

## The Most Successful Season Yet



5 members of the National Development Centre Thunder Bay were selected by Cross Country Canada to compete at the Super Tour Finals/Spring Series in Sun Valley, Idaho in early April. Erin Tribe, Michael Somppi, Andy Shields, Dudley Coulter, and Chris Hamilton were all selected based on their performances at the National Championships in Canmore, Alberta. There were over 200+ competitors from all over North America and also racing was a group from Norway and Japan. This made for great competition to finish off the season.

There was a set of 4 races throughout this mini-tour, which started with a 3.3km skate prologue where Andy Shields was the top junior of the day and 15th overall in a field of 132 racers. He had a very strong race and beat a few Olympians in the process. The next race was a classic mass start where Michael Somppi finished an impressive 15th place. Classic Sprints were next on the agenda and the top NDC skier of the day was Erin Tribe in 25th. The series ended with a grueling hill climb where the skiers start based on their combined times of the first 3 races. Andy Shields had a great experience at the Super Tour finals, "finishing the season with a hill climb was so fitting - I was really able to apply myself and really work hard to conquer that mountain. Crossing the finish line felt so good especially after such an exceptional season. Now I get to rest for a month, and believe me I really need that rest."

Overall, it was a phenomenal season for NDC Thunder Bay as 3 members represented Canada on the World Stage, 6 athletes qualified for Canada Winter Games, Andrea Lee became the Canadian University Champion, Somppi cracked the top15 at World U23 Championships, and Andy Shields proved to be the best Junior Skier in the country qualifying for the World Junior Championships and winning the overall junior men's title at the Canadian Championships. Thunder Bay maintained its reputation as a hot spot for Nordic Skiing and we hope to keep this trend alive for the 2011/2012 season.



"This season was a huge stepping stone for me," said Shields, "The improvement in my fitness and results was far more than I was expecting of myself before I joined NDC. Finishing in the top ten in the open category at Norams several times and controlling the domestic junior category was really amazing and a little bit unbelievable. My two main goals at the start of the season were to race at World Juniors and in the Junior Aggregate title at Nationals and I am very proud to say that I accomplished both of them. The training center's program is going to be even stronger next year so I can barely contain my excitement! "

The National Development Centre will now select its athletes for the 2011/2012 season at the end of April. Top racers from across the country will submit applications for consideration. The new team will arrive in Thunder Bay in early May to participate in their first training camp and begin their journey towards success.

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The National Development Centre – Thunder Bay is a community-based organization working within the framework of Cross Country Canada to provide elite cross-country skiers with intensive training and competition programs. It is one of only four NDC's in Canada with the others based in: Quebec City, Callaghan Valley, BC and Canmore, Alberta. Since 1994, NDC-Thunder Bay has been a cornerstone for the development of elite cross-country ski racers in Canada.