



**Club Questionnaire: Anchorage Biathlon Club**

**Contact: Deana Watson**

**E: [dwatsonphd@aol.com](mailto:dwatsonphd@aol.com)**

**Q: Share some Club highlights from this past season.... for example: Best or most well attended events; fun practice sessions/drills; social events/Club building activities, etc).**

A: We have a few social butterflies who love to plan events. Last year we had a nice end of the year celebration and then a very well attended season opening parent meeting. During the YJWCH Trials in Anchorage this year, we were able to host Max Cobb when he was in town and celebrate his move to the Secretary General of the IBU. We invited the mayor of Anchorage to attend and he did!! We spent the evening talking about the need for a roller ski loop in town and for both growth of sport and safety for our developing athletes.

Still the favorite game is king of the range, but we always do a halloween range event that is well attended. Probably one of our biggest turn outs was for Nationals in Lake Placid. I think we have 26 people in our team house! Locally though, the biggest biathlon event is the state championships. We have athletes fly in from around the state. This season the Anchorage Biathlon Club hosted all the local races.

**Q: Highlight a story (or two) of Club participants who improved the most, and/or were able to participate in high level competition this past season.**

A: Our most improved athlete would be Vanessa Wing. Vanessa learned to ski 18 months ago. She started biathlon and learned to ski on roller skis before the snow! Her ski speed and shooting have improved immensely. She travels to all the racing events with the team and this year at National Championships in Casper, WY this year she podiumed twice!!

Elias Watson finished the season on a high note after breaking his ankle last October. At Nationals in Casper, he was on the podium for all three events. Elias went with a group of 20 US youth to the Liatoppen Biathlon Festival in Norway. On day one, his relay team finished second and on day two in the sprint race for his age group, he made the podium again, earning a bronze medal. Pretty incredible to see, as the boys had always heard how fast the Norwegians were!

**Q: Share one secret to your success as a club, or something you consider to be Best Practice.**

A: Our coach (Jean Paquet) is the secret, he always has a focus on fun whether it is the youngest athlete or the high school/college youth. Our kids love to come to practice, there is a great community within the kids. They may go to different schools and compete against each other at local nordic events, but they are a team and it is pretty incredible to watch them cheer each other on in any event or sport. This is one thing we are especially proud of, we have had many parents and spectators comment on their incredible sportsmanship.

**Q: Share either some history related to your club, or some plans or excitement for where your club is headed.**

A: We are in the process of creating a booster club. Because we grew so quickly we've been in "catch-up" mode. There have been a couple key people that have done the lion's share, but we have many parents stepping up to share the load and help to grow the club and its participants.

**Q: Share if your club has done any fundraising or community-related events. If so, how did it go and what did it take to organize?**

A: Our last big fundraiser used SNAPraise and we had a goal of 20K in order to purchase our first scholarship rifles. We didn't quite make that goal, but we were able to get 2 Fortner action Anschutz rifles. We have received a few grants, one allowed our club to purchase our own timing system and chips. Also, recently we had a small group go to the local VFW to tell them about their trip to Norway and ask for support, they generously helped to fund some of the youth attending.

Our athletes volunteer at the local Ski 4 Kids events. We run a laser rifle biathlon station that is always the hit of the event. It is a great way for our youth to give back to the community and learn how to teach others about the sport. Each spring we usually have about 10-12 ABC youth come to the range and help with brass clean up from the long winter of shooting. We take the spent casings to the recycling place in town and then the funds are donated. Other volunteering includes wrapping Christmas gifts at sporting goods stores.

**Q: Is there any aspect that you are in need of guidance on, or you feel you could learn from another Club?**

A: We could learn more about grant writing.