

Americans finally embracing Nordic skiing

By Stephanie Pearson, Outdoor

Nordic skiing began about 8,000 years ago in Russia but it's taken until now for the sport to start really catching on in the U.S. The proof is everywhere: Citizen races are booking out months in advance, alpine resorts are grooming new classical and skate-skiing trails (an offshoot of Nordic Skiing that developed in the '70s), and Americans are finally competing with the powerhouse Europeans.

Earlier this month, Liz Stephen placed fifth in Italy's multi-stage Tour de Ski, the highest result ever for an American. And shortly after that, she came in second in the Cross Country World Cup.

Why is this cardio-intense sport, formerly practiced only by diehard Nordic fanatics, being embraced by the masses? One reason could be that it kills winter depression and improves both mind and body health. According to the soon to be published "Birkie Health Survey," a study of 24,000 past participants in the American Birkebeiner, the largest cross-country ski marathon in North America, it's the best sport there is for both physical and mental well-being.

Read the whole story