

Murdoch wins pair at provincials

Larch Hills takes overall title

By Dan Falloon



PHOTO BY JOERN ROHDE COURTESY OF HOLLYBURN CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLUB

DOUBLE GOLD Michael Murdoch won two races in his age group at the 2016 Teck B.C. Championships at Whistler Olympic Park this weekend.

Michael Murdoch made the most of his opportunities at home.

The Whistler Nordics ski team member won his age group for both of his individual races at the 2016 Teck BC Championships at Whistler Olympic Park from March 4 to 6.

Murdoch battled through rainy, cold conditions on the first day of racing action to win the juvenile boys' sprint race in a time of two minutes, 35.26 seconds (2:35.26), besting his nearest competitors by almost four seconds. In the interval starts the next day, he finished the 7.5-kilometre race in 22:30.2, 21.3 seconds up on the runner-up, Konrad Van Varseveld of Larch Hills.

Murdoch was well prepared for what he ended up having to face.

"I've been training in this weather, when it hasn't been awesome. I'm used to the slushy conditions," he explained.

The sprints often provide a challenge for him, so picking up the win helped him gain confidence and momentum for the rest of the weekend. Murdoch added he felt a little extra encouragement with the miserable weather.

"If you go faster, you get inside faster," Murdoch reasoned.

Murdoch, along with Joe Davies and Benita Peiffer, will attend the Haywood Nationals in Whitehorse, Yukon from March 19 to 26.

Murdoch has attended the big event before, but had always raced against older competitors and finished lower in the pack than he was accustomed to. He's excited to go with an idea of what he's getting into in terms of the number of

people at the event and that he's going with the chance of charging for a podium appearance.

"They were really big when I was young," he said. "Now that I'm older... I'll hopefully be used to the amount of people."

LARCH HILLS NABS OVERALL WIN

The Larch Hills Nordic team, meanwhile, went home with the overall title for the fourth time in five years, edging out host Hollyburn, and Revelstoke.

The team was helped by its significant contingent of participants, as the Salmon Arm-based club encourages cross-country skiing as the winter recreation option of choice for several of the city's roughly 17,000 inhabitants.

"We don't have a downhill ski hill, so the kids are going to do cross-country if they're going to ski," head coach Abbigail May said. "A lot of ski teams don't start until the kids are more like 13, but we start our ski team when they're eight, they can join the team. They just love to be part of a team and get the team outfit. That really seems to make a difference."

Like any successful squad, May said the community members have people who come together and fill all the necessary roles from coaching to organizing events to waxing skis.

May said the team members didn't complain, even in the face of some wet and chilly conditions on the first day of competition.

"The sprint day was really tough. You're soaking wet and you've got another heat and you really don't want to be there but you have to just go out there with your soaking wet feet and get it done," she said. "That was one of the toughest days."

OTHER LOCAL MEMBERS STRONG

In addition to Murdoch, several other members performed well.

His Whistler Nordics teammates Luke Mackie and Tyler Thuma each won bronze in 200-metre sprints in the atom and peewee boys' divisions, respectively. Molly Mackie also won bronze for the peewee girls in the same event.

For Spud Valley, Taven Stroh took third in the one-kilometre atom boys' interval event, while Ethan Hess won the five-kilometre sit-ski event. Hess, along with Kajsa Hayes and Gabe Gledhill, were the only team to complete the sit-ski event the next day.

Locals saw some success in the relays. The Whistler Whipper Snappers (Talia Wittenberg, Katelyn Schick and Molly Mackie) won the peewee girls' 3x1000-metre relay, while the Whistler Rockers (James Tait, Jesse Thuma and Tyler Thuma) were second for the boys in the same event. The Sea to Sky 4 squad (Josie Clifford, Ella Condon and Izabella Jost) placed third for the peewee girls.

Lastly, the Sea to Sky 3 entry (Yvette Jackson, Marie St. Pierre and Cathy Martin) was third in the open women's 3x5000-metre relay.

Full results are available at

www.zone4.ca.

Tags: Results

READERS ALSO LIKED...

Whistler's d'Artois revels in historic moment for Canada

Skier wins nation's first X Games men's superpipe gold

by Dan Falloon

Finn gets the win

Crankworx: 14-year-old local out-whips all challengers

by Eric MacKenzie

