

Anwatin and Nellie Stone Johnson Ski Teams hit summer training mode

Written by

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“Cross-country skiing? What do you guys do in the summer?” That commonly asked question resonates with most Minneapolis fair weather folks who are eagerly anticipating upcoming days of beaches, barbeques and basking in the sun. While some prefer to burry their winter memories in the sand, the youth on the Anwatin and Nellie Stone Johnson Middle School Ski Teams are seeking out winter... on dryland.

Pictured: With canoe in hand, Nellie Stone skier Lagarius Munn and Coach John Miller descend to the Namekagon River as they embark on their journey.

“You only get to ski four months a year,” said Anwatin Ski Team coach Allie Rykken. “We want to show the kids that cross-country skiing is a lifestyle, one that involves active outdoor adventure all year round.” Diving into summer training mode, the athletes have continued to meet at Theodore Wirth Park for practices that involve mountain biking, roller skiing (simulates cross-country skiing on wheels), trail running and orienteering.

The Anwatin and Nellie Stone Johnson Ski Teams, run by the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation, recently united for an Adventure Race at Theodore Wirth Park. Coach Rykken spent time constructing a one of a kind obstacle course that involved wit, teamwork and skill - amidst getting dirty, and having fun. “We were looking to do something that the kids could train

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for,” said Rykken who meets with Anwatin skiers three times a week for summer practices. “Adventure races have different components so we used those parts as mini goals to focus our training on throughout the spring. They worked on their map reading (orienteering) skills and endurance in preparation for the race.”



Pictured: After having skied together all season, the Anwatin skiers show off their muscles.

The race began with a mountain bike ride nearly two miles to the high point of Wirth. From there they ran and biked a 3 mile course that required them to complete seven stations including: fixing a flat tire on a bicycle, tossing a Frisbee into a bucket, maneuvering a tractor tire around cones, answering trivia about skiing and mountain biking on the trail, and ultimately balancing for five seconds as a team on the skeeder toddler (a glorified see saw) without it touching the ground.

Arenzo Jones, who skied for Nellie Stone Johnson, celebrated after his team won the event. “I love how much air you get when you hit the bumps!” he said describing his mountain bike ride. Jones learned how to ski in elementary school in the Foundation’s Minne-Loppet Program and continued to ski on the middle school team. He was happy he still gets to practice with his coaches in the summer. “I want to ski more when I get older, and encourage my sisters to ski too.”

The Loppet Foundation is a local nonprofit based in Theodore Wirth Park whose mission it is to provide lifelong recreational opportunities to the Minneapolis community, especially inner city youth. Through winter and summer Adventure Camps, middle school ski teams and Adventure Outings, the Loppet Foundation runs programs that give kids the tools to pursue healthy, fun and active lives. If your child is interested in experiencing the thrills of the trails, please contact Youth Program Director Allie Rykken at rykken@cityoflakesloppet.com. tel:612-604-5333

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