



TECK Coast Cup soldiers on, despite poor conditions

WOP staff keep venue running for 200 Nordic racers on Saturday

Vince Shuley / Whistler Question

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Competitors in the TECK Coast Cup series had to contend with challenging conditions at Whistler Olympic Park last weekend. Photo by Vince Shuley

The second stop of the TECK Coast Cup series (originally scheduled for January) took place at a very patchy Whistler Olympic Park on Saturday (Jan. 14), following brutal rainstorms.

“It was horrible when I left here about 3 or 4 p.m. yesterday,” said Margot Murdoch, Whistler Nordics chief of race. “(John Heilig) had a crew of about 12 guys shovelling snow onto bare, rocky (parts of the track). Those guys really made it work. John, Andreas Andresen, Martin Schrama and the gang made it work. The groomer Simon Smith was a saint, they made me do this and I’m glad we did it.”

Conditions near the stadium area oscillated between sheet ice and puddles of water in the days leading up to the race, but still needed to be used as the staging area for Saturday’s Classic Technique event with an interval start. The circuit was shortened in an effort to make the race happen, but the distance of the track wasn’t really the issue.

“What was challenging was the width of the course for passing,” said Murdoch. “Normally with 200 racers you would

have two to three lanes to pass, but the fellas that were shovelling were shovelling onto just one lane. Our course crew had to be smart and on it.”

Murdoch pointed to the strong support of TECK as being one of the drivers to make the race happen despite such challenging conditions. With more than 90 per cent of racers being youth, ongoing participation with the Coast Cup series is key for the growth of Nordic skiing in the region.

“What I’m really thrilled with is the number of stronger racers,” said Murdoch. “There’s even a couple of kids here from the BC ski team, so these young children get great role models with the older kids that show up. I think we’ve had our biggest categories of Atoms (youngest category) that I can remember, ever. With our club, the Whistler Nordics, it’s a really positive thing to see them join in and see what racing is about.”

Youth from both Whistler Nordics and Spud Valley Nordics (Pemberton) made podiums in almost every age category on the challenging home soil. In the Juvenile Girls, Benita Peiffer and Mila Wittenberg managed a one-two for Whistler, with Kaede Kawano tying for first in the slightly younger Juvenile Girls 2 category against Hollyburn’s Jenna Sim. Juvenile Boys saw Michael Murdoch and Joe Davies in first and second, respectively.

Midget Girls saw Whistler’s Linnea Uunila best Naomi Prohaska and Ruby Trand, who managed a silver and bronze, respectively. Bantam Girls 1 and 2 was led by Sierra Pochay-McBain and Marlie Molinaro, with Savannah McKinney-Lincks third in Bantam Girls 2. Gregor Tait was first and Alex Feuz third in Bantam Boys 1 with Larson Rickli winning Bantam Boys 2.

In the younger Pee Wee Girls, Molly Mackie took first and Ruby Hunter second in Pee Wee Girls 2. Pee Wee Boys James Tait and Tyler Thuma manage a second and third respectively, with David Peatfield managing to squeak into third place in Pee Wee Boys 2.

The annual Sigge’s P’ayakentsut cross country race is currently schedule for the Feb. 28 weekend, with organizers deciding next week whether the race will go ahead as planned, be postponed or cancelled with refunds issued for registration.

Head to whistlernordics.com or payak.ca for more information.

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