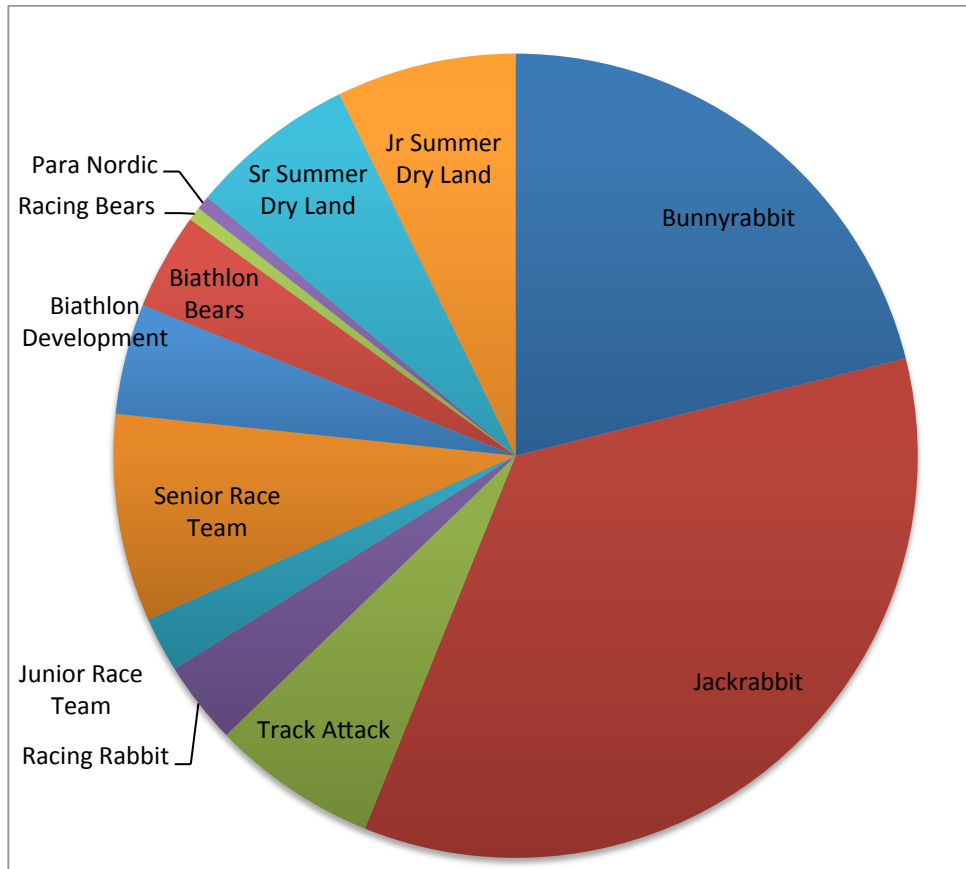


## 2015 Review of Athlete Development Programs at Soo Finnish Nordic Ski Club



**Program** **Number of Skiers**

Bunnyrabbits	38
Jackrabbits	63
Track Attack	12
Racing Rabbits	6
Junior Race Team	4
Senior Race Team Full	15
Biathlon Bears	7
Racing Bears(Biathlon)	1
Biathlon Development	8
Para Nordic	1
Sr Summer Dry Land	12
Jr Summer Dry Land	13

## **Bunnyrabbits, Jackrabbits, Racing Rabbits, Track Attack, and Para Nordic Season Highlights**

The 2015 season children aged 4 to 16 participated in one day/week learn to ski programs: Bunnyrabbits (38), Jackrabbits (63), Track Attack (12), and Para-Nordic (1). Registration started on Zone4.ca in July 2014 with many classes full by September.

There were 39 volunteer coaches and 10 high school assistant coaches who were graduates of the learn to ski program. Coach training (Introduction to Community Coaching and Community Coaching) was offered in December 2014.

Thirteen sessions were scheduled on Saturdays (10:00am – 12noon), starting December 20th and ending March 14th. Despite the ongoing cold temperatures, only one lesson was cancelled and later rescheduled for March 28th.

The season kick-off was held at the Bible Fellowship building and on snow. Santa made a guest appearance and the hot dog social was well attended. The Algoma Public Health unit donated lip balm with SPF as part of their sun safety program.

On January 17th, all lessons were relocated to Crimson Ridge Golf Course. Each class was designated a time to ski in the terrain park that was specifically made for our program. The restaurant made accommodations for our Jackrabbits to have their snack in their clubhouse. Coaches and Jackrabbits alike enjoyed the different venue and new trails to explore. A grab-and-go lunch was available in the restaurant.

The 59th Annual Hiawatha Invitational Time Trial on January 24th saw 129 participants across all age groups. All Jackrabbits were automatically registered (parents did not have to sign children up and pay a fee on Zone4), but everyone still had the choice to not race. Many parents commented that they were hesitant for their children to participate, but they were surprised to see their children have a positive experience. Jackrabbits warmed up with their classes for the first hour of lessons, and coaches brought their skiers to the start lineup, put on bibs, and cheered. The time trial was a classic race, interval start, with the traditional class divisions and there was a free-technique option for biathlon athletes to have an opportunity to practice their race skills. All time trial racers were awarded a participation “woodel” at the finish line (proved to be a great incentive for younger skiers) and Club ribbons, with individual race details (time), were given to participants at the Awards Banquet. The Hot Dog Team served over 300 hot dogs, dozens of cookies, and hot chocolate under the new blue Club tent.

The Racing Rocks Ski Tournament replaced the Jackrabbit Olympics on February 28th. The event plan was submitted to Cross Country Canada, who approved the activities and provided an orange Buff to each participating child. Invitations were sent to nearby ski clubs, local school boards, and ski shops and resulted in nine additional children taking part in the morning’s activities in an effort to promote the

sport of cross country skiing. New games this year were *Soo Finnish Skittles* and *Biath-A-Gong*. Delicious cookie medals were awarded and many families stayed for hot dogs and refreshments. The “Choose Your Own Adventure” mass start time trial concluded the day with new categories of a 4 km skiathlon and a “Mystery Ski” – an open option for those to ski any distance and be timed. There were many new faces at the start line: approximately half of the participants had not raced before at Hiawatha Highlands. Club ribbons were distributed to all participants at the Awards Banquet.

Parent and coach volunteers created two Klister cut outs and one Olaf. These were used for special events and coaches may use them for weekly lessons (for treasure hunts) in future seasons.

A group of coaches invited older Jackrabbits and parents to attend an optional one-hour Tuesday night ski practice. Practices started January 6th and the last session was on March 10th. This was initiated to encourage more time on skis, specifically to work on skate technique. Typically there were a minimum of three children each week that would attend and most evenings would end with a game of LED lighted frisbee. The evenings were great socially for the children (community/group/team building).

The Family Ski Day on the Pinder trail system in reverse direction was a crowd pleaser. Grooming efforts were successful at making the trails available after the previous day’s freezing rain. A campfire, barbeque, and refreshments were set up by the intersection of the Mockingbird extension. The addition of shortcuts on this trail system allowed the youngest skiers, who account for almost 1/3rd of our group, to participate.

Crimson Ridge Golf Course hosted our Sprint Races, rescheduled from February 14th for March 28th. The terrain park was once again set up with obstacles and families were invited to ski the trails after and before their child’s scheduled sprint time. Race team members and special guest Jack Carlyle mentored Jackrabbits along the course. Children received a Club cowbell for participating. The restaurant at Crimson Ridge again offered sandwiches, soup, and refreshments to customers.

At the Awards Banquet, each athlete received a package that included a participation medal, a certificate which listed the name of their level, coaches, skills learned, and what level to register in for the next season. The package included a 5 X 7 class photo. Two photography sessions were scheduled to ensure most of the children had a photograph of themselves with their class. Children graduating from Level Four and Track Attack skiers were also given a letter inviting them to join Racing Rabbits or the Junior Race Team.

Throughout the season, family members and friends of Jackrabbits stepped up to help when there was a need for an extra adult to ski along a class, to open juice boxes, or to help run a game. Our program continues to build community and encourage full family participation.

- Diane Charron-Bishop, Matthew Towle, & Cassandra Nielsen



## **Racing Rabbits Season Highlights**

The Racing Rabbits put in a great season training every Thursday and Saturday. Coaches John, Bob, Julie, and Emma were committed to this keen group of six young skiers working on skating and classic technique, hills, and speed. They often did informal time trials on the White Pine extension on Thursday evenings, and the group raced in club time trials, the Maple Syrup Stampede, and the Ontario Provincial Midget Championships in Temiskaming. Many of the Racing Rabbits trained during the summer months with Wendy Mihell as part of the Junior Dryland Program.

- Joanna MacDougall

## **Junior Race Team Season Highlights**

The Junior Race Team trained on-snow Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. They were coached by Greg Prodan, Emily Kinnunen, James Isaacs, and Trish Westman. The team of four athletes skied in the club time trials, and some of the athletes travelled to O-Cup races in Duntroon and Timmins, and the Ontario Provincial Midget Championships in Temiskaming. The Junior Race Team had the opportunity to train during the summer months with Wendy Mihell as part of the Junior Dryland Program.

- Joanna MacDougall

## Senior Race Team Season Highlights

The Soo Finnish Nordic Senior Team trains year-round, from June to March. Athletes do a combination of dryland training activities including running, roller skiing, cycling, and strength work in the off season. Once the snow arrives, the athletes work hard on ski technique and skiing fast to be prepared for the long race season. The team meets three times a week for team practices, and team members train on their own during the rest of the week.

This year there were 15 Senior Team ski members and 8 Biathletes who competed at several races throughout the season, from the club level to the national level. The team travelled across the province, including races in Thunder Bay, Duntroon, Gatineau (Quebec), Timmins, and Temiskaming, as well as competing locally in club time trials and the Maple Syrup Stampede. Highlights include Matteo and Sebastien's bronze medals in Thunder Bay, Shilo's bronze medal at Highlands and gold medal in Timmins, Gavan's double gold performance in Timmins, and Declan's gold and silver medals in Timmins. Shilo, Matteo, and Sebastien rounded out the season by finishing 1st, 3rd, and 6th overall in their categories respectively in Ontario.

The Senior Team puts in a lot of hard work at practice, but we also have a lot of fun. Favourite workouts include social skis on the Crystal and the "parloff". The athletes look forward to attending practice with their friends, and there are lots of smiles to go around despite the daily contributions to the Pain Bank. We always welcome new members, and look forward to seeing new faces next season.

- Erin Mallinger

## Biathlon Season Highlights

Members of the biathlon team raced across North America this season - Alberta, Minnesota, Quebec, and Ontario. The season ended at the Canadian Nationals in Hinton, AB for a couple athletes or at the Ontario Championships in Sault Ste. Marie for the remaining athletes.

Athletes who represented Soo Finnish through the .22 rifle program were: Dalton Hertz, Sarah Gaudette, Austin Olar, Bryce Vanderburg, Derek Rouleau, and Shilo Rousseau. Soo Finnish athletes in the air rifle program were: André Breckenridge, Cassandra Breckenridge, Eamon MacDougall, Simon Beckett, Gavan Barrett, Kaylee Marcil, Gregory Polnick, Shail Giroux, Anna Towle, and Chandra Rousseau.

Highlights for the season included Dalton and Sarah attending the Ontario training camp/Canada Winter Games trial races in Canmore where Dalton qualified on the Ontario team as the first alternate. As the season progressed, Austin had multiple races where he placed 3rd, 4th & 5th and then won double gold at the Ontario Championships in Sault Ste. Marie. Bryce had two top 5 placings and received double silver at the Ontario Championships. Derek had two top 5 placings, received double bronze at the Ontario Championships, and also raced at the first Ontario Cup race in Collingwood where he finished 1st and 2nd. Finishing off the season, both Dalton and Shilo, representing Soo Finnish, attended Canadian Nationals in Hinton, AB: Dalton shot 10 for 10 in a race (second time this season) and Shilo, who raced up a category, placed 9th in the Pursuit with the sixth fastest time out of a field of more than twenty. Shilo also raced at the Quebec Cup and two NorAm Cups in Quebec, where she had several top 3 finishes, including a few first places. Chandra accompanied her sister Shilo and received multiple top 5 placings.

Many of the athletes also raced at Cadet Areas and Provincials. At the Northern Ontario Area event, the 2310 Army Male Relay team that consisted of Austin, Bryce, and Brandon Riggs placed 2nd. The 2310 Army Female Relay team (ages 12-14), consisting of Kaylee, Cassandra, and Maelyn Doxtater, raced against more than ten teams with girls ages 12-18, and placed 2nd overall (first top 3 placing ever for the Army female unit relay team). For the Individual race, both Austin and Bryce placed 1st and 2nd respectfully in the Sr Boys category. At the Ontario Provincial event, the 2310 Army Male Relay placed 2nd with less than 50 seconds behind the leader. The 2310 Army Female Relay team was able to capture a top 5 placing, and was the top team that advanced from Northern Ontario. Kaylee placed 2nd in the Jr Girls and Brandon placed 3rd in the Jr Boys Mass Start races.

- Colin Edwards

## Volunteers

Jackrabbit Administration	Diane Charron-Bishop, Matthew Towle, Cassandra Nielsen
Registrar	Anita Beckett
Time Trial	David Baldwin, Laurie Carlyle
Hot Dog Crew	Tyler Moody, Davey Taylor, Jennifer Mealey
Photography	Anna Moody, Amy Wheeler Reich, Darren Linqvist
Jr Bunnyrabbit	Sam Nicoletta, Vivian Hall, Ella Santana, Andrea Howland, Nichole Murray, Jennifer Nieson
Sr Bunnyrabbit	Sharon Quinn, Wes Hill, Hannah Dunlop, Diane Charron-Bishop, Shannon Ramsay, Julia Robertson
Level One	Michael Irvine, Maija Irvine, Jodie Stewart, Paul deBeer, Liliana Speck, Carl Rosso, Maxine Orr, Claire Gregory, Matt Towle, Charlotte Reich, Michelle Delorme
Level Two	Janice Kloss, Mary Ann Linqvist, Terry Bariciak, Madeline Swinn
Level Three	Darren Linqvist, Don Hall, Hanna-Liisa Linqvist
Level Four	Joe Reich, Andre Riopel, Phil Dopp, Scott McCron
Racing Rabbit	John Santana, Bob Karklins, Julie Freestone, Emma Karklins
Track Attack	Rob MacDougall, Luke Kahtava, Steve Holmes, Wendy Meraglia, Andrew Quon, Michael Swinn
Spares	Joanna MacDougall, Bobbi Rushon, Caroline Davey
Para Nordic	Lynn Rosso, Marie Morin-Storm
Junior Race Team	Greg Prodan, Emily Kinnunen, James Isaacs, Trish Westman
Senior Race Team	Erin Mallinger, Lawrence Foster, Hillary Mallinger
Biathlon	Colin Edwards, Mike Hertz

Coach Training	December 2014
Introduction to Community Coach:	6 new SFN coaches
Community Coach:	4 new Soo Finnish Coaches