

LSSD Camp

By NDC Team Member Jimmy Gunka

Every year for the last 8 years at the end of June to the first week of July, Big Thunder Nordic Ski Club hosts the annual LSSD training camp. Athletes from all over Eastern Canada descend on Thunder Bay for 5 days of hard core killer training in the Thunder Bay area. This year was the biggest turn out of athletes in the history of the training camp; 75 athletes! The LSSD camp is aimed at skiers who wish to push their limits and to put athletes into an environment with tons of motivation and a whole lot of kids who want to be the next Devon Kershaw or Alex Harvey. This year's training camp had so much to offer in terms of help and coaching. The lineup for this camp included NDC head coach Eric Bailey, Big Thunder head coach Adam Kates, special guest and 2010 Olympian Stefan Kuhn, CCC Eastern High performance coordinator Lisa Patterson, Ontario Ski team coach Pavlina Sudrich and all of the NDC athletes... and I also can't forget about Chris Serratore, Big Thunder President, who spearheaded the mini-midget camp.

On June 29 the camp kicked off the much anticipated 5 day camp including 9 training sessions, 1 paintball session, and 10 athlete vs. food sessions. Every day started off by splitting the athletes up into 4 different groups varying by age, gender and ability. Each group had at least 1 coach and 3 NDC athletes to help out. The first two days consisted of rollerskiing in the morning. So after the group had split up they all went to different parts of the Neebing area to work on technique. It was so cool to be able to act as a coach and help out most of the youngsters and I hope that they all took advantage of what they were given. I myself have done this camp 7 times and remember back in the day how cool it was to be able to ski with the NDC guys and to learn from them. This year, I was an athlete and a coach at the camp and to be honest I really like to be both! When you're trying to help someone and teach the kids how to ski correctly you learn a lot for yourself.

Anyways, after a few days of long rollerskis it was time for some fun! For the last 3 years on the lowest volume day of the camp there has been an activity planned for the afternoon - Paintball. Each of the times it has happened, it seems as though Adam Kates came out unscathed, so this year he turned it up a notch and chirped every single athlete how much he was going to rock them that day. Needless to say, I saw Adam at dinner that night and couldn't help myself and laugh. He got ROCKED. Everyone had some welts here and there, but Adam looked as though he got shot everywhere... and I mean everywhere. With Adam in a world of hurt there were still 3 days left in the camp. One day included a cross country running race hosted by the awesome Fresh Air Experience which was followed by the annual Sleeping Giant run the next day. Unfortunately for everyone, a bunch of welts and a bruised body couldn't hold Adam back from taking the big W in the race. Congratulations to everyone who did the race! It was pretty epic with a huge storm 20 minutes before the race that left the trail muddy and everyone wet. Luckily no one got hit by lightning and everyone pushed super hard!

Every year, the last day consists of a run at Sleeping Giant Provincial Park followed by lunch and an afternoon at the beach. The run is always a blast and most athletes do anywhere between 2.5 to 4 hours for the NDC athletes. It was a beautiful day with a nice breeze during the run and clear blue skies for lunch and the afternoon on the beach.

The whole camp was a huge success and it motivated me to see so many youngsters rippin' it up! It's funny to look at it when I was in their shoes just 2 years ago. It was super fun to work with all the kids and help out as much as we all could. A big shout out to Stefan Kuhn for the appearance, I think everyone was really stoked after hearing his speech about his way to the top and about being a part of the 2010 Olympics. Also a big thanks to all of the coaches involved as well as the Big Thunder Ski team for undertaking this camp year after year. Also a huge, huge, thank you to all of the athletes who participated this year, this camp is for you, and we hope that you enjoyed yourself in what is one of the greatest ski communities in Canada - Thunder Bay.

Lastly, I think I can speak on behalf of every single athlete/coach/helper, the food was unbelievably amazing every single day. You really have to experience the camp because I cannot explain how awesome it is to have so many people working the kitchen to provide us with amazing food. It takes a lot of time and effort to do this and is really appreciated by every single athlete. Thank you to Jean E. Pendziwol and her crew of chefs!

NDC would also like to thank the whole organizing committee for inviting us to take part and be able to help the upcoming skiers of Ontario and Canada.

Below are some pictures from the camp...



Erin and Alannah leading a group of skiers



A group of athlete's rollerskiing on Lachloman Road



Paintball!!



Ski walking at Centennial Park



Rollerskiing with Stefan Kuhn!



Look at all the athletes!!



THANK-YOU, THANK-YOU to our awesome kitchen crew!!!!