

Regionals Race Report

This was the final race before nationals; for most of the team, it was the last race of the season. We were still on manmade snow, but Rikert had managed to groom a 5 km course that was essentially three loops, or fingers. Each one started with an uphill, then turned and came back down a challenging series of tight, icy corners. While it was arguably less technical than the previous race at Lake Placid, the course was far from easy.

7.5 km Race: This was an individual-start skate race. The course was the 5km loop, followed by the third “finger” a second time. The race was in the morning, so conditions held up fairly well for most of the course, with the exception of a veritable puddle on the second “finger”. This puddle happened to be very inopportunistically timed—it just preceded a sharp downhill corner, and was essentially unavoidable. Needless to say, many of us ended up with wet feet. Several of the downhill corners were skidded out and icy by the end, but overall, the conditions were the best we’d seen all year.

1.2 km Sprint Race: After a few hours of rest/lunch, we headed back out into a light drizzle to race the skate sprints. The sprint course was the first “finger” of the 5 km. The format was fairly typical: an individual-start qualifier, followed an hour later by heats. The top sixteen qualifying times moved on to heats. Each mass-start heat had four skiers. The top finisher in each heat moved on to the A final, with the second finisher going to the B final. The sprints were full of surprises; in so short a race, anything can happen. Because of this, they were more exciting to watch than our usual races.

Saturday Highlights: Several Cornell skiers made the top 10 in each race. In the 7.5 km, Adam, Ben, Isabel, and Sarah finished 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th, respectively. The men’s team finished second to Clarkson, and the women were only one point away from second, finishing third behind Clarkson and UVM. In the sprint, the women managed to finish one point ahead of UVM for second place, with Isabel and Sarah in 3rd and 6th. Cornell had the most impressive lunch spread of all of the teams, with several parents bringing soups, desserts, fruit, and other delicacies. Needless to say, we departed from our steady diet of PB&J to enjoy the grand feast. A huge Thank You to the parents of Emily, Helen, Jason, Ben, and Sarah for providing us with sustenance! Extra shout-out to Emily’s parents for making us vats of mac&cheese for Saturday’s dinner.

15 km Race: This was our first 15k of the season, and also our first mass-start race. The format was a welcome change because it allowed skiers of similar speeds to ski together. Predictably, the course was three laps of the 5 km loop, which was nice for spectating and feeds. With the 40* temperatures, the course had melted down to slush at its best, and ice over gravel at its worst. Kick waxing was a bit of guesswork, a bit of luck, and a lot of klister, but eventually wax experts Adam, Sarah, Dave, and Justin concocted a magic formula that worked for just about everyone. Karen and Gabe were head cheerleaders/bearers of Gatorade. Among Gabe’s encouragements was the line “Hey, you’re almost at the top! Of this part of the hill...sort of...”, which is surely what motivated Sarah to ski to her impressive 2nd place finish. Max employed the “cheer while you’re racing” strategy, giving words of encouragement as the first few girls passed him on his final lap. All in all, there is no question that Cornell took home the “friendliest team” award.

Sunday Highlights: In addition to Sarah’s aforementioned 2nd place, several other Cornellians breached the top 10. Adam finished in 2nd also, with Ben following in 5th. Isabel took 5th for the women as well. These results were good enough to bring the men’s team to 2nd for the race, and the women tied with UVM for 2nd. Since this was Regionals, overall weekend places were calculated as well; Adam finished in 6th, Ben in 10th, Isabel in 4th, and Sarah in 5th. Many thanks are awarded to Dave and Peter, who volunteered to clean klister off of the test skis.