

Cross Country Yukon Newsletter July 2026

Welcome to the first edition of the Cross Country Yukon (CCY) newsletter.

As I complete my first year as President of CCY I have been reflecting on what an exciting year it has been for our organization and the Yukon ski community. As the territory's sport governing body, we are dedicated to supporting, promoting, and growing cross-country skiing across the Yukon. We are also proud of the continued success of the Squad program, one of Canada's most consistent athlete development pathways, inspiring the next generation of Nordic ski racers.

Looking back on the past year, I am struck by the strength of our partnerships with volunteers, coaches, and ski clubs. Across the Yukon, dedicated volunteers and community ski clubs create opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy skiing, helping the sport thrive in communities large and small. Their commitment is fundamental to the strength of our ski community. I would also like to recognize Whitehorse Nordic Centre, which continues to foster one of Canada's most vibrant ski communities. Their commitment to offering programming for all ages and abilities has fueled remarkable growth and inspired more people than ever to discover a passion for skiing.

This past season showcased the dedication, resilience, and talent of Yukon athletes. From the Arctic Winter Games to the Olympic stage, Yukon skiers represented our territory with pride. Congratulations to all the athletes who gave their best on race day—you make us incredibly proud.

As we move into summer, I want to thank everyone involved in our sport. The strength of cross-country skiing in the Yukon comes from the collective efforts of many people, and I am grateful to be part of such a passionate community. I wish you all a wonderful summer and look forward to sharing more updates in our next newsletter.

Aisha Montgomery
CCY President



BOARD RECRUITMENT

CCY Board is looking for new members to join our team. We are welcoming diverse voices and backgrounds and are seeking individuals with skill sets in communications, fundraising and members from the community ski clubs. If this is of interest please contact aishamonty@gmail.com no later than July 21, 2026

SQUAD PROGRAMING

Orange and Purple squad registration will open on Aug 10th. For more information contact ccyassistant@gmail.com registration information will be sent by email.

STAY UPDATED

https://crosscountryyukon.com

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @crosscountryyukon
Coming Soon: more resources for athletes and families - waxing, equipment, race prep and more!

CCY Operational and Program Updates



Many sport organizations in the Yukon are navigating uncertainty about future funding. Earlier this year, the Yukon government signaled that reductions could be on the way. We are very appreciative that the Arctic Winter Games Host Society chose to reinvest part of the revenues from the 2026 Arctic Winter Games to help Yukon sport organizations. This support offers stability at an important time and allows CCY to continue delivering high quality programs.

Even with this support, we know it is time-limited. As we plan for long-term sustainability, we made the decision to pause our early season snowmaking program for the 2026-27 season. While early-season snow access may be delayed, alternative training plans will support athletes.

In the months ahead, CCY will place a stronger focus on building new revenue and fundraising opportunities to support the future of our programs. Watch for updates and community initiatives as we begin this work.

This past year, CCY has made progress on implementing Safe Sport policies and procedures. Safe Sport is integral to a healthy sport culture and we are grateful for the time and effort it has taken to implement; this work will continue into the 26-27 year. During this past ski season, CCY also provided continued support to community ski clubs through community coaching development and involvement with their events.

This past winter, through a Tourism Yukon grant, CCY partnered with Nordic Pulse and Yukon ski clubs that have adopted Nordic Pulse, a real-time app providing grooming updates, weather, trail reports, and club news. Participating Yukon clubs include Whitehorse Nordic Centre, St. Elias Ski Club, and Dawson Ski Club. More clubs will be joining this winter. We are excited about this initiative and hope that this real-time grooming app will encourage skiers to explore ski trails across the territory. We encourage skiers to download the app to check trail conditions and stay informed before heading out on the trails this coming winter.



Photo: Alyssa Dawn

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Dawson City Ski Festival

Thank you to Jane Vincent who on behalf of CCY supported this years Ski festival in Dawson. The festival was held over a few days in March and included activities such as Square dancing on skis, ski repair, waxing clinics and ski lessons.

Old Crow Loppet

Old Crow's 13th annual Father Mouchet Loppet took place in April. CCY went out ahead of the event to help mount and organize skis, followed by National Team members Sasha Masson and Derek Deuling and Olympian skier Liliane Gagnon who supported the loppet. There were over 100 participants this year.

After Old Crow, Sasha, Derek, and Liliane spent time on skis with Whitehorse athletes from, Jack Rabbits, JDP, Lynx, Biathlon, Squad and Special O playing games followed by an inspiring talk about their season racing and Lilian's Olympic experience.

Whitehorse Arctic Winter Games

Arctic Winter Games was a huge success with 2 ulus in the U14 male category. The cross country ski team representing Team Yukon did amazing with everyone having great races and personal bests. Despite the chilly temperatures, athletes, coaches and volunteers kept the spirit of the games alive.

Athlete Highlights

The 2025-26 season marked an historic chapter for CCY, anchored by Sonjaa Schmidt qualifying for the Olympic Games. This international momentum carried throughout the season and into the World Cup Finals in Lake Placid, New York, where Yukon athlete Sasha Masson delivered a career-best nineteenth-place finish in the Skate Sprint, solidifying his status as Canada's top sprinter after qualifying for World Cup heats three separate times in the latter half of the season. Sonjaa Schmidt capped off her brilliant year with an equally impressive eighteenth-place finish. Nordiq Canada just recently announced that Sonjaa and Sasha have both earned spots on the National Team for the upcoming 2026/2027 season.

Domestically, the depth and resilience of the Yukon's racing pipeline were on full display. At the end of January, CCY supported 32 athletes at the Westerns and World Junior Trials in Canmore. This was a massive logistical success made possible by a dedicated group of hard-working volunteer coaches who kept the athletes seamlessly supported.

At the Canadian National Championships in Mont Sainte-Anne, Quebec, twenty Yukon athletes faced incredibly tough and rapidly-changing weather conditions. The group handled the adversity with remarkable focus, ultimately propelling Whitehorse Nordic to an outstanding eighth-place finish in the overall club aggregate standings.

The individual medal haul at Nationals was strong across multiple categories. Sonjaa Schmidt dominated the open women's field, capturing three gold medals. She later teamed up with Constance Lapointe to secure gold in the Open Women's team sprint.

In the U18 division, Aramintha Bradford skied to a spectacular silver medal in the women's 10km classic. The Yukon's university-level skiers also delivered standout performances in the CCUNC category. Sophia Giangrande earned an individual podium, and Maude Molgat teamed up with her University teammate Kate Mason to capture gold in the team sprint.

To ensure the sustainability of these elite performances, CCY proudly announced the creation of the International Excellence Award. This new annual financial award was established through the generous contribution of Claude Chabot, a long-time Yukoner and dedicated supporter of the sport. Moving forward, this initiative will provide critical financial assistance to the territory's highest-achieving athletes as they face rising costs of competing on the international circuit.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CCY would like to to extend a huge thank you to our amazing network of volunteers. The countless hours you dedicate to our programs, events, and activities are instrumental to the success of cross country skiing in the Yukon. We are truly grateful for your commitment, enthusiasm, and support. We are always seeking volunteers for a variety of roles throughout the year and appreciate any time you can contribute.

CCY would also like to acknowledge Whitehorse Nordic. The growth of our ski community over the past few years has been impressive, and the Whitehorse Nordic Centre deserves tremendous credit for helping create an environment where skiers of all ages and abilities can thrive. From ski lessons and youth programs to races, community gatherings, and even DJ dance parties at Harvey's Hut, it is remarkable to see how much is happening at any given time.

Their contributions were also instrumental to the success of this year's Arctic Winter Games, where the strength of Yukon skiing and the dedication of our volunteers were on full display. CCY would like to extend a sincere thank you to the staff, volunteers, and leadership of the Whitehorse Nordic Centre for their tireless efforts and ongoing partnership.