

SnowLine

The Official Newsletter of the

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team, Inc.

Lake Tahoe • Truckee • Donner Summit



Cory Smith, 24, of Park City, Utah stood shy and reserved in the shadow of his companion at the race registration desk. His coach was inquiring (thick Norwegian accent) if Cory could be seeded among the elite racers. No one in the room had heard of Cory. He is a fast skier, coach Torbjørn assured us. Cory was granted a red "E" on his race bib. The next day, one hour thirteen minutes and thirty-seven seconds after the firing of the start gun, Cory streaked through the finish line all alone, the lead skier and winner of the 1999 Great Ski Race. Anything but reserved now, Cory chatted freely and happily with the local TV camera crew and fields of photographers. Smiling wide, posing with his skis, thoroughly enjoying all the attention, Cory was obviously delighting in the moment. Fourteen minutes later, local skier Mary Hall finished in perfect form, winning the women's field. Fit, smiling, and positive, Mary is the consummate representative of the race and the sport. During the next five hours, 737 more skiers—of most sizes and all abilities—came pouring through the finish line. Some barely held their snowplow with noodle-tired legs down the finish hill, those that could not achieved spectacular pirouetting crashes. The finish line corral was ablaze in wild colored lycra, sweat-stained faces, handshakes and hugs. Some laughed, some just looked relieved it was over. Skiers finishing four and five hours left blue (jean) streaks on the course wherever they fell and showed up sporting heel blisters

the size of Easter eggs. The beer flowed, the pasta steamed, the band rocked. Such was the excitement of the 1999 Great Ski Race, the largest Nordic ski race in the western United States, the biggest participation event of the North Lake Tahoe SnowFest Winter Carnival (though one of the few without the DeKuyper

the course by "liquid sunshine"). The polite weather allowed most everything to be outside—the food service, beer service, award ceremony, retail sales. The finish area had a great "ski race village" feel to it this year.

For the first time in race history we polished off all 10 kegs of beer. The price racers had to pay for that privilege was a five minute wait, cross legged, in line at the outhouses.

All the buzz this year on the course was Soup Station 2. A veritable oasis at 23 km, Soup Station 2, coordinated by Team members Ray O'Brien, Bryan DeVore, Shawn Kelly, Rod Mayne, Bill Koplin, and Jeff Rieger (many others too) outdid themselves offering diced Snickers bars, sectioned oranges, lemonade, Kool Aid, cookies, and hot soup in an all-you-can-eat fashion. The crew also constructed signs to get and keep the skiers psyched, placing them in the preceding kilometer. Many skiers commented on the affect of the signs: made them dig just a little bit harder. With the aid of snowmobiles, the Soup Station 2 gang transported two skiers off the course: one woman with a shoulder injury and one stray snowboarder (see next story). When asked (jokingly) if the lead racer (Cory) stopped for a bite to eat, Ray commented, "I don't think he even noticed us."

In every respect the 1999 Great Ski Race was a great success. This only was possible because of the unselfish support of the community. Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team wishes to thank all the volunteers and participants of the race, and the raffle prize donators. Special

Dear Team,

The rights of spring are upon us. The Great Ski Race 1999 is behind and it snowed the next day. "Lucky we didn't have the race today." How many times have we said that line? Oh probably, twenty times out of the twenty-three we have had.

The Team came together again and we produced another super event. I can't tell you how many times people come up to me and give us all compliments about the race. Great meal, Great music, Great day, Great course, a Great Ski Race.

I couldn't find a way to name all the people who help. I guess you have to find a way to know in your own heart how appreciated you are.

It is so much easier to put the race on these days. It is almost like auto-pilot. People know their parts, they have perfected the plan, they teach others their tricks to make it work just a little better each year.

So many doing their own little chores to put together the Great Ski Race. I'm proud to be a member of an organization that somehow puts together some 200 volunteer workers to put on a truly wonderful event.

What an event, year after year we keep it up, improvements, new ideas, some work, some don't. People drop in and help to do it again, year after year. New faces fall in for those who have lost interest, old faces change jobs and keep on helping.

Take a look at the results lately? You may notice how many people are completing the race in under two hours. Grooming has to be part of it, but hey, people are getting in better condition and the results prove it, the Great Ski Race challenges them to get better.

If you have a chance you should try to get around and see what other people are doing to help put on the race. Bag stuffing night is a lot of fun to see, registration on Saturday afternoon is hectic, yet interesting. The start was my first year ever to watch the start it is fabulous. Check that road crossing in Truckee, what an operation that is and the "new and improved" soup station #2. Just up from the finish in the mini-S-turn is a wild spot to watch and the finish is spectacular.

I thought the tents with food, beer, sales and all were really a great feature this year, it looked more festive.

Complaints? we had a few and it mostly centered around the last 10 kms that had been trashed by snowmobiles. Yes, they got on the course just minutes after the last groomer on Saturday evening. No, we could not stop it, but we have a plan for next year. We need to put some folks out on the course for the night before the race, who the heck wants to do that? Well, I bet some members will step up and take on that duty, could be a lot of fun and I know just the group to find those fun seekers in.

"Just a Great group of friends putting on a Great Ski Race." That is my definition of the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc.

Thanks a lot friends,

Doug Reed

"girls" present), and main fund raising event for the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team.

The weather for race day was stellar: cool, mostly clear, and warmed just enough by the Great Ski Race cheerleaders (fueled throughout

Next General Meeting is Monday, April 5, 1999, 6:30 p.m. at the Granlibakken Resort's Ski Hut

thanks to Great Ski Race sponsors Alpenglow, Alpine Meadows Ski Area, Cliff Bar, Cottonwood Restaurant at Hilltop, Fischer Skis, Lakeview Cross Country Ski Area, Lanza's, Nordic Equipment, Northstar-at-Tahoe, Paco's Truckee Bike and Ski, Sierra Pacific Power Co., Sugar Bowl Ski Resort, and Sunnyside. And next year? The Great Ski Race 2000!

Errant Boarder Rescued

Upon reaching the finish line of The Great Ski Race, several skiers had casually mentioned something about "...that guy walking on the course, with a snowboard..." Sure enough, Kevin Smith (no relation to Cory), 23, had strayed from the backside of Northstar and had wandered around for a couple hours before he stumbled across a groomed snow trail with hundreds of skinny skiers whipping past, all of them wearing numbered bibs. Nordic Team member and Great Ski racer Kelley Clare came upon Kevin and chatted with him enough to figure out what had gone down. When Kelley reached Soup Station 2 she informed Bryan DeVore of Kevin's whereabouts and Bryan snowmobiled up-course. When Bryan spotted Kevin, he had to stop his snowmobile and flag him down—Kevin was on his board riding out a downhill. After snowmobile delivery to the finish line, I spoke with Kevin for several minutes. He seemed fine but said he was pretty tired, "I walked quite a ways." Surrounded by the melee of The Great Ski Race finish area, Kevin in his baggy outfit and snowboard in hand looked about as out of place as a plumber in a lingerie store. I called a taxi cab to take him back to Northstar.

Dr. Light I Presume

Eliot Light, the subject of our February 3 search, attended last month's Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team meeting at Granlibakken. Eliot stood before the group and spun the tale of his two nights out, his fall into Five Lakes Creek, and his subsequent rescue. Eliot was dramatic, funny, and full of praise for all who had helped. He said the most poignant moment in his life was when his daughter was born, and a close second was seeing the bobbing headlamps of our searchers come into view on the slope below. Eliot came bearing gifts: a thank you letter from his mother, a cash donation to the Team, and a special present for the searchers wrapped in Christmas paper. While telling his story, Eliot revealed that after the searchers found him they seemed to take a few too many minutes to kick up a bonfire. (When you've spent two nights in the snowy mountains with only the clothes on your back, no fire is ever lit too soon.) I guess the fire-starting shrink-wrapped "hamburgers" that are carried by several of our searchers didn't exactly behave like napalm when a match was put to. The present Eliot lightheartedly passed on consisted of a couple of fruit cakes (for fuel), bunches of (ahem, functioning) disposable lighters, and a bottle of Meyers 151 Rum (for

kindling fires from within). Also in attendance that night was the camera crew from the television tabloid show *Inside Edition*. Complete with umbrella lights and a feather duster audio boom, the crew was sent to scrambling as their camera ran out of tape just as Eliot was telling the crux of his story. Look for *Inside Edition's* interview with Eliot and the Nordic Team searchers soon.

(From the Any Excuse for Insomnia Department... I sat up in bed that night wondering: after the meeting, who walked away with the bottle of 151?)

Thanks Eliot!

Honorable Mention

At the February 1 general meeting Team President Gerald Rockwell presented honors to two Team members whose efforts have been significant in bettering the Team and the community. Dirk Schoonmaker was honored for his contributions—I kid you not—too many to count. They would literally fill this page. Most recently, Dirk has participated in and coordinated more Winter Awareness presentations at the local grammar schools than any other Team member. Jackie Thomas was also honored by Gerald for all her work as Team Secretary and head of the Team Dispatch Committee. Jackie writes numerous letters on behalf of the Team every season and keeps minutes from all the General and Board meetings. Under Jackie's direction, the Team's skiers, snowcats, and snowmobiles are all called in a matter of minutes at the commencement of a search. Great job Dirk and Jackie!!!

Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team Officers

President	Gerald Rockwell	583-5376
Vice President	Joe Pace	583-1806
Treasurer	Scott Schroepfer	546-2809
Secretary	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Board Members	Steve Matson	546-7968
	Dirk Schoonmaker	583-2929
	Steve Twomey	525-7280
	Medora Weiser	583-2339

Committee Chairs

Cuisine	Debra Schroepfer	546-2809
Dispatch	Jackie Thomas	587-2687
Education	Whitney Foehl	(775) 322-4368
	Karen Honeywell	546-8609
The Great Ski Race™	Douglas Read	583-6381
	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Newsletter	Randall Osterhuber	587-3092
Snowcats	Tony Remenih	583-1684
Snowmobiles	Ray O'Brien	581-4358
Training	Paul Honeywell	546-8609
Truck/Equipment	Russ Viehman	582-1695
Tahoe Nordic Search & Rescue Team garage		581-4038

All phone numbers area code (530) unless noted otherwise.

Trainings

April 10: Carl (530-525-7548) from the Meeks Bay Fire Department will lead a multi-agency training focusing on the avalanche potential and agency response to avalanche incidents in the Emerald Bay area. Meet at the Team garage (223 Fairway Drive, behind the Tahoe City Chevron) at 8:00 AM to carpool, or the Meeks Bay firehouse at 8:45.

April 17: Russ Viehman will lead an on-the-snow training in the Mt. Rose area. Meet at the Team garage at 7:30 AM or up at Sheep Flats at 8:15.

Tahoe Forest Hospital is offering CPR and CPR/First Aid classes on **April 10, April 17, and May 18.** Call (530-582-3483) for more info or to sign on.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team, Inc.

www.tahoenordicsar.com

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