

**Cross Country Yukon Sport Coordinator**  
**Annual Report for 2006-2007**  
**By Alain Masson**

This season, and the finish of the 2007 Canada Winter Games, will forever stand out as a highlight of Cross Country Yukon (CCY). Many, many years of hard work by athletes, families, coaches, CCY board members and Whitehorse X-C ski club volunteers produced an incredible event with unforgettable memories. 2007 will stand out as one of the best ever Games in terms of results and certainly it is due much in part to the on-going support from YRAC and Best Ever Funding.

### **Cross Country Yukon Board**

This year will mark the end of a five year cycle with the hosting of the 2007 CWG's. The Board has directed much of its attention and effort into successfully hosting these Games- both in the preparation of the athletes and the goals of the organization.

Due to Best Ever Funding, CCY was able to hire an assistant sport coordinator over the past two seasons. Mary Waddell will be leaving at the end of this season, but her support and expertise made it possible for myself, the head coach, to focus more time on preparing the elite athletes for their competitions and the CWG's. With more staff available, I was able to share the responsibilities of the younger squads and Mary was able to take over many of the duties I had previously done (e.g. the School Challenge, coaching certification, race technical delegate and chief of races). CCY continued with the implementation of the risk management policy, and will continue with this initiative next year.

The addition of the assistant sport coordinator was a huge success for CCY as it allowed our programs to keep growing and expanding throughout the times of the Games. Without this extra 'womanpower', many initiatives and programs would have needed to be put on hold during the lead up to 2007.

It is expected that with the end of the Games, there will likely be a huge shift in the leadership and the volunteers involved with CCY. We anticipate that although change is often difficult, the hard work that had gone into building a strong and vibrant sport organization will carry us through. We will now enter into new five year plans which will likely focus on expanding CCY's capacity to take advantage of the renewed and growing interest in the sport of x-c skiing.

### **High Performance**

The skiers at the 2007 Canada Winter Games succeeded every goal we had for them as a team and will be remembered as was one of our most successful

groups of skiers ever despite their exceptionally young age. Nine of the 10 athletes had personal best results at the Games and the team ended up with one gold by David Greer, a bronze by Bryn Knight and a bronze for the women's relay team of Janelle Greer, Heidi O'Connor-Brook, Bryn Knight and Emily Nishikawa.

I believe that our successes were assisted by the support of Best Ever Funding. The additional financial resources allowed CCY to put together the best prepared team that was possible and it paid off. The elite athletes had access to individual work with a sport psychologist over the past three years and we believe this was one of the programs that helped our athletes to excel at the Games. Additional camps and racing opportunities also helped to raise the level of the team.

While the Best Ever Funding was allocated for the lead up to the Games, I believe it will have a huge impact on the younger skiers and coaches who were exposed to many of the opportunities and will certainly bask in the success of the racers even if they did not participate in the CWG's this time around.

Prior to the CWG's, CCY took a group of young skiers who were not racing at the Games down to the Western Canadian Championship. We had a very successful competition with many medals despite not having our top skiers there. It showed us as an organization that when our older skiers move on, a new generation of skiers will be ready to take over.

The Canadian National Championships saw the Yukon Ski Team continued with best ever performances. After their success at the Canada Games in Whitehorse, the Yukon Ski Team skiers won a record 17 medals at the competition in Mt-Ste-Anne, Quebec. David Greer, Bryn Knight, Emily Nishikawa, Janelle Greer and Graham Nishikawa all made multiple visits to the podium. David, Emily and Janelle all won their respective aggregate title. It may be long times before we can see this kind of team performance all come together again. This edition of the National Championships will set a new standard of performance for generation of skiers to come.

The podium awards that Cross Country Yukon gives out after the National each year will more than triple in value as all skiers have achieved best ever performances in these championships. This is another indication of the skiers improvement this year.

Graham Nishikawa continued this season with the National Team and sadly experienced a season filled with sickness. Despite his bad luck, he was still able to show that when he is healthy he is able to compete with the best in the country. Graham continues to be identified as one of the hopeful team members for the 2010 Olympics.

## **Youth Development**

The number of young skiers involved in our programs continues to grow, so rapidly in fact, that we are having difficulty meeting the demand. The Orange Squad (8-12 year olds) filled up on the first day of registration this year. A waiting list was created, but could not accommodate the large number of skiers who were interested. CCY is looking at expanding the squad program to include another squad so as to meet the demands of the program. This enthusiasm looks good for the future of the sport and hopefully we can find coaches to meet the need of the increasing number of skiers.

The School Challenge and Ski S'cool Program were successful again this year. These programs have been attracting new youth into the sport of x-c skiing which should help increase the base of skiers at the entry level. The Jackrabbit program was also popular again this year with the schools and clubs in the Whitehorse area. There were many volunteers willing to help out and hopefully this should increase the pool of potential coaches for the future.

## **Event and Technical**

The Canada Winter Games has been the focus of CCY for the past five years and all the hard work paid off. The organization of the Games used up more than a hundred ski volunteers. It was one of the best ski events held in Canada in recent memory. The level of sophistication in the stadium made the skiing venue one of the highlights of these Games. The Yukon ski community should feel very confident about their ability to organize high level ski races in the future as they showed they are world-class.

## **Leadership Development**

CCY was able to put forward a very skilled coaching staff at the Games this year and all four coaches were certified at the Level 3 level. This was a first for CCY and perhaps a first for any sport governing body in the Yukon. Due to the Women in Coaching Apprenticeship Program, we benefited from having an extra woman coach at these Games which made a huge difference in the level of support we were able to provide to the athletes of the CWG's team.

CCY conducted a number of Community Coaching Courses which proved to be popular. We also implemented for the first time the Learning to Train coaching course that replaced the former NCCP Level 2. It was also successful and provided an avenue to keep restructuring our programs around the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model.

All in all, 2007 was a year where we could not have asked for more as an organization in regards to growth and results. Our challenge will now be to

continue riding the wave and all indicators show we have built a structure that can handle that.

A heartfelt thank you for your continued support. It helped make the difference in many young lives.

Alain Masson