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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Agony and Ecstasy – Yukon Ski Team Wraps up Canmore Norams

There weren't any podium appearances on the final day of the Canmore Norams on Tuesday, but there were some superb, and unexpected, performances by young Yukon athletes all the same.

Competing in the classic technique sprint race, Lee Hawkings put together the performance of his life, finishing in 5th place in the Junior Men's category. Head coach Alain Masson said that "this is easily Lee's best ranking in a national race, probably the only time he's cracked the top 15. He's got a great season ahead of him."

Not far behind was Colin Abbot, who finished 3rd in the "B" final, giving him 8th place overall.

And Janelle Greer, finishing off a stellar meet, pulled out another 4th place finish, just out of the medals in the Junior Women's category.

"We all had such good skis today," noted Masson. "Great kick, amazing glide. It was the day of all days for us."

It wasn't such a happy day for Emily Nishikawa. Having been fighting injury for much of the season, the sprint was going to be her big chance to show her stuff on the national stage.

In the qualification round, Nishikawa tied for first place with Heidi Widmer, then went on to win her quarter final handily. But then, in the semi final, disaster struck. Feeling strong, she was in the lead but caught an edge, crossed her tips and crashed, ending her race and her hopes for making the World Junior Championships team.

Overall, Masson was extremely happy with the team's performances at the event.

Competing against most of the top skiers in the country, the team picked up two gold medals (by Graham Nishikawa and David Greer), two silvers (Nishikawa and Greer again), a bronze (Janelle Greer) and a host of strong performances by the rest of the team, generally skiing against athletes several years their senior.

The icing on the cake was the qualification of Nishikawa for the World Cup races at Whistler Olympic Park later this month and David Greer taking the crucial race that will put him on the team representing Canada at the World Junior Championships at the end of the month in France.

The team returns to Whitehorse on Wednesday.

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