

# UVM Race Report

After a week of incredible skiing at Mont Saint Anne, hopes were high as we traveled to our first race. On the five hour drive to Vermont, snowbanks dwindled with each passing mile. We arrived in Burlington to a mere few inches of snow. Upon arriving at the Sleepy Hollow Nordic center on Saturday, we were informed that our first race, a mixed-gender, mixed-technique relay, would consist of five laps (per person) of a 1.2 km loop. After the beautiful snow in Quebec, this was slightly disappointing.

The course had a flat section where the handoffs would take place, followed by a downhill that ended with some mildly tricky S-curves. Immediately after the turns, racers climbed a long hill back to the exchange zone. The race was a confusion of laps—people lapping, people being lapped, and almost everyone wondering which lap they were on at some point in the race. Because we had 25 skiers, Tim decided not to race, and took one for the team by counting laps and informing every Cornellian (in a British accent) which lap they were on each time they came around. While the course was not ideal for skiing, it made spectating a very enjoyable experience, as there was almost always someone to cheer for at all times.

The race order was male skate, female skate, male classic, female classic. Our competition arranged their relay teams in order of ability, meaning they had an “A” team that they expected to be their fastest, and then teams decreasing in ability on down to their four slowest skiers. We decided to have only two “stacked” teams with our eight fastest skiers. Helen arranged the rest of our skiers in an attempt to make all the teams equal, so that we had no “slow” team.

Race Highlights: We had two out of six relay teams in the top 10, taking an impressive 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>! None of our teams were even close to last—the slowest Cornell team finished a full 20 minutes before the final finishing team! Of our 24 racers, eight were new to the team, and many were new to nordic skiing!

Sunday’s race was a team sprint/relay hybrid. Teams were single-gender, classic only. Each team had three skiers, and each skier did three laps of the same 1.2 km loop, but they only did one at a time before tagging off to the next teammate. This format was very exciting both to spectate and to race, because teams often went back and forth in the standings with each change of teammate. Because the teams only had three people, we were able to race eight teams—three women’s and five men’s.

Race Highlights: Two women’s teams (one in 2<sup>nd</sup>, one in 9<sup>th</sup>) and one men’s team (finishing a close 4<sup>th</sup>) made the top 10! Tim managed to complete his final lap without falling, which was a personal best!