

Tahoe Cross Country team going to Junior Nationals

Nine members of the Tahoe Cross Country competition team will compete March 9-15 at Junior Nationals at Auburn Ski Club.

This is the first time that any TXC athlete will compete. Nine athletes were named to the Far West Junior National Team. To get where they are today, these young athletes put in hundreds of hours rollerskiing, running, hiking and skiing over the last year.

Cam Goldstone has made some extraordinary improvements over the course of the year. In the last handful of weeks he has really come into his own. His top end speed is extraordinary, and his ability to push through trying conditions is elite. He's one of a very select few athletes at JNs who will be hoping for slow challenging conditions – where the mentally strong are separated from the rest.

Cooper Anderson is the youngest member of TXC going to Junior Nationals. This typically would be irrelevant, but the selection procedures for qualifying as a “U14” to race as a “U16” are much more difficult. Typically athletes must finish within 10 percent of the “standard time,” but Cooper, as a younger athlete, had to finish within 1 percent. He met and exceeded that challenge several times. As for Cooper the skier, he knows how to “hop V1” better than anyone in the region.

JC Schoonmaker is, in many ways, the team leader. Despite being in ninth grade, he carries himself professionally, and he is always looking out for his teammates. Turns out he's a pretty fast ski racer, too. This year he is just starting to figure out exactly how fast he can be. JC's “V2” is just about as efficient as it comes.

Max Roske is emblematic of the team. He is relatively new to ski racing, and getting faster at a terrifying rate. He also knows how to persevere. On his first day rollerskiing he had a scary crash. Most people would be done at that point, but the next week he was back – and it's paid off.

Nate Cutler has a serious need for speed. His top gear is as good as anyone's. Cutler knows how fast he wants to be and is piecing together exactly what he needs to do to get there. He knows better than just about anyone his age when it's time to rest and when it's time to press.

Quinn Lehmkuhl is best explained by the term "Quiet Fire." She isn't smack-talking her competitors, she doesn't finish races or intervals heaving and collapsing to make a scene. She simply takes care of business.

Sofia Sanchez has the will and endurance of anyone, but to just talk about her motor is to ignore her incredible technique improvements over the year. People should fear her efficiency.

Tara Gallant is a no-nonsense athlete who also enjoys a good game of blob-tag. Her V1 is top notch, and her focus and drive are world class. Watching her in an interval session is like watching a professional, she knows exactly what needs to be accomplished and she does it.

Ursula Volz is a beautiful skier. Whether it's her ability to glide, apply power, change gears, increase the tempo, or ski smoothly, she really has very few weaknesses. Unfortunately much of her season has been derailed by sickness, and yet she was still able to qualify for JNs – that's a testament to the kind of athlete that she is.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News