

Copper Country

SKI



TIGERS

Youth Cross Country Ski Program

All Ages and Abilities

Spring Skiing Events Galore!

Spring in the Keweenaw is a great time for skiing -- plenty of snow, fast tracks in the morning, and warm sunshine in the afternoon. Mornings are great for training and racing, and afternoons are just right for exploring and games. As the snow base becomes compacted from repeated freeze-thaws, try cruising off-track through the woods and fields - it's great fun to find new routes between established trails. And with the longer days, there's time to ski plenty of kilometers before the end of March.

Upcoming Events

March 6 *Junior Bear Chase* -- races for age 16 and under at Swedetown, sponsored by Ski Tigers. Classic races (no skating allowed) begin at 11:00 a.m.; Freestyle races (skating allowed) begin at 2:00 p.m. Awards by age and gender groups.

11:00 -- Classic races (No skating allowed):

½ kilometer for age 5 and under

1 km for age 6-7

2.5 km for 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-16

2:00 -- Freestyle races:

2.5 km for 9 and under, 10-11

5 km for 12-13, 14-16

There is no regular Ski Tigers on March 6, so please come out and try the Junior Bear Chase, even if you've never raced before. Send your preregistration to Shawn Oppliger, or register after 9:00, day of race. For more information or to copy a registration form, go to the web site:

<http://keweenawtrails.com/events/bearchase/>

March 7 *Bear Chase* -- 26 km and 50 km races *for adults*. If you've been putting in the K's this year, why not give it a try.

March 9 *End-of-Season Bonfire* -- Join our Tuesday Night Relay skiers for a bonfire and marshmallows at 6:30 p.m. at Swedetown. It's an easy ½ km ski from the parking lot.

March 13 *Ski Tigers meets at Tech Trails* in Houghton at 1:00.

March 16 *Ski With The Huskies Relays* at Tech Trails at 5:30. Join the MTU ski team for some fun relays in the stadium area.

March 20 *Picnic in the Snow* -- The annual picnic sponsored by Rick Oikarinen, owner of Cross Country Sports. Meet at 10:00 at the Swedetown Chalet and ski down with your group (a 6-km gentle downhill) or drive to the site, along M-203, and ski in 100 meters. It helps if a few people with vans can shuttle the younger skiers back to Calumet after lunch. Bring your appetite, and look out for colored eggs in the snow. Also, this is another chance to ski with our friends on the MTU Nordic team.

April 17 *Pool Party* -- from 1-3 p.m., our end of the year pot luck and awards at Finlandia University's Paavo Nurmi Gym. Bring your swim suit or gym clothes and shoes, and a dish to pass.

Ski Tiger Board President

Shawn Oppliger @ 482-9669

Parent Involvement Program Coordinator

Debbie Hart @ 482-7534

More News

Board Meeting April 18

The next Ski Tigers board meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., April 18 at the Maasto Hiito Chalet in Hancock. All Ski Tigers parents and coaches are invited. We need your help to keep Ski Tigers responsive to the needs and wants of its families. Come and tell us how the season went, and consider joining the board so you can help plan for next year.

Win an Iditarod Hat

Ski Tigers who complete two races in the Ski Tigers season earn the **coveted Iditarod Hat**. If you already earned an Iditarod Hat in a previous season, you are not eligible for a new hat (limit one per lifetime). Parents, please contact Wendy Sharp at 482-0902 by Friday, Mar. 26 to claim your child's hat. Hats will be given out during the awards ceremony at the Finlandia University Pool Party on April 17.

Kilometer Club Deadline

Call in your season kilometer totals through March 31 to Alex Friend at 487-7029 by April 2. Kilometer Club awards will be distributed at the Pool Party.

Extra Sweatshirts

Shawn has a few Ski Tigers hooded sweatshirts for sale, including adult sizes. Call 482-9669.

Spring Running Races Set

Striding for Strings, a series of running races on the Houghton Waterfront bike path, is set for May 29. There will be 8k and 3k races for adults, and races from 500 meters to 2km for children. The races are a fundraiser for Copper Country Suzuki. Call Ray Sharp at 482-0902 for more information.

www.keweenawtrails.com/skitigers/

...Is the part of the greater Keweenaw Trails internet site devoted to Ski Tigers. At this address, you will find links to lots of up-to-date Ski Tigers news you can use, including this newsletter.

Interview: Karl Walczak Local 2-Sport Star

Karl Walczak excelled in Nordic skiing and distance running at Michigan Tech, where he is now a graduate student. He recently finished in the top 30 at the American Birkebeiner Ski Marathon, ahead of several thousand racers and just minutes behind the world's best. I interviewed him by email in January.

Q. Karl, where did you grow up and how did you get involved in Nordic skiing?

A. I grew up in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota with a younger brother and two older sisters. My sisters had a large impact on the sports I was involved in. My sisters and parents had me join the running and Nordic skiing teams as a 9th grader. The first year I disliked both but liked the people that were involved so I tried another year. The second year I began to enjoy competing in both running and Nordic skiing. I was also involved in boy scouts, band, and the National Honors Society during high school.

Q. Why did you choose Michigan Tech and what did you study?

A. I wanted a place that had engineering programs and running and Nordic teams. Michigan Tech seemed like a good school that fit my requirements. I graduated from Michigan Tech with a BS in mechanical engineering in winter 2002 and started my PhD in 2003 at Michigan Tech.

Q. Describe your training program.

A. During college I have been increasing the total hours that I train. During dry-land training, summer and fall, I like the majority (60-70%) of my aerobic training to be running. And 30-40% consists of strength training, polymetrics, roller skiing, road biking, and other activities. This year my training weeks varied from 8-23 hours. My four-week training cycle usually went small, medium, large, and recovery week. On-snow training typically consists of 60% classical skiing to 40% skating, but that can vary with snow conditions and races. I use a similar training cycle but I focus more on skiing with very little running and strength training.

Q. Where is your favorite place to ski ?

A. In the U.P. The Tech Trails are my favorite.

Q. What is the most interesting place that you visited for a race?

A. The U.S. Nationals this year, in Rumford, Maine. I enjoyed the atmosphere. The competition was fierce. Ten seconds could change your position by 10-20 places.