

# **NORDIC SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **2024 BVCCSC AGM**

#### **OVERVIEW**

The Nordic Skills Development Program is a community sports organization that provides opportunities for all members of the Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club and our communities to develop their skills in Nordic Skiing and Biathlon. In 2023/24, program fees, fundraisers, and grants from Gaming BC, BVCF, CCBC, ViaSport and NWSDA allowed us to hire a new Head Coach, Andrea Stapff. In addition, we rehired program coordinator, Denise Kelly, to contribute expertise and facilitate communications and program organization. The NSDP continues to rely heavily on volunteers who provide coaching, program oversight, race support, and share in the many tasks of building and maintaining our ski facilities in order to keep the programs affordable.

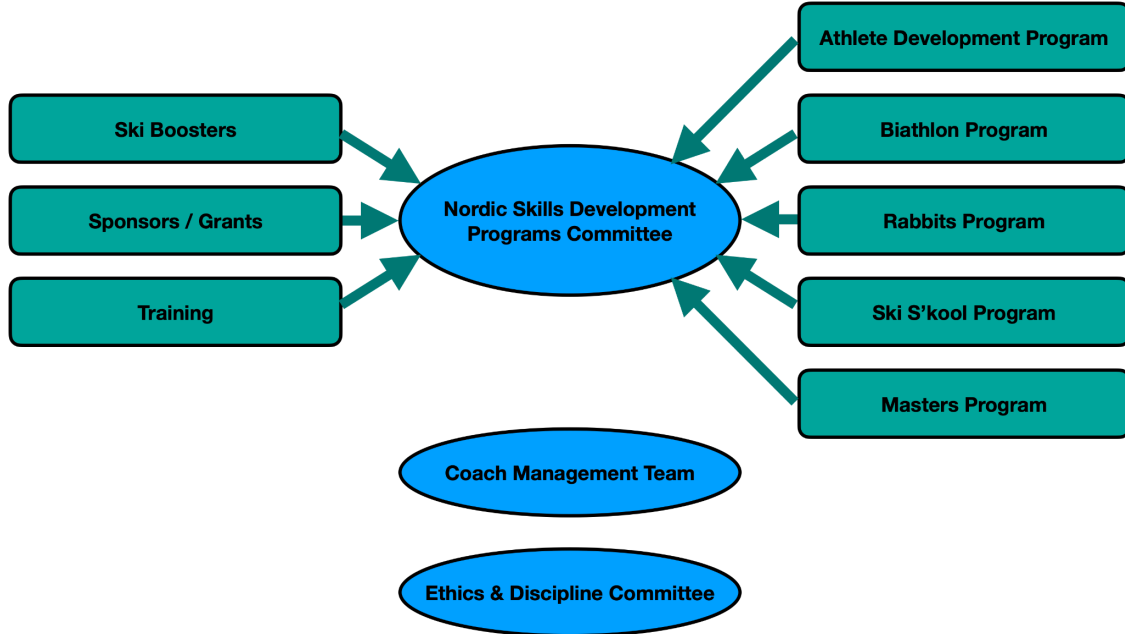
Last year, our skills development programs included:

- Nordic Skiing
  - Skills Development Programs
    - Bunnies (ages 4-5)
    - Rabbits (ages 6-10)
  - Athlete Development Programs
    - Track Attack 1 (7-10)
    - Track Attack 2 (10-11)
    - U14 (ages 12-13)
    - U16 (ages 14-15)
    - U18 (ages 16-17)
  - Ski S'Kool Program (ages 5-13)
  - Master's Performance Programs (2 training groups)
  - Master's Drop In - 147 drop ins!
- Biathlon
  - Youth Biathlon (U13, Recreational, Junior)
  - Masters Biathlon



**PROGRAM COORDINATION**

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



**SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

<b>PROGRAM</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
Nordic Skills Development Program	Sarah Sacharoff, Stephen Wickham (Adrienne Rosenberger, spring 2024)
NSDP Coordinator	Denise Kelly
Athlete Development Program	Andrea Stapff, Ryan Chapman, Chris Werrell, Helene Fleury
Masters Performance Program	Andrea Stapff
Biathlon Program	Lea-Marie Bowes-Lyon
Rabbit Program	Sue Pearce and Tarah MacPherson
Ski S'Kool	Denise Kelly
Masters Drop In	Cobey Oliemans



## PROGRAM SUPPORT

FUNCTION	LEAD	ROLE
Ski Boosters	Yeva Glover Georgie Watts Amy Kleptar Diana Cullen Martina Bezzola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide support and services for families on behalf of the NSDP, including Biathlon</li> <li>● Coordinate NSDP fundraising activities</li> </ul>
Coach Training	Denise Kelly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Support coach training for all NSDP Programs</li> </ul>
Sponsorships/ Grants	Stephen Wickham Denise Kelly Sarah Sacharoff Jen Chapman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordinate program grants for the NSDP, including Gaming Grant and Viasport, CCBC Grants, NWSDA, Nordiq Canada</li> </ul>
Wax Team	Andrea Stapff, Ryan Chapman, Sandy MacLean, Andrew Rosenberger, Josh Wimbush, Chris Werrell, Diana Cullen, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Led by Andrea Stapff, Chris Werrell and Sandy MacLean. Coordinate club wax and equipment purchases and wax support for race events</li> </ul>



## OTHER COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE	PURPOSE	REPRESENTATION
<b>Coach Management Committee</b>	Oversee Head Coach contract, hiring and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sarah Sacharoff</li><li>● Ryan Chapman</li><li>● Chris Werrell</li></ul>
<b>Ethics and Discipline Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Provide code of conduct for NSDP coaches and athletes.</li><li>● Resolve disputes using BVCCSC Dispute Resolution Policy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Sarah Sacharoff</li><li>● Jen Chapman</li><li>● Steve Wickham</li></ul>

## HIGHLIGHTS - 2024

Our new Head Coach, Andrea Stapff took over in August 2023 and brought a wealth of experience and wisdom to the program.

Andrea's responsibilities include:

- Oversight of the BV Nordics Athlete program from U10 to U20 in alignment with Nordiq Canada's Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model.
- Facilitation of BV Nordics Masters Performance Program
- Development of annual and monthly training plans for ADP athletes
- Facilitate athlete participation in local through national races.
- Mentoring of volunteer coaches through the provision of coaching clinics and periodic involvement in volunteer lead practices.
- Provide leadership, wax determination, and direction to volunteer coaches.
- Participate in Local and Provincial Training Camps.

Denise Kelly was rehired as NSDP Coordinator for 2023-24. Denise coordinated coach and officials training clinics, grant writing and was instrumental in coordinating the Ski S'kool Program. In addition, Denise helped coordinate registration, fundraising and managed our NSDP website information. Denise has been rehired for 2024-2025, which will sadly be her last year. NSDP is currently looking for a replacement to fill the large gap she will leave.

Some of the season highlights include:

- Expanded summer training programs available for TA1-U20 athletes in Summer 2024 led by Andrea Stapff
- Pumpkin Fest 2023 was a bit hit and will be a yearly event
- Steve Wickham and Andrea Stapff organized a very successful regional Snow Camp held in December 2023 - the first time on snow that season for many regional athletes



- Andrea Stapff coached the Masters Performance program, meeting twice per week and including a dryland component which ran at capacity, and added a daytime Masters Lite program, meeting once per week on snow.
- Team dinners and team events while at races. The athletes loved these.
- BC Winter Games - 6 of our nordic athletes attended, Zone 7 led by BV Nordic coaches Amy Klepetar and Steve Wickham. Adrian Wickham won a gold medal! Also, Justice Lancaster represented the club in Biathlon, coached by Callie Lancaster.
- Whistler and Prince George BC Cups - 20+ BV Nordic athletes at each (largest ever at PG - over 30). Strong wax team support with some challenging conditions - klister every race.
- Salmon Arm BC Champs - 30 BV Nordic athletes.
- Nationals - 2 BV Nordic athletes attended, Sacha Fleury-Allen and Finlay Gagnon, supported by coaches Helene Fleury and Andrea Stapff
- Biathlon Masters and youth programs continued to grow.
- Winter World Masters Games (Italy) - Attended by Lea-Marie Bowes-Lyon (1st in Pursuit for age class) and Callie Lancaster
- Prince George Biathlon BC Cup - Attended by 2 Masters and 1 youth. Kelowna Biathlon BC Cup - Attended by Callie Lancaster (Masters) and Justice Lancaster (Junior)
- Whistler Biathlon BC Cup - Attended by Callie Lancaster (Masters)
- Canadian Biathlon Championships - attended by Callie Lancaster (Masters)
- Coaching Development continued with NCCP courses - had numerous coaches attend T2T courses in Whistler and are hosting a T2T course in Smithers in December!
- a small group of BV Nordic helped out McBike for the Mother's Day Run which went very well - hoping to do this again next year
- a magical ADP backpacking trip to the Babines in August
- the club currently has 4 athletes on the BC Development Squad and 8 athletes on the BC Talent Squad.

The 2024 Rabbits program was overall another successful year; we had 101 kids total; 46 bunnies (ages not quite 4 to 7) and 55 rabbits (ages 7 to 10). Notable items from the season:

- One sessions was canceled due to weather
- Following last year's success, a bunnies/rabbits category was available at the Chris Dahlie open. 12 participated in the "official" race, and 28 participated in the less formal "bunny shuffle". These kiddos felt a part of the fun and it showed their parents and families what a race day feels like. Other special events included:
  - Night ski - Valentine's Theme
  - Fun Race Day
  - Bunny Shuffle at Chris Dahlie open
  - Season-end finale Bunny Parade at the Wetzin'kwa Loppet



- Coaches and volunteers make the program a success. Sue Pearce, the coordinator, continued to twist arms to find enough of both. She tried her best to make coaching a (relatively) simple and rewarding experience.
- This was Sue's final season as Coordinator. Tarah Macpherson was Sue's assistant and will be taking over the coordinator role next year.
  
- Rabbits 2025 Goals:
  - Hoping to maintain our over 100 kids next year
  - Enough coaches! (ideally coach:kid ratio of 1:7, and a couple "spares" to cover absentee coaches) For 100 kids this means 15-17 coaches.
  - Participation in local races
  - More cross-over/encounters with the older age groups
  - Coach training sessions with Andrea

### Biathlon

The biathlon program grew this year with the addition of 4 youth athletes. The masters coached program continued to be popular with 5 athletes returning and one new master starting. Sessions began on snow in December and ran all winter on Saturday mornings until the end of March. The program and coaching was led by Lea-Marie Bowes-Lyon with support from Bryan Swansburg and Callie Lancaster.

### PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Skill Development	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bunnies (4 - 5 years)	17	39	51	46
Rabbits (6 - 10 years)	17	34	35	55
<b>TOTAL Skill Development</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>101</b>
<b>Ski S'kool</b>				
Schools	6	7	10	10
Student Visits	1451	1273	1302	911
<b>Athlete Development Summer</b>				
Track Attack(U10)/U12		21	8	8



U14		11	9	10
U16/U18		11	14	7
U20				1
<b>TOTAL Summer</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Athlete Development Fall/ Winter</b>				
Track Attack(U10)/U12	26	33	33	29
U14	13	14	9	11
U16	11	5	16	11
U18	3	7	4	4
U20				0
Biathlon - U13/Recreational	0	0	3	7
Biathlon - Junior (13 - 14)	0	0	1	1
Biathlon - Senior (15 - 16)	0	0	0	0
Biathlon - Youth (15 - 18)	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL Athlete Development</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Masters</b>				
Biathlon - Masters - Experienced	3	3	3	3
Biathlon - Masters - Coached		7	6	6
Masters Performance		12	15	15
Masters Performance Lite				12
<b>TOTAL Masters Athletes</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>TOTAL Masters Performance Waitlist</b>		<b>n/a</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>



## Finances

A significant portion of the funding for a paid club coach comes from the BC Gaming Grant, for which we are very thankful. For the 2023-24 year, Steve Wickham was able to secure our annual gaming grant at \$29,500. In addition, BV Nordic NSDP has enjoyed continued support through two 3 year grants to help with the transition to a full time full year head coach, the CCBC Head Coach Grant and the National Winter Sports Development Association (NWSDA) Grant. This year was year three of these grants.

BV Nordic NSDP was awarded a three year grant towards our Ski S'kool Program from the Bulkley Valley Community Foundation (BVCF) beginning in 2021-22. This grant allowed us to decrease the cost to participate in the program and also helped cover some of the expenses of running the program. This year was the final year of that award.

NSDP also raised funds through the pursuit of other grants and Ski Boosters fundraising activities. The Ski Boosters raised funds through club host shifts, an online auction, extra lodge cleaning, maple syrup sales and event catering. Other forms of income were an account at the local bottle depot that allowed bottle donations to be made to the program and an optional NSDP donation field in the zone 4 registration.

We were able to make some significant purchases this year of wax equipment, dryland training equipment, including two ski ergs, new test skis for the wax team and new rental rifles and a scope for Biathlon.





## **Volunteers**

It is safe to say, our program does not exist without the generous commitment from our volunteers.

A big thank-you to our ADP, Biathlon and Rabbits coaches and Ski Boosters for this year, without whom there would be no ski program.

Thank-you to, Josh Wimbush, Helene Fleury, Stephen Wickham, Sandy MacLean, Adrienne Rosenberger, Rory Luxmoore, Kaia Andal, Matt Beedle, Shannon Pearce, Ryan Chapman, Jodi Preto, Andy Rosenberger, Chris Werrell, Richard Alton, Dustin Hersee and Erin Williams

Thank you to our Rabbits coaches led by Sue Pearce with assistance from Tarah Macpherson -Ryan Chapman, Roger McMillan, Jordy Guillon, Malcolm Johnson, Ben Laurie, Lauren Boddy, Gabe Newman, Hans Erasmus, Brandin Lilgert, Duran Hurry, Nils Erasmus, Kara Przewczek, Lizzie Czechmeister, Suzanne Campbell, Doug Wiggil, Ava Wimbush.

Diana Cullen, Amy Klepetar, Georgie Watts, Laura Eustace, Erica Lilles, Stephanie Capyk, Ben Forsyth, Karolina Wenzel and Yeva Glover made significant organizational contributions towards Ski Boosters.

Many thanks to Léa-Marie Bowes-Lyon, Bryan Swansburg, Callie Lancaster, and Nils Erasmus for their dedication to the biathlon program.

And a big thank you to the many other parent volunteers that helped out in numerous ways throughout the year.

## **Looking Forward – 2024-25**

We welcome back volunteers leading our different ski programs. Rabbits will be led by Tarah Macpherson. Yeva Glover will be leading Ski Boosters. Denise Kelly will coordinate the Ski S'kool program and will be our program coordinator.

The biathlon program is continuing to build its youth program. It will have 3 laser rifles on loan from Biathlon BC which should provide added flexibility to the program. The masters biathlon program will welcome the masters from last year's program and new masters will be able to join as space permits. Two new coaches will be joining the program providing for improved coach/athlete ratios.

Andrea Stapff has been re-hired as our head coach, overseeing the ADP and Masters Programs.

NWSDA has granted us a \$10,000 grant for 2024-25 to target overall athlete



development, maintaining the head coach position and increasing BV Nordic athlete participation at provincial and national events. They merited our club based on our proven ability to develop competitive skiers and coaches based on long term development planning.

Our three year grant from the BVCF expired this season. We applied for and were granted \$8000 to support our Ski S'kool program for the 2024-25 season through the Paul Backhouse Memorial Fund managed by BVCF.

With two paid employees under NSDP's wings, we are financial planning out 5 years into the future. Our aim is to provide stability for our programs by finding a sustainable balance of fees, grants and fundraising while closely managing our expenses. We are very fortunate to have a sizeable reserve which has allowed us more confidence in risk management.

Starting in 2022-23 our Fall/Winter Fees included race waxing for all of ADP and Masters Performance athletes. We plan to continue to make small incremental increases in our athlete fees yearly, in order to fund our expenses. Our fees are still low in comparison with other BC clubs that have full time head coaches.

