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Buddy Werner's 2

Summer Fun! 2008 MARA Summer Camp

June 18, 2008 marks the beginning of the second annual MARA Summer Camp. This year we return to Mt. Hood for six days of skiing and one memorable day of whitewater rafting.

The purpose of summer camp is to continue development of fundamental ski skills and hone race tactics. Additionally, participants are exposed to a myriad of ski and boot manufacturers who offer free demos of

new race equipment, providing an optimal opportunity to find the right gear for each athlete's ski quiver.

Three days of skiing to begin the camp are followed by a day of rafting and fun. We conclude with three more ski days.

Most ski days begin early (breakfast at 6am!) loading the lift at 7am, snack break at 10am and back to the Mazama lodge for lunch at 1pm. An hour of rest is

followed by afternoon dry land exercise, dinner, and evening video.

Our camp is geared toward race oriented MARA athletes ages 9 to 15. A commitment to ski racing and personal athletic development is the only requirement.

For more information look to the MARA web site or email MARA at mtashlandracing@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

March 13 - Final Thursday night training

March 14-16 - Coyote Classic, Mt. Shasta

March 15-16 - Peter Lorincz Cup, Willamette Pass

March 16 - Final Sunday Masters Training

March 22 - Sloan Cup Family Fun Race, Mt. Ashland

April 5 - **MARA MAKE UP DAY** last day of training for Mighty Might

April 13 - Mt. Ashland CLOSED

April 10-13 - PNSA Masters Championship, Mt Bachelor

April 25-27 - May Day Race, Mt. Bachelor

June 18-26 - MARA Summer Camp

Mighty Might

2008 Buddy Werner Championships

by Troy McCrae



“Buddy Werner participant, Reece Pressman trains for the big race. Reece finished eight in the Slalom.”



“Parker Spear eyes a Hair Pin.”

3/3/08- Fourteen MARA racers and their families descended upon the quaint little Bavarian styled village of Leavenworth, Washington over the past weekend for the annual Buddy Werner Championships. The races were held at nearby Stevens Pass Resort, and included the best 9-12 year-olds on 23 teams from across the USSA’s Pacific Northwest division, encompassing Oregon, Washington, and Northern Idaho. On this grand stage, seven boys and seven girls stepped up to represent Mt. Ashland against many teams sent by larger programs that were arguably “stacked” with bigger, stronger kids.

Stevens Pass advertises 1,125 acres of skiable trails, bowls and glades on three sides of two different mountains. With a vertical drop of 1800 ft. and 35% advanced expert terrain there were plenty of steep thrills to explore. However, our focus was on two trails descending from the Big Chief lift on the left side of the area looking up from the lodges. Giant Slalom was staged on a rolling intermediate trail called “Showcase” which started out with a relatively flat upper section that rolled onto a more challenging pitch that got steeper towards the finish. The Slalom course was set up on “I-5”, a black diamond to the skier’s left of the chair, which was steep and challenging right out of the start. The slope went from steep to flat in a smooth-arc transition about two thirds of the way down, which proved to be a

challenging technical aspect of each course set over the weekend. Course workers used rock salt in the preceding days to ensure the race surfaces were hard, icy, and fast for the event.

The races started on Saturday with the boy skiing GS, and the girls tackling the Slalom, and then the disciplines were swapped on Sunday. We had high hopes going into the weekend with all of our racers skiing better than ever leading up to the event. We coaches believed that our top seeds had legitimate chances to place in the top twenty or better on both days if everything worked in our favor. But as any experienced ski racer can tell you, it is a brutally unforgiving sport that punishes even little mistakes. Winning an event takes two strong, flawless runs over variable course and weather conditions, not to mention the right kind of wax, luck, and the stars all in proper alignment! That being said, Saturday proved disappointing as several crashes and bobbles kept MARA out of contention.

In the girls’ slalom, the difficult course took its toll in the first run as three of our girls crashed on the steeps and one was disqualified for missing the last gate (though she had arguably skied the best slalom of her life!) The casualties included a scary DNF in which an ankle twist required our youngest racer to take a ski patrol sled ride down the hill!

It wasn’t all doom and gloom though as top seed Nahanni Lukes sat 21st

after the first run and looked poised to crack the top 20. In her second run, a slight blunder in the critical transition section of the course cost her precious time. However, a remarkable recovery salvaged an admirable 25th place finish for her out of 126 girls.

Other noteworthy performances came from Megan Ganim, and Nikita Norton. Megan started the day with a bib number 68 and put together two solid runs to finish 32nd! Nikita overcame a disastrous mistake in the first run which forced her to hike up a couple gates in order to finish the run. She started the second run next to last, lost a pole half way through the course, but showed grit and determination by finishing the run with a time that was right there with Nahanni and Megan, more indicative of her ability!

The boys suffered similar frustrations in the giant slalom with crashes, including one DNF, taking their toll. Reece Pressman managed to put together two decent runs to finish a respectable 38th overall out of 134. Second seed Chase Ganim followed Niki’s example after crashing twice in the first run and attacked the second run from the back of the pack to score a time that was a mere 18 hundredths off of Reece’s! He effectively made a statement that he means to contend for the next couple of years!

Story Continues p. 5

In Praise of Junior Ski Racing, Part II *by Richard C. Kun*

We frequently say junior ski racing builds character. So it does. But perhaps equal to building it is the fact that many athletes already have character, and are therefore attracted to ski racing's challenges because they exist. Weak personalities need not apply. I'm sure it works both ways; either way, let's recognize and appreciate that all these athletes are exposed to the character building experiences.

Beyond character building, ski racing has a host of other benefits to children and teens on the road to adulthood. They include:

1. Sense of Accomplishment – success in ski racing comes at all levels of competition, at every age group and ability level. Even the most experienced racers are delighted in winning or making the podium, or being in the top ten, or the front page, or the top 30, depending on the level of competition in relation to their ability and expectations. Every athlete has their own measure of success that brings deep satisfaction when they accomplish their goal. Each race provides incentive of some sort for each racer, whether it's to win or simply drop points, or to move up through the field from their starting position. So, a potential for great satisfaction is present for every competitor in nearly every race.

2. Friendship – ski racing is a very social sport with constant interaction with peers of both sexes. Traveling together, training, eating and playing, "hanging out" on the race courses, at the start, the finish, the daylodge, sharing their successes and failures all creates very strong bonds of friendship. A good number of athletes, I suspect, stay with the sport in large part because of those friendships. So be it; those friendships, or at least the

memories of them, will last a lifetime.

3. Sportsmanship – ski racers learn to accept both success and failure, experiencing in a split second one or the other. This constant "leveling" of results teaches them to be modest in their own success and acceptance of defeat, which in turn allows them to be genuinely happy when their competitors do well and genuinely sympathetic when they don't. They learn to relate to their competitors in a way that is rare in other sports. And this empathy is at the heart of sportsmanship.

4. Commitment – this one is easy – you simply can't make it in ski racing without a nearly year round commitment. The workouts, the training, the camps, the unbelievable amount of time expended, by definition requires commitment. A real lesson for adulthood.

5. Focus – the ridiculously brief few seconds of each race requires the utmost concentration and control of one's physical and mental processes. Racers learn to perform under extreme internal (self-imposed) and external (others' expectations) pressure to the best of their ability. Development of this mental and emotional toughness has a host of applications later in life.

6. Self-reliance – all individual sports bring forth self reliance to a degree that is simply impossible in team sports (I am not denigrating team sports; they have virtues, such as teamwork, that individual sports lack). Ski racing, among individual sports, is at the top of the heap in promoting self reliance because fear, frustration, luck, focus and self-control are such common elements.

While I'm making lists, there are a number of people who deserve recognition besides the racers:

1. Parents – the financial support required is truly great, what with equipment, coaching fees, travel, accommodation, club dues, lift tickets and entry fees amounting to thousands of dollars each season. Most parents also attend races to lend moral support whenever they have the time. They fund raise, haul kids to training, and attend meetings, all in support of their kids. The whole family truly participates to a degree almost unique in sports.

2. Coaches – most are ex-junior racers who love the sport. Not the highest paying of jobs, it is obviously a labor of love. Most have a genuine personal interest in their athletes' success and they go through the long hours, foul weather, travel, ski prep, course setting, etc., for their charges with a great sense of responsibility and enthusiasm.

3. Sponsors – local business people generously give product and services for fundraisers or in direct support. Major equipment distributors support many of the racers with free or discounted equipment and clothing.

4. Resort Management – the resorts that sponsor teams and hold races are typically generous in support of junior racing, including, but not limited to providing, or helping to provide: race room space and lockers, extra snow grooming and course preparation, early or late lift operations, discounted lift and meal tickets and passes, subsidized coaching, vans for travel, run closures for training and racing, and fencing, gates, timing and other equipment. While a little extra money can be made on race day, most of the junior programs enjoy a great deal of resort assistance in one form or another.

On a more personal note I want to commend all these kids I've been around for 14 years. I've been fortunate enough to have the time and money to attend nearly all Alex's and Dominique's races. I've been so impressed with the quality of most of these junior athletes. I've been there at the starts in the blizzards when they huddle, waiting patiently under wraps, jostling and kidding each other to relieve the tension. At the finish I've noted their mature controlled pleasure – or disappointment – when reading their times. In the daylodge I've watched the kids killing time, jammed together with their clothing, boots and backpacks, waiting for their run or to go back out for inspections – and those waiting around, making the best of a DNF on the first run. I've seen their helpfulness in bringing their teammates outer clothing from the starting area to the finish line. I've talked to them, watched them train, traveled with them, congratulated and commiserated with them and I must say they are among the finest youth our country has to offer. Clean cut (usually), polite, considerate, motivated, hard working, inured to danger, pain and frustration – true sportsmen and women on their way to successful lives.



Sports Nutrition...Feed the Machine



"Mike Bansmer lays some tracks."

ARE YOU UP TO DATE?

KEEP TABS ON IMPORTANT MARA DATES AND EVENTS; CHECK OUR WEBSITE AND CALENDARS OFTEN!

"Consuming carbohydrate at least an hour before the start allows any hormonal imbalance to return to normal."

Pre & Post Competition Eating

Long gone are the days when athletes thought that eating a big steak before a game would give them lots of energy. Today's elite sports men and women follow a strict diet, particularly on the day of a competitive match or event. While diet won't turn poor athletes into great ones, it can make the difference between performing poorly and tapping your full potential.

The Glycemic Index

Not all carbohydrate is digested and absorbed at the same rate. The **Glycemic Index (GI)** is a scale of how much a particular type of food raises blood sugar over a two-hour period compared to pure glucose.

For example, a piece of food with a **GI score of 45** means that it raises blood sugar **45%** as much as pure glucose in that two-hour period.

Common sense says that **simple sugars** which are broken down quickly, like fructose in fruit, should have a higher GI than complex carbohydrates, but that's not always the case. White bread, white rice and potatoes (all classed

as carbohydrates) have a **very high GI**. That means they raise blood sugar almost as much or even more than pure glucose. Fructose has medium GI because the fibre found in fruit slows digestion and absorption.

Choosing foods with a **high GI** will help to quickly replenish carbohydrate stores **after** a game or event. Before a game or event, **low GI foods** are more appropriate as they release energy more slowly and for a longer period.

Pre Match Eating

The goal prior to a game or event (and even a training session) is to maximise carbohydrate stores in the muscles and liver and to top up blood glucose stores. Studies have shown that consuming foods with a high GI within an hour of exercise can actually **lower** blood glucose, which is not what an athlete wants! The reason is because the body produces an "overshoot" of insulin, which helps muscles to take up sugar in the blood. This in turn causes low blood sugar levels.

Athletes should eat foods with a **low to medium GI** before a match. This complex allows for a

relatively slow release of glucose into the blood and avoids the unwanted insulin surge.

Consuming carbohydrate at least an hour before the start allows any hormonal imbalance to return to normal.

Example **low GI** foods include pasta, whole grain breads and rice, oatmeal, milk and milk products and fruit (except bananas and dried fruit).

The pre-match meal might consist of pasta in a low-fat tomato sauce, baked beans or scrambled eggs on toast and fresh fruit such as apples, pears or orange juice. Some grilled fish or chicken and vegetables could accompany the carbohydrates. Ideally this meal should be eaten at least three hours prior to the start - especially if nerves are a factor, which can impair digestion.

Food in the stomach is given a high priority to be digested before it has chance to spoil. As a result greater blood flow is directed to the digestive tract - not good news when players' muscles will soon be demanding an increase in blood flow too. The result of performing with a full stomach is nausea - the body's attempt to cease exercise so that it can redirect blood flow back to the stomach.

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Sports Nutrition...Continued

Post Match Eating

As an example, soccer players can use up 200 to 250 grams of carbohydrates during a game. It's important that they (and other athletes that perform for a similar duration) replenish those stores as quickly as possible. It becomes even more important if the athlete has more than one competition in the week or is involved in heavy training.

Ideally, a **large, high-carbohydrate meal** should be eaten **within two hours** of the finish and it can and should consist of **high GI foods**. Bananas and dried fruits are good immediately following a match, as are sandwiches and high-carbohydrate drinks like Gatorade Exceed and Lucozade. A main meal several hours later might consist of bread, pasta,

potatoes and rice as well as other simple sugars like cakes and sweets.

Even under the best circumstances it can take over twenty hours to fully restore carbohydrate stores. This has implications for athletes who are competing five or six days a week (perhaps during a tournament). In this case carbohydrate replenishment at regular intervals during training sessions becomes very important. This is where high-carbohydrate drinks can offer a real advantage (see Part 6 tomorrow).

Carbohydrate Loading

Carbohydrate loading is often used by long distance athletes to "pack " their muscles with energy. The actual process involves

depleting the muscles of carbohydrate a week or so before the event with exhaustive exercise and a low-carbohydrate diet.

Two to three days before the event the athlete should switch to a very high-carbohydrate diet. In their depleted state, muscles take up more carbohydrate than they normally would giving the athlete a large store of energy.

For most sports and events, carbohydrate loading is unnecessary. In fact a disruption in an athlete's normal eating pattern can actually cause stomach upset and lead to impaired performance. A more sensible approach is to increase carbohydrate intake in the days leading up to a game or event.

Buddy Werner Championship...continued

On Sunday, the girls attacked the giant slalom and generally fared better than the day before. Megan Ganim put together two strong runs to finish 24th coming from behind to edge out Nahanni who finished 28th overall. Kailey Flockoi skied well enough to crack the top 40, and Nikita was on her way to a certain top 20 finish in the second run when she crashed again. Witnesses say that she was skiing out of her mind and that her split time was some four seconds faster than anyone else at the time!

The boys took their turn on the challenging slalom course and suffered similar misfortunes as the

girls. Three crashes and a missed gate took their toll on our ranks. However, there was the highlight performance of the weekend for MARA, as Reece Pressmen skied the best slalom of his life! He put together two strong runs on a demanding course, cracking the top ten, and tied for 8th place overall! As MARA's soul representative on the podium for the weekend, Reece received a raucous cheer from the MARA families, racers, and coaches that drowned out all the other activities for a good minute!

As a team, MARA finished 14th out of 23 overall, which is very

respectable considering the competition we were up against! Ski racing is an ornery animal, but it's not hard for us coaches to imagine better results if only a couple things had gone our way. We were continually impressed by the character and poise our athletes possessed on the slopes this weekend. They showed admirable determination to compete even when the chips were down and they can all be proud of the way they are skiing at this point in the season! Your coaches are immensely proud of you! Congratulations to all of our Buddy Werner racers for a fantastic performance this weekend!