

Sometimes the best training is just having fun, especially at Stevens Pass!

IT'S ABOUT THE JOURNEY: RECREATIONAL SKIER TO DCL TRYOUTS

photos and text by Jenn Lockwood

My journey as a skier began at the age of three when my father taught me how to ski at Spouts Springs and Mission Ridge. Throughout my childhood I skied maybe two to five days a year; in high school I was lucky to ski, as my high school basketball team was very competitive, annually attending the state championships – which we won my sophomore year, going 27-0 on the season!

I've always loved winter and skiing; when my high school athletics took me to Wenatchee Valley College in '89 on a softball scholarship, I learned about their ski program. I enrolled in the program and was excited to be able to spend more time skiing and playing softball. However, I became intimidated at orientation, being surrounded by others who had spent their winters skiing versus me only skiing a few days a season. So, before my journey began, I left the program. Funny how things turn out; friends I knew then, briefly, have come full circle so skiing and PSIA has brought us together.

It wasn't until after college that I got back into skiing. When I moved to Portland I didn't know anyone but I had fallen back in love with skiing and spent my weekends skiing and snowboarding. In 2001, I was introduced to my husband's fraternity brother, Chad Haugen, who taught skiing at Mt. Hood Meadows. I had never thought about teaching skiing – what a perfect match with my Personal Training career! I joined the staff at Mt. Hood Meadows the following season to fill my time while Dan was race coaching or volunteer patrolling.

What I'm getting at here is, that until age 32, I was a recreational skier who had never taken a lesson in my life! Looking back over the last nine years I've seen Mt. Hood Meadows grow an amazing community of instructors, clinicians, DCL and Tech Team members. That process began before I came along and probably started in the mid-90's when a large number of our core group all began working at Mt. Hood Meadows. They drew me in – I didn't know anything about PSIA and/or what the certification process was like. In two seasons I received my Level II. Getting my Level III took two more seasons and considerably more training: I increased my fitness, added dryland movement analysis sessions, attended Saturday and Sunday evening clinics at Mt. Hood Meadows,

and changed my work schedule to four-tens so that I could ski three days a week.

My "journey" toward 2012 DCL tryouts began in 2006 after receiving my Level III certification. I knew this would be a long-term plan as Dan and I were starting our family. During the three years of having our two boys I had my eyes on 2012 tryouts and made sure that I kept my feet on the snow, taught lessons, led and taught clinics and attended any and all educational events I could make. Lucky for me, TD training every spring has been at Stevens Pass, a short 30-minute drive from my family cabin.

My "journey" began with a passion, namely skiing and recently moved toward the goal of becoming a Divisional Clinic Leader at the 2012 Tryouts. As with any goal, you must have a plan of action. My plan began with an "end date" of DCL Tryout 2012, with many action steps that included: improve my overall fitness and nutrition, improve my teaching and movement analysis, by attending Portland movement analysis 1x/week between October and April, improve my skiing fundamentals through attendance at clinics, TD trainings, Winter Blast, Divisional Academy, Symposium, Fall Training, etc. and asking for "help" from a large group of individuals! Oh, and at the same time, continue to develop and grow my Personal Training business while raising two active boys! Whew!

There have been many rewards along the way. Friendships have developed over the last ten years – but the friendship and camaraderie that I have experienced over this last season has been amazing. I have trained with many people – however this season in particular I spent a great deal of time with Holly Tencer, Brad Walsh, Ellen Bierman and Jenna Krevosky. It is my belief that without this team of individuals, and many more people who helped along the way) none of us would have made it as far as we did. It is challenging to learn alone – you learn so much more when you

Dancing into the wee-hours with your training partners, Holly Tencer and Tara Seymour, is good training too! ↓



can share your experiences, thoughts and feelings while developing a deeper understanding.

An example: following March TD Training, six of us drove home from Stevens Pass (five hours) and discussed our three days of clinics: topic by topic, drill by drill, skill focus, etc. I gained so much over that weekend and that drive alone. Along with all of us improving our skiing and teaching, we also learned the importance of coaching, which I believe includes the balance of learning and having fun! You have to keep it fun... from doing synchronized somersaults in the powder with Brad, to free skiing without a focus, and dancing until the wee hours with friends.

Challenges: "Don't be afraid to fail. Don't waste energy trying to cover up failure. Learn from your failures and go on to the next challenge. It's OK to fail. If you're not failing, you're not growing." John May and Charlie Wolff provided weekly challenges over the last two years during Portland Movement Analysis sessions. These evenings provide Levels 1, 2, 3 and beyond an opportunity to improve their teaching in front of mentors and their peers. There is no doubt that without these evenings and the teamwork of all that were involved each night I would not have performed as well in my teaching segments. This program grew because John May and Charlie Wolff wanted to improve their teaching and presentation skills; in building this program, they have also helped the growth of numerous instructors and the Mt. Hood resorts' community as a whole. So, if you do not have this at your school build it and they will come. It's true.

Learning from a variety of mentors had its own rewards. A significant portion of my training included working with Scott Weimer, who is so great in sharing his journey complete with the ups and downs, successes and struggles. Scott was so open in communicating what helped him achieve his success: training, reading and writing down what you have learned and what you want to teach – put it in your own words. Like so many members of the current PSIA-NW Divisional Clinic Leaders and Technical Team members, he took time to send texts, emails and phone calls to provide coaching. Do you want the same? All you have to do is ask! If you want something you have to go for it; you have to ask for it. My fitness mentor, Todd Durkin, would say "PRIDE" – Personal Responsibility In Daily Effort. You must take responsibility in your actions towards goal achievement.

Terry McLeod's important message was that, unlike certification, tryouts are for a few spots on the team; remember, you are competing. I struggled with this at first because I feel it is our job, as instructors, TDs, clinicians, etc. to encourage a learning environment; a team environment – in that if we help others become better we, in turn, become better, too. In hindsight, the lesson learned was that you have to remember at the time of tryouts that it is about you going after



↑ Don't be afraid – push yourself! Andrew Rockenfield and Tara Seymour scoping “Wild Katz”.

your goal and keeping that goal in sight. Remember, you can't control the weather, snow conditions, your group, the energy and/or the tasks assigned or terrain to ski. However, you can control how you respond to these things – how you perform under these circumstances. Ultimately, as a clinician you will experience excellent as well as poor conditions; lively and unenergized groups; two participants and/or 20, so you have to be able to create a learning environment, teach and perform, ski well through demonstration at all times. This goes, as well, for refining the fundamental movements of skiing – balance, edging, pressure control and rotary movement. With these movements you can ski anywhere, any time, and respond to all conditions. Whether in tryouts or preparing for certification, with ownership/confidence in your teaching and skiing, you can perform anywhere, any time, under any conditions.

I've trained a lot with Rick Lyons aka “Scary Rick” – it's a long story. Rick is an amazing coach who exceeds expectations in his effort to help our divisions instructors become better – whether on the snow, in a dryland workshop, a movement analysis class or over a beer – he is ready to help make you better. His best lesson came when I had the amazing opportunity to ski with Rick and Terry while they trained with Dave Lyon a few weeks before National Team Tryouts. It was so great to watch my mentors train with Dave and see that they do feel the same pressures, concerns, nerves, etc. as we do when it comes to certification exams and/or tryouts. The only difference was in their questions – they questioned more on what might be asked of the candidates and drills they might be asked to perform and what the selectors might be looking for. The questions I hear more from our certification candidates and for tryouts are more focused on skills, movements, the teaching cycle, etc. We are all at different points in the learning curve. It helped me be more confident amongst those with more experience – as skiers/riders, teachers, examiners, veteran DCL members – that everyone has felt and/or feels the similar pressures that come with performing in front of your peers. Ultimately, the evaluators are truly rooting for you to succeed!

The power of visualization may have been my downfall. If you spoke to me at anytime preparing for these tryouts I would tell you that I had areas to improve in my skiing but I was confident that I could make those changes and that my concern was in my teaching and movement anal-

ysis. I'm a doer, so my greatest gains in skiing (remember I never took a lesson until I was an instructor and 32 years old), I learned by watching others – so putting things into words to teach has been a challenge. I knew I needed to do some visualization – seeing myself perform successfully, repeatedly, prior to tryouts. I was fortunate to work with my life coach, Dawn Montefusco, to overcome my nerves on the teaching side of the tryouts.

It wasn't that I was overconfident or cocky regarding my skiing – I knew I had made positive changes in my skiing, others had seen changes, and I had done everything to make changes in my skiing. I've been a competitor all my life (remember, I played on a team that went 27-0 – which isn't an easy accomplishment!) I was not worried about being in the “hot seat” on my skiing – I like that pressure – lead-off hitter for my college softball team! So, my focus in my visualization was in calming my nerves to teach in front of my peers, and mentors, with confidence. I didn't spend a long time on this – actually, we worked on this two days prior to tryouts and the improvement in my confidence and nerves was amazing, and led to the feedback I received on my teaching, “above the bar.” What I left out of the visualization practice was seeing myself ski tasks with precision.

So what went “wrong?” Bottom line: I just had a few bad days of skiing. And from Day One to Day Two, I focused on the wrong things between days. After Day One I should have reflected on what went well for me, what I should continue to do, where did I struggle, and what do I need to do to improve my performance in this area. Again, the only thing I can control during tryouts is my performance! Be in the moment and stay focused on your goal! Side note: in case no one has told you, do NOT tune your skis three days before tryouts or an exam.

In the end nothing went “wrong!” My journey will be a little longer than expected. And like Michael Birch-Jones and I discussed an hour before the announcement, it is NOT about the destination – it is about the journey along the way. I learned so much this season about skiing, friendship, teaching, coaching, setting goals; I taught people a new sport and taught veterans of the sport a few new things, and along the way I inspired some folks! More thanks to MB-J and Tara Seymour for the reminders of what is important in life – my family, Dan, and my boys. The inspira-

Events like Winter Blast are a great place to learn ... Tara Seymour and Matt Boyd (National Team) on 7th Heaven! ↓



tion I hope to provide, first and foremost for my boys, is that you can do anything you want (at any age) when you set a goal, form a plan, follow a plan, surround yourself with great people, and have fun. Second, I hope I provide inspiration to the women with and/or without children that you can juggle many things – it just takes organization. It will always be hard to find a balance – my

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boys missed me at times this season but they are getting tons of me this summer – hard to balance all of life on a day-to-day basis – the goal is to find balance over the long haul.

Initial disappointment is a normal reaction in not achieving my goal this season. However, over two months' reflection I am so proud of my effort and growth over the past season. “Out of failure grows success.” It is so easy to point fingers and/or say this or that wasn't “fair” and/or perfect in the certification or tryout process. My mentor, Todd Durkin (trainer to Drew Brees, Aaron Rodgers) just sent me an email on competing: “Greatness is not in the finish time, the score, or the highest grade ... greatness is rather in the focus, the flow, and the effort expended to compete ... to have the courage to “lay it all out” and go for it.” Again, ultimately, I am only in control of my journey and you in yours.

Recreational skier turned passionate ski instructor followed a nine year amazing, focused path, developed incredible friendships, experienced great adventures (Winter Blast, Divisional Academy and Symposium 2012) and become a better skier, teacher, personal trainer and mother. “Life itself is a race, marked by a start, and a finish. It is what we learn during the race and how we apply it that determines whether our participation has had particular value. If we learn from each success, and each failure, and improve ourselves through this process, then at the end, we will have fulfilled our potential and performed well.”

My journey continues, I will achieve my goal of being selected to represent PSIA-NW in the future, and my journey will NOT end at that destination. It will continue as I learn, teach and inspire! Join me on the journey! ❄️



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