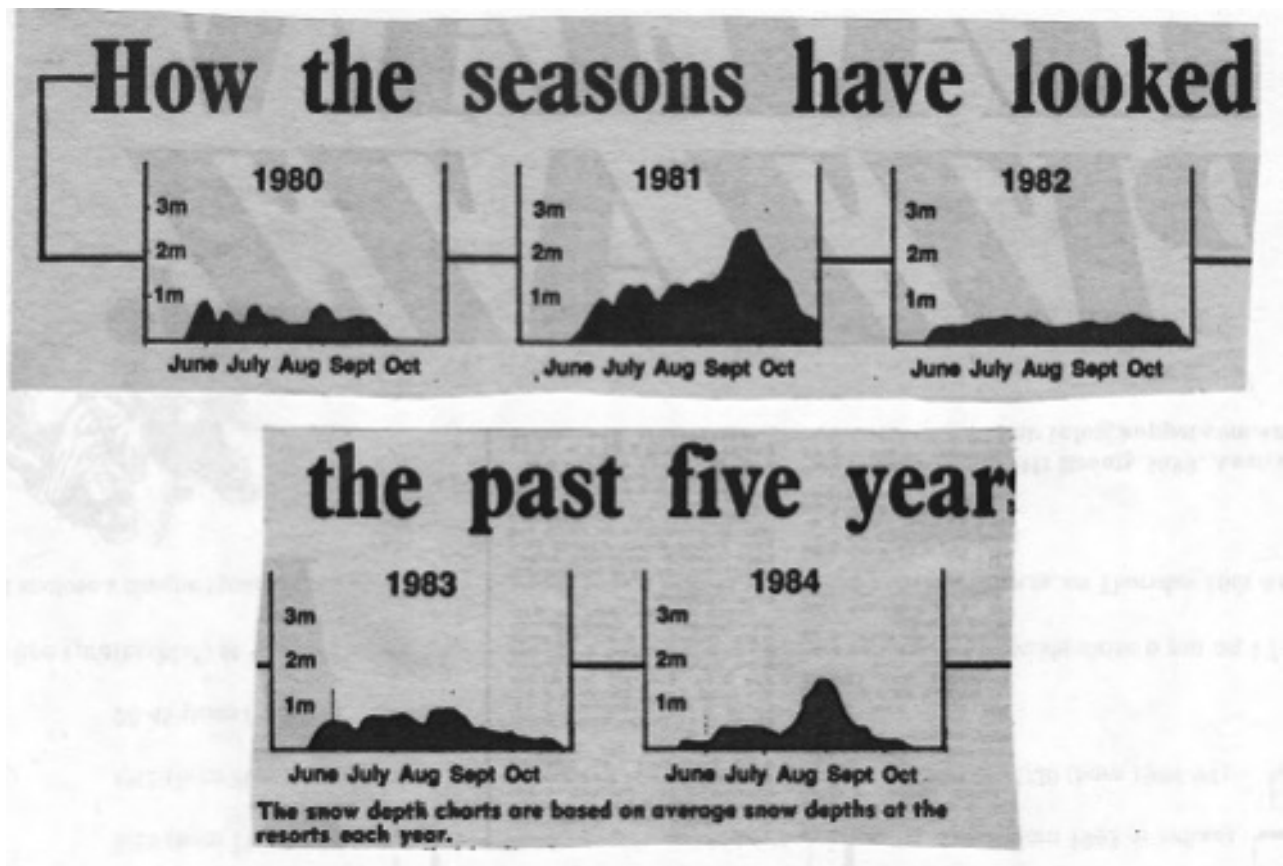
Thanks to Bron Gray for these photographs.

Birkie Juniors

Good days, wet days and unpredictable days, but the 2013 Birkie Juniors still had lots of fun with guest Swedish coach Victor Gustafsson. Victor's method using the FUNdamentals approach was well received judging by the smiles all round of our skiers, not to mention the chance to ski with other juniors in a group and improve skills at the same time. They loved the challenges and opportunity to ski with a classy international skier! Mt Beauty Secondary College and the Primary School were also delighted to have support for their XC Ski program and see students motivated and enjoying the mountains. All junior Birkies enjoyed a few races including the Joey Hoppet. Of note, Jarrah Forrer discovered he enjoyed racing and made his mark by taking out his age group at the Australian Championships at Perisher this year in distance and sprint events. Thanks are extended to BNSC for supporting and helping fund the initiative and to each of our families who billeted Victor and ensured he enjoyed his 8 weeks down under.

LOOKING BACK

Paul found these snow depths when looking through some old files.



Hoppet Day Photos



Volunteer Tent — From left: Meg Crebbin, Jim Crebbin, Jenny Hughes and Bill Sykes (MP-Benalla)

Hoppet photos courtesy of Paul L'Huillier



Race Director — Allan Marsland looking very relaxed. Allan has been 'the boss' of all 23 Hoppets.



Hoppet Announcer: Neil Van der Ploeg & assistant Linky Grimmer

Ski & Snowboard Australia announces appointments to the SSA Cross Country Committee (SSAXCC) following an internal review.

Earlier this year, SSAXCC determined that a review of its structure and activities was required. It is worth noting that similar reviews have been undertaken in other SSA National Discipline Committees over the last couple of years.

The SSA Board endorsed the SSAXCC's request to implement a review and a XC Review Panel was established.

The XC Review Panel sought expressions of interest to join the SSAXCC from the broader community, reviewed the structure of the Committee, Sub-Committees and Working Groups and reviewed the activities currently undertaken. The Panel also published a draft strategic vision paper and invited public comment.

The SSA Board was presented with and approved the membership recommendations from the Panel, which are listed below.

SAXC Committee

Peter Cunningham	Interim Chair
Ben Derrick	Incoming Chair
Finn Marsland	High Performance
Chris Darlington	Athlete Development
Anthony Evans	Selection
Allison Stoddart	Coaching
Andrew Walker	Rules
Toni Hulme	NSW Grassroots
Ronice Goebel	VIC Grassroots
TBC	Athlete

Over the coming weeks, one of the main priorities of SSAXC will be to define further the responsibilities of the working groups within the new structure and populate these groups with suitable experts from both within and outside the committee. The Panel also recommended the establishment of an Executive. However, this will be left as a decision for SSAXCC.

Editor's note: Finn, Allison, Andrew and Ronice are all Birkebeiner members.



Alasdair Tutt, Paul Kovacs and Phil Bellingham training at the Stromlo Forest Park in Canberra

Snowgum Wodonga Mini Series

The History

Snowgum Wodonga Mini Series first started in 1989 as Mountain Sports Wodonga Mini Series run by Telemark Nordic Ski Club. In that very first season 284 total competitors raced in 5 events. With 118 individuals competing in one or more of the 5 races. 37 skiers successfully completed 4 out of the 5 races. After a successful introduction of the Mountain Sports Mini Series it continued for the next 8-9 ski seasons. In 1994 a total of 158 juniors took part in one or more events.

Two athletes from the early Mini Series days who have gone on to great achievements are Esther Bottomley, dual Olympian for XC skiing, and the recently crowned XC Mountain Bike World Champion, Paul Van der Ploeg.

The Present – 2013

This year, 49 children participated in the Mini Series across the age classes of U7, U9, U11 and U15 boys and girls. There were three races held within the series on the 13/07, 18/08 and 01/09. A fourth race had been scheduled for the 30/06 but was cancelled due to a lack of snow.

Unlike the early Mini Series days, at the completion of the races there was an opportunity for juniors and parents to try Laser Biathlon in the Nordic Bowl. Fun Laser Biathlon relays were conducted for those who were challenged to test their skills with these two opposing sports. The weather was brilliant on the final day of racing, which made it possible to hold the presentations in the Nordic Bowl. Each participant received a special Mini Series Diploma, spot prizes sponsored by Snowgum Wodonga and gold medals for those competitors who completed all three races this season. This year we were fortunate to have the *Australian XC Ski Champion Anna Trnka and Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club member* to assist with presenting the Diplomas and medals to the participants.

The success of the series this year was underpinned by great support from parents, Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club and Telemark Nordic Ski Club. A truly great partnership supporting the development of XC skiing.

The Future

We would love to quote “Go Back to the Future” and see the numbers that we saw back in the 80’s – 90’s participating in the series again in 2014 onwards. Developing what would form part of a bigger picture of junior XC Skiing development within Australia. Ultimately we want to see kids not just participate in the race series but also have fun in doing so. Feedback from parents and competitors from this year’s mini series have been very positive with advance commitment to supporting and participating in *Snowgum Wodonga’s Mini Series* in 2014. For those skiers who were unable to participate this year, we look forward to seeing you next year and please don’t forget to bring your friends.

Lynn-Maree Cullen (nee Cranage)

Telemark Nordic Ski Club (formed 1972)



Paul Gray with a young laser biathlete



The start/finish area at the mini Series



The start line



Diploma winners with Anna Trnka



Plenty of activity around the entry table.



Lots of willing helpers.



National Podium-Perisher Valley: From left – Victor, Jarrah Forrer, Paul Kovacs and Phil Bellingham



Jun Birkies with Coach Victor (right) and parent Ewen Silvester (left)

Drop Outs & Burn Outs

Toni Scheier

Cross Country Canada 1989

Some philosophising:

We are all aware of athletes who are great racers in their early teens and have quit racing by the time they reach their twenties. Often the "system" has been blamed, i.e. they have been pushed too hard, etc. Sometimes that is the case. However, at the National Coaches Seminar there were some discussions that confirmed some of my beliefs in this area that I thought you may be interested in.

Frank Dick, the National Track and Field coach in Great Britain was speaking about the same topic. The top junior British distance runners rarely go on to senior competition. This was a cause of great concern in Britain and he discussed this with a famous Czech sport psychologist, Miroslav Vaneck. Vaneck said that they also experienced the same problem and both he and Dick put together a paper on the topic.

They believe this drop out rate is a natural phenomenon and they characterize athletes as having **two qualities** necessary for success: **natural talent** and **desire**. Athletes do not have equal amounts of these qualities. There are athletes who have:

- a lot of natural talent and little desire;
 - a fairly equal mix of both;
- and lots of desire and little talent.

At a young age it is the athlete with the natural talent who is successful and often they win most of the competitions that they enter. The athlete with less natural talent but more motivation does not win very often but works hard to become better. Around the mid-teens the effects of training become more important than just natural talent alone. The less talented athletes start to improve their results as training pays off. The talented athlete sees his margin of victory drop off and he may start to lose races (something that he has rarely done before). The talented athlete then makes a decision to either work harder (improve motivation) and stop relying on natural talent or quit the sport. The decision of many of these talented young athletes is to quit the sport.

Dick and Vaneck feel that the top athletes in the world are, in many cases, not the ones who had the most talent as juniors but the ones who had good natural talent and worked hard to improve their abilities because they didn't always win. The exceptional athletes are the ones with *great talent* and *great motivation*.

So, what do I think this means?

Drop out/Burn out of very talented young athletes is natural and is experienced in most sports in most countries.

In Canada we have a small number of competitors so that talented athletes who drop out are easily noticed.

In Canada the extrinsic rewards of cross country ski racing are few, so only very dedicated people persevere in the sport after the late teens when there is a lot of pressure to conform to the North American standards and acquire a university education and a good job.

Our system is young so it is "easy" to get to the top of the sport. In the past a naturally talented junior could get Canadian Championship medals without a great deal of training,

at least in the younger age classes. It is getting harder to do.

Our system is young, so yes, we do make mistakes at times and some talented athletes who could make it do get burned out and drop out.

What can we do?

Work hard as coaches to help increase the motivation of our talented athletes (internally versus externally oriented goals).

Provide challenging race opportunities for young juniors so they learn how to deal with losses in competitions.

Provide talented juniors with an international reference for their performance through the Canada Points List.

Accelerate the development of our system.

(This article originally appeared in the June 1989 edition of *Australian XC News* and was submitted by Paul L'Huillier for inclusion in the Birkie Bulletin)



A few views of the slip above Bogong village.



A keen bunch at Ski de Femme.



Cross Country Skiing National Team Selection 2013-2014 Provisional as at September 20, 2013*

*Subject to acceptance of place on team.

	Men	Women
World Cup Team (FIS Point or Top 80% of field World Cup)	Callum Watson Phillip Bellingham	Esther Bottomley
Continental Cup Team (FIS Points Only)	Paul Kovacs	Aimee Watson Anna Trnka
National Squad (Australian Selection Races)	Nick Montgomery (U23 criteria) Alex Almoukov (Post Selection)**	
National Junior Team (Junior Australian Selection Races)	Damon Morton Hamish Roberts	Anna Trnka Xanthea Dewez Casey Wright Katerina Paul (Post Selection)**

**Post selection based on injury or illness during some of the selection races.

Note that athletes may move up to World Cup and Continental Cup Teams during the season.

2013/2014 Major International Event Teams

	Men	Women
Shadow Olympic Team	Phillip Bellingham Callum Watson Paul Kovacs	Esther Bottomley Aimee Watson
World U23 Championship	Phillip Bellingham Nick Montgomery Alasdair Tutt Jackson Bursill	
World Junior Championship	Damon Morton Hamish Roberts Daniel Walker	Anna Trnka Xanthea Dewez Casey Wright Lucy Glanville
World University Winter Games***	Callum Watson Phillip Bellingham Paul Kovacs Alex Almoukov Nick Montgomery Alasdair Tutt Jackson Bursill Daniel Walker	Anna Trnka Casey Wright Lucy Glanville Ashleigh Spittle Ellie Phillips

***Subject to team size and endorsement by Australian University Sport.