

# Nome's Caity Tozier shoots her way to International Gold at the Arctic Winter Games

By Keith Conger

Caity Tozier, a high school senior on the Nome Ski and Biathlon team, found the 5K Individual Race at the Arctic Winter Games, her first international biathlon contest, an eye opening, and motivating, experience. As she was out shot by the field, including her sharp shooting Alaskan teammate Zoey Grenier (who hit an Arctic Winter Games best 19 out of 20 targets), Tozier found herself watching others take podium spots.

That race proved sufficient incentive for the determined rural athlete to be the first, and only time she would have that vantage point.

Tozier's second race at the Gray Mountain Biathlon Range in Whitehorse, Yukon Territories, Canada, produced a vastly different result. Finding the target 8 out of 10 times

during the 3K Sprint Race, Tozier was able to overcome the extra time in the penalty loop assessed for each missed shot, (Grenier shot 9 of 10). She was able to use her superior running speed to build a 50 second lead, and claim the highest vantage point-top of the podium.

Tozier's effort made history as the first individual gold ulu (medal) earned by a rural junior (ages 15 - 18) biathlete, snowshoe or ski, in well over 10 years. The sharp shooter from Nome would go on and add to her collection of "bling" by taking a silver ulu in the 4K Mass Start Race, and a silver ulu in the 3 x 2K Team Relay.

Tozier was among seven athletes who are members of the Western Interior Ski/Biathlon Association who qualified for the games. Tozier, and

Vincent Tomalonis of White Mountain qualified for snowshoe biathlon spots by virtue of their performances at the 2011 state rural ski and biathlon championships (which are hosted by WISA, the Western Interior Ski/Biathlon Association). Tomalonis' high school teammate Asa Bergamaschi, and Katie Daniels of Unalakleet, qualified for Ski Biathlon spots at the WISA meet.

All the WISA biathletes had strong results with Bergamaschi and Tomolonis having fourth place finishes, and Daniels placing fifth in an event.

Two of WISA's athletes, sophomore Rosa Schmidt of Nome, and eighth grader Carolyn Sam of Galena, qualified for the Snowshoe Racing team through postal trials by submitting times to the sport coordi-

nator in Juneau. Sam captured a gold ulu in the 5K run, a silver ulu in the 2.5K run, and a gold ulu in the 4 x 400 meter relay. Schmidt had two strong fourth place finishes.

Caleb Korta, an eighth grade WISA athlete from Galena, qualified for the Arctic Winter Games at the 2011 WISA meet as well. As WISA's lone representative on the cross-country ski squad, Korta had a strong showing against one of the strongest fields at the games.

Joining the skiers and snowshoers at the Arctic Winter Games were two Western Alaskan Arctic Sports (aka Native Youth Olympics) participants. Tahnee Esparza from Golovin had many outstanding performances, earning bronze ulus in the Kneel Jump, the Alaska High Kick, and the 2-foot High Kick. Nome's Emery Booshu earned a bronze ulu in the Alaska High Kick.

Western Alaska was represented by three coaches. Nancy Persons of Unalakleet helped coach the Ski Biathlon Team, Nome's Joni Earp helped coach the Alaska Sports Team, and Nome's Keith Conger helped coach the Snowshoe Racing Team.

Both biathlon disciplines are structured similarly, the only difference being the mode of transport. Athletes ski or snowshoe several times around a course, each time entering a shooting range where they gather their biathlon specific, 22 caliber rifles.

During each shooting session the athlete takes 5 shots from a distance of 50 meters. In Junior Category races (which all the WISA biathletes

performed) athletes shoot half of their shots in the standing position, at targets 4.5 inches in diameter. The remaining shots are taken in the prone position, at targets that are only 1.5 inches in diameter.

Hitting a biathlon target after skiing or snowshoeing with an elevated heart rate has been likened to trying to thread a needle while riding a snowmachine.

Occurring every other year, the Arctic Winter Games is a high profile, circumpolar sports competition for northern and arctic athletes. The games celebrate sport, and promote social and cultural exchange.

The Arctic Winter Games started in 1970 with just a handful of events, and only three contingencies (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Alaska). This year over 2,000 athletes gathered from nine northern "nations" to compete in 21 different sports.

Arctic Winter Games participation is limited to regions located north of the 55th parallel. Joining the three original members are Greenland, Russia, Northern Alberta, Nunavut (including Baffin Island), Nunavut (Northern Quebec), and the Sápmi Nation (northern Scandinavia).

Biathlon, snowshoeing, and Alaska Sports are not the only opportunities for rural Alaskans to attend the Arctic Winter Games. The Table Tennis Team is a wonderful, untapped opportunity for participation as well.

The WISA athletes will gather together the last weekend in March for the 2012 Western Interior Ski and Biathlon Championships in Galena.



Photo by Ed Todd

**STRIDING TOWARDS FIRST PLACE**—Nome Nanook Caity Tozier won a gold medal at the 2012 Arctic Winter Games in the 3K Snowshoe Biathlon Sprint Race.

## 2012 NKC Businessmen's Race goes off without a hitch — almost

Eighteen people became mushers in the Nome Kennel Club's Annual Businessmen's Race. Mushers have the opportunity to run three dogs around a three-mile course. For many people this is the first and only time they will be on the runners of a dog sled. Others, like Susan Shinkai of California and Josh Marble of Nome, come back year after year because it's such a fun time.

Six Kennel Club members brought dogs and sleds to the race to

give folks this opportunity and many other Kennel Club members and friends provided support in the way of trail grooming, timing, dog handling and trail support.

The first team out of the shoot made it three quarters of the way up Gold Hill and decided to turn left toward Icy View (perhaps heading home). A snowmachine had to chase them down and get them going on the correct path. All other teams were better behaved and no one else

had trouble navigating the course. On the bright side, musher number 1, Nat Crichton, got an extra half mile ride — at least that's the spin his dog team's owner tried to put on the situation.

The weather was perfect for a sled dog ride and snow conditions were pretty good too. While there were reports of tumbles and tangles, every musher made it to the finish line on their sled and with a smile on their face.



Photo by Diana Haecker

**MUSHER FOR A DAY**—John Butkevich ran a team belonging to Stephanie Johnson of Nome, finishing in fourth place in the NKC businessmen's race. Helping John get to the starting line was Bubba McDaniels of Nome.

### RACE RESULTS:

Pl.	Time	Name/Bib#	Dog Team	Kennel
1.	18:38	Holly Mantooth/13		Bey
2.	19:39	Vivian Coleman/5		Salesky
3.	20:11	Brad Bougher / 7		Bey
4.	22:07	John Butkevich / 6		Johnson
5.	22:29	Susan Shinkai / 9		Thomas
6.	22:53	Faith Duncan / 3		Thomas
7.	23:37	Jan Halsted / 20		Thomas
8.	23:49	Mike Krause / 8		Owens
9.	25:14	Florence Evans / 14		Johnson
10.	26:51	Susan Stephenson / 16		Bey
11.	26:56	Nat Crichton / 1		Bey
12.	27:31	Deborah Davis / 2		Owens
13.	28:10	Valerie Tartaglino / 10		Bey
14.	29:01	Chris Kotouch / 11		Owens
15.	29:31	Brandy Combs / 12		Salesky
16.	29:38	Josh Marble / 15		Owens
17.	30:56	Joseph Caplinger / 4		Trowbridge
18.	33:10	Kurt Pakvan / 19		Trowbridge

## NANANA ICE

### CLASSIC

Tradition

DOT:



**ICE WATCH UPDATE:**  
**37.7 INCHES**  
(As of 3/19/12)

**TICKETS AVAILABLE THROUGH APRIL 5**

www.nenanaiceclassic.com • iceclassic@alaska.net • 907-832-5446

#### How to take part:

1. Buy your \$2.50 ticket; one for each guess.
2. Fill out the ticket with your date and time.
3. Drop it in an Ice Classic can.
4. Mark your calendar.
5. Watch for breakup.

Dutch Harbor: Safeway  
Galena: Crowley Marine Services, Yukon Inn  
Haines: Harbor Bar, Outfitter Sporting Goods  
Homer: Eagle Quality Center, Ulmer's Drug & Hardware, Redden Marine, AJ's OldTown Restaurant  
Kodiak: Cy's Sporting Goods, Safeway  
Kotzebue: Alaska Commercial Co.  
McGrath: Alaska Commercial Co.  
Nimilchik: Nimilchik General Store  
**Nome: Eagle Quality Ctr. (Hansons)**  
Petersburg: Harbor Bar  
Prudhoe Bay: Brooks Range Supply  
Seward: Safeway, Gateway Texaco  
Unalakleet: Unalakleet Native Store  
Valdez: Eagle Quality Center

#### TICKET LOCATIONS:

Akiak: Stephan Ivan & Sons Store  
Anaktuvuk Pass: Nunamiut  
Auke Bay: DeHarts Store  
Barrow: Alaska Commercial Co.  
Cordova: Alaska Commercial Co., Nichols Backdoor Store  
Dillingham: N&N Market, Willow Tree Inn