



**Club Questionnaire: Fort Kent Biathlon Club**

**Contact: Carl Theriault**

**T: (207) 631-9589**

**E: carlther17@gmail.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 held a continental cup race in January. The banquet for this event was lots of fun as athletes from both the U.S. and Canada got to mingle and meet each other. It was a great time to learn from various clubs and the room was full of laughter and smiles.
- Our club has a really robust volunteer program and it's always great at races to see this group from the community come together to support the club. They're always so supportive of the racers, each other, and the event. There's a really special and familial feel to our events.
- We took three of our young athletes to Norway to compete for team USA at the Liatoppen ski festival. On top of a great opportunity to race, they had the opportunity to befriend many other biathletes from the US as well as from the global biathlon community.
- We held learn biathlon sessions over the winter and there was a small group of promising athletes who attended and it was great to see the upcoming potential in our area.
- We held 2 events for high school skiing of over 300 participants.
- Located on the Canadian border we frequently join our Canadian neighbors at each other's events. We traveled to Val Cartier, Quebec in late August to join in another fun roller ski biathlon weekend with several of their clubs throughout Quebec and Ontario. We then traveled to Charlo New Brunswick for their Maritime Invitational Event in January with beautiful skiing conditions ... the Canadians are always so happy to have a US club at their events, as we are to have them join in our events!!

**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:**

- We had Hannah Chipman and Dolcie Tanguay who have both trained with us for several years go on to compete at Junior Youth World Championships and Dolcie also competed at World University Games.
- Rowan Tanguay, Alden Reardon, and Quinn Michaud competed at the Liatoppen skishooting festival in Norway as part of a 21 biathlon team USA. It was such a special experience to see how they handle 1,200 young athletes on the range, and have our athletes shoot and ski competitively and gain new cultural experiences and friends!

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

A: Our success stems from the culture of our club. We are a really close club and everyone supports each other through training and there's lots of excitement for everyone's success. We also have a lot of support from our community which also makes a huge impact on our success. It also helps to have so much snow and time on skis!

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

A: We started our mission as Maine Winter Sports center in 1998 as a Nordic and Biathlon Training Center for Northeastern US. We have been the training site for 10 past Olympic Biathletes, and multiple World Junior/Youth Championship athletes, eight of whom call Fort Kent home. In 2014 we transitioned to Fort Kent Outdoor Center with a focus on community four season Activities, and continued training support for young Nordic and Biathlon Athletes. The Jalbert youth program now provides funding to support the Jalbert Biathlon Residence for up to 6 full time athletes, and programming for local youth and our Post Graduate athletes who train full time at FKOC subsidized at costs that make our sport affordable to youth that may find the sport unaffordable. The University of Maine at Fort Kent has partnered with FKOC to offer our Post Graduate Athletes tuition at 50% or the normal cost to give those early college aged athletes a chance to start their college education reasonably while training full time. Several of our past athletes have taken advantage of this program and are now working as nurses, teachers or law enforcement professionals.

We are excited to have our club grow. We are expanding what we offer for training opportunities and we are hosting quality events each year.

**Q: How does your club attract new members/XC skiers?**

A: One way we attract new members is by offering opportunities for people to try skiing and biathlon; that gets people hooked. We are continually trying to improve programming like ladies ski night, group hikes and snowshoes, as well as youth programming. We offer summer training

camps for athletes throughout Maine and New England that offer try biathlon experiences that bring in several new athletes every year.

We are also trying to improve things around the venue that improve the skiing experience. Our current projects are trail development and figuring out a system of communication on trail conditions.

**Q: Has your club had success finding grant funding? If yes, what grants?**

A: We are very fortunate to have a couple consistent funding organizations that have been supportive of our mission to offer quality outdoor recreation and athlete development. We also work with several state organizations that provide support for recreational trail development.

**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: We have various events throughout the year that we use as fundraisers. Things such as community BBQ's, ski tours, snack shack at races, and more. The board does most of the planning for the events and takes on much of the organization. Most events went well. Some were not as attended as others, but when that happens we redirect focus on those that are well attended and look for ways to improve them. Instead of asking local sponsors for event sponsorship, we have a sponsor sign program where we have four by six foot signs hung throughout our stadium, wax room building, target roof, and on our web site that brings in significant revenue each year.

**Q: How/where does your club purchase ammunition? Any good connections you can share?**

A: We go direct to distributors throughout the US, and make sure we take advantage of the Capstone Youth Shooting Program to order the bulk of our practice ammunition each year when offered in the spring.

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

A: We are always looking for new shooting drills and games that keep the training fun for young athletes.