

Clarkson Invitational Race Report

Due to the lack of snow in Ithaca, for most of the team Saturday's race at Lake Placid, NY was the first time on skis in two weeks. Our race course was twice as long as the course at our previous race; unfortunately, that made it a mere 2.56 km. After the untraditional relay formats of the UVM invitational, Clarkson decided to go by the book and stick with two 7.7 km interval start races, starting with a skate race on Saturday, and leaving the classic for Sunday. Each race was three laps of the relatively short loop, with racers starting 15 seconds apart. The course was fairly technical. It began with a long climb of varying steepness, and then came back down through a series of challenging corners, one of which was approximately a 180* turn. The corners transitioned into a long downhill back to the stadium area, and the loop finished with a short, flat section before going back up the hill for another lap.

Because of the lack of snow, we were racing on the only available course at Lake Placid. This added to the general race day confusion because there were several other competitions going on the days that we were there. This meant that a race was happening while we tried to warm up. Luckily, we were allowed to be on the course as long as we were careful, but it did make the pre-race routine more difficult. Similarly, there were other people warming up on-course as we raced. Added to the number of people in our race and the shortness of the laps, any given point on the course was pretty crowded at all times, which made racing even more of a challenge. Because so many people were skiing on the man-made snow, the uphill became very choppy and difficult to ski, and the downhills were quickly scraped to ice as people snowplowed the tricky sections. Even with all of these things working against us, we prevailed over the crazy snow conditions (loose, icy, artificial snow), on a course that would be intense at the best of times, and managed to do some great racing.

Race Highlights: We put four individual people in the top 10 over both days of racing (Adam, Ben, Sarah, and Isabel), with Dave managing to ski with Clarkson's Ben King for most of Saturday's race, bringing him to an impressive 11th overall. Nathan had an excellent race on Saturday as well, coming in fourth for our men's team. Noelle completed her first-ever races and realized that she can classic faster than she can skate; this fact was actually true for several members of the women's team, which no doubt contributed our being only three points behind UVM in a close third-place team finish. Our men's team also did very well overall, finishing in second and third, each day only a few points out of first. In an impressive feat of quick thinking and fancy footwork, Sammy managed to maneuver around a crash that happened right in front of him on a crazy corner, which was doubly beneficial to the team as it meant that Justin didn't get run over. Both Sarah and Sara did the traveling onesie race suit proud in their respective races.

Weekend Highlights: Congratulations to Kendall for getting into NYU (and thanks very much for the subsequent cupcake wonderfulness that resulted from that success)! Wes's car managed near-perfection in parallel parking "with grace", a feat made even more difficult given the number of people stuffed inside. We had another successful pizza date with the Hamilton team, making two years in a row of getting to know the competition off of the trail.