

Living the Dream

By Michael Somppi



I have always been a hard working person. Whether it is school, sports, work, or anything else, I always strive to do my best. It can be very physically and mentally draining to always keep up that same intensity and focus, but I have always believed that the hard work will pay off. And it always does. Sometimes sooner than expected, often much later, but it never fails. Success is not something that just happens. It is not a lottery; you have to make your own success.



Over the past several years I have continually narrowed my focus in order to be my best and I have learned there are many sacrifices I must make, but also many bonuses along the way. Although I could rhyme off all the sacrifices I have made and continue to make such as cutting back on my education, missing out on parties and time with friends, living on limited financial resources, and essentially, living a normal life, I would rather focus on the positives because for me, the positives easily outweigh the negatives. I consider myself extremely



fortunate to be able to live an abnormal life as a high performance athlete and member of NTDC and I hope I never find myself taking this insane life I lead for granted.

During the first week of July, our team participated in the LSSD training camp partially for training purposes, but also as role models to younger aspiring athletes. I found myself reminiscing about the days when I was a Juvenile training with Lappe Nordic and NTDC seemed like such a far away, distant goal to



reach. Following the LSSD training camp, our team departed on a road trip for Canmore, AB where we would be training for the remainder of the month. Prior to NTDC I had never spent much time in Canmore, and now this would mark my 3rd summer road trip there. I love being around the mountains; the scenery is a pleasant change from Thunder Bay where Mount McKay seems like a hill in comparison. I realize, had I not qualified for NTDC, I would likely be working like crazy to make enough money to pay for University during my summer months. I prefer this option, a road trip to Canmore to spend a few weeks doing some hard training and enjoying life in the Rocky Mountains.



During the week of July 20th-26th our team headed up to the Haig Glacier for a week of high volume on-snow training. Everything went well, we were fortunate to have awesome weather (didn't have to ski in any rain or fog!) and of course we ate like royalty thanks to the Haig staff, Jodi and Joel. I doubt I would have ever had the opportunity to stand on the top of a glacier, let alone ski on one, had I not joined NTDC. The training we do on the glacier combined with the altitude is certainly not easy, but like I said, hard work pays off. I work hard while I am on the glacier, but I also get to enjoy the views and it's an experience I will never forget.

The end of July came and our team headed back to Thunder Bay, ready to relax and recover for a week before diving back into another training block. Next up is a trip to the Hayward, Wisconsin and to cap off our off-season, a trip to Schladming, Austria where we will be training on the Dachstein Glacier for 3 weeks. As a member of NTDC for the past 2 years I have traveled all over Canada, done a few trips to the States and crossed over the pond to Europe for my first time. I love traveling and I can't wait to find out what is in store for me in the future. All I have to do is keep working hard and having fun.

