

Alpine skiers schuss in giant slalom

Outlaws skiers took on an exhausting giant slalom, running the entire length of the mountain last Saturday, January 31.

It was the fourth alpine ski race for the Sisters High School team at Mt. Bachelor ski area. The race venues alternate between slalom and giant slalom every other week. In slalom, “gates” are close together, putting a premium on tight, quick turns. In giant slalom, the gates are farther apart.

Each racer runs the course twice, and the placings are determined by the combined time of the two runs. The Outlaws once again had exceptional performances from members of both the mens and womens teams.

In the mens division, Sisters senior Yasha Saldi placed seventh overall. He ranked eighth on his first run, and sixth on his second run, with a two-run combined time of 2:20.08.

“Yasha really went after that second run,” said Head Coach Greg Ausman. “He knew he could ski this course more aggressively the second time through, without making any big mistakes.”

Sisters junior Cammi Benson placed sixth in the womens division, with a fourth-place finish on her first run, and seventh on the second run. Her combined time for the two GS runs was 2:25.78.

“Cammi had an incredible

first run, very smooth and balanced,” Ausman said. “By her second run, the course had developed a crusher (an abrupt transition from a steep slope to a flat spot, which has the effect of crushing a skier at high speeds), but she is so strong in her legs, she was able to get through that without going down like many of the girls when they hit that spot.”

First-year racer Jake Sahlberg had a strong 16th place this week.

Ausman said, “Jake is making huge improvements. He is very coachable, and really listens to my suggestions. His performance is already reflecting that, and every race he’s getting better and better. He is going to be a serious contender for Top 10 awards very soon. I am really excited to see him progress this much.”

Betsy Ausman placed 26th, and her sister Emily Ausman placed 31st in the womens overall standings.

“Both Emily and Betsy have been out sick for most of the week, and were not able to train. They knew we needed a minimum of three girls to qualify for team rankings, so they both toughed it out and competed, in spite of feeling sick,” said Ausman. “It paid off, too; the girls team placed fourth this week.”

Freshman Lachlan Wood also had a strong performance, placing 31st.

“As a freshman and new to

ski racing, Lachlan is really getting the technical aspects of racing figured out. He is improving every time we ski, and I can see his confidence go up after every race,” said Ausman.

“ There is a lot of camaraderie between the smaller teams. Sometimes we train together on a practice course...
— Coach Greg Ausman

Out of the seven schools in the Oregon Ski School Association league (Bend, Summit, Mountain View, Redmond, Ridgeview, Lakeview and Sisters), both the Sisters men and women placed 4th in the team standings this week. Ausman explains, “There are really two groups – the big teams of Bend and Summit that each have about 60 kids, and the rest of the schools who have smaller teams. Of the smaller teams, one week Sisters will be on top, then the next week it’s Mountain View or Lakeview. We trade off.” This week among the smaller teams, the Sisters womens team was second, being edged out by Mountain View, and the men were second-by-a-hair to Lakeview.

According to Ausman,



PHOTO BY JULIE BENSON

Yasha Saldi and Cammi Benson celebrated top-10 giant slalom finishes with Coach Greg Ausman.

“There is a lot of camaraderie between the smaller teams. Sometimes we train together on a practice course, like last Friday when we trained with the Redmond and Ridgeview teams. The coaches of the smaller teams are very supportive and encouraging of each other, and we try to cooperate to make it positive for the kids. Every week, I try to personally talk to kids on the other teams about

my observations of their improvements, and the other team’s coaches do the same for my kids. This is a way that we can take the focus off the flat-out competition, which could be discouraging for kids on smaller teams trying to compete against the huge teams. Plus they get to make friends with kids from other schools. I don’t know of any other high school sport where this happens.”

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