

# Murphy sports a golden trigger finger at championships

By Keith Conger

In a ski biathlon race, hitting a 4 1/2-inch target at 50 meters using a .22 caliber rifle, with a heart hammering from skiing at a race pace, has been likened to threading a needle while riding on the back of a snowmachine.

This correlation rang true April 3 for virtually all of the participants during the second event of the 22nd annual Western Interior Ski/Biathlon State Championships held at Fairbanks' Birch Hill Ski Area. While the other 40 competitors were averaging slightly better than four out of 10 targets hit, Nome's straight-aiming eighth grader Miranda Murphy shot clean. Hitting 10 of 10 targets vaulted Murphy up in the rankings in the most hotly contested age division at the meet.

After the biathlon results were posted, Murphy, who has yet to miss a target in two years competing at the state level, not only took the podium for the first time ever, but also headed to the top step reserved for gold medalists. Murphy, who has worked hard to get her skiing ability to match that of her shooting, backed up her biathlon victory by posting the fifth fastest split on the 3.5-kilometer team relay course in the junior high girls division.

Nome sixth grader Rosa Schmidt skied the anchor leg of the relay behind Murphy, turning in the fastest junior high girl's split. The pair was not only rewarded with the silver medal for the event, but their efforts helped maintain second place in the overall team trophy standings. By taking the bronze medal in both the 5-kilometer ski race and the biathlon, the diminutive, but fiercely

determined Schmidt distinguished herself as one of only two junior high girl triple medalists. The pair from Nome was helped out in the team competition by seventh grader Ariana Horner, who posted fifth and sixth place finishes in the ski race and biathlon, respectively, and by seventh grade ski rookie Hanna Tozier, who cracked the top 10 in her first state-level ski race.

The Nome girls came up 17 seconds short in their quest for relay victory, as they could not quite track down the formidable pair of seventh grade Unalakleet skiers, Katie Daniels and Season Haugen. The duo posted the second and third fastest relay splits, respectively, to capture relay gold. White Mountain eighth grader Precious Lincoln teamed up with seventh grader Rayna Buck-Nassuk to take the third place team trophy.

Haugen also found herself on the top podium spot after the 5-kilometer ski race April 2, as she edged her rival Lincoln by a mere one second. That single tick of the clock would prove doubly important as it became the difference Haugen would eventually need to wrestle the Skimeister Trophy (earned by the outstanding skier in each age category for each multi-race ski event) from Schmidt.

## High school results

Emerson Conger, a sophomore on the Nome Ski and Biathlon Team, would run his consecutive victory total in individual races at state-level meets to six. Conger followed a victory in the 10-kilometer ski race, one that he won by nearly four minutes, with the

best shooting performance of the high school boys in the biathlon. In the biathlon, the high school racers had to shoot without the aid of a rifle-rest.

By posting the fastest relay split of the day on the 3.5-kilometer course, and nearly breaking the eight-minute mark at 8:02, Conger opened up nearly a one minute lead for his team. A strong anchor leg from freshman teammate Brendan Wehde, who took a silver in the ski race on day one, helped the duo win team relay gold.

Conger's meet results netted him his third Skimeister trophy in as many years. Tanana sophomore Cy Conrad was the runner up for Skimeister with a bronze medal in the ski race and a silver in the biathlon. Ian Witter, a rookie skier from Nenana, made an impressive showing with a pair of fourth-place finishes in the individual events.

Galena freshman Jenna Buchanan used a victory in the five-kilometer high school girl's race, along with the only high school girl's sub 10-minute time in the relays, to extend her Skimeister trophy string to two. She teamed up with fellow Galena skier Kimberly Greenway to take first place in the team relays.

Sophomore Sierra Corsetti from Unalakleet captured her first high school gold medal in biathlon with a narrow eight-second victory over senior Ruby Campbell of Tanana. Freshman Caitlyn Tozier, another ski rookie from Nome, finished with a pair of fifth-place finishes in the individual events.

## Junior high boys results

Shyler Johnson, an eighth grader

from Unalakleet, used the fastest relay split in the junior high boys division to lead his eighth-grade teammates, Chris Lockwood and Ben Currier (who was the only other athlete beside Murphy to hit all their targets), to a gold medal in the event, as well as overall team gold. Eighth grader Asa Bergamaschi of White Mountain continued the domination in individual events that he started the week before at regionals with gold medals in the five-kilometer ski race and biathlon. Bergamaschi also earned his first Western Interior Skimeister award.

Nome's Tim Schmidt, an eighth grader, completed the meet with fifth- and seventh-place finishes in the ski race and biathlon, respectively. An up-and-coming pair from Nenana, Robert Austin and Sean Witter, took team silver, while Thomas Amaktoolik and Kevin Ione of Golovin took the third-place team trophy.

The team from Nome was awarded the Sportsmanship Trophy as they stayed out at the finish line in each race enthusiastically cheering every racer as they crossed.

## Arctic Winter Games

The 2009 Western Interior Ski and Biathlon Championships was a qualifier for spots on Team Alaska's biathlon teams for the 2010 Arctic Winter Games that are to be held in Grand Prairie, Alberta, Canada, March 6-13, 2010. By winning their high school age group races, Conger and Corsetti earned spots on the ski biathlon team. Both athletes competed in the 2008 Arctic Winter Games in Yellowknife, Northwest Ter-

ritories, Canada. There, Conger raced in the ski biathlon and Corsetti competed in skiing. Conrad earned a spot on Team Alaska's snowshoe biathlon team.

## Individual awards

**Skimeister**  
**High school boys:** Emerson Conger, Nome  
**High school girls:** Jenna Buchanan, Galena  
**Junior high boys:** Asa Bergamaschi, White Mountain  
**Junior high girls:** Season Haugen, Unalakleet

**Ski race**  
**High school boys (10 kilometer):** 1. Emerson Conger, Nome, 24:25, gold; 2. Brendan Wehde, Nome, 28:25, silver; 3. Cy Conrad, Tanana, 28:44, bronze.

**High school girls (5 kilometer):** 1. Jenna Buchanan, Galena, 14:19, gold; 2. Ruby Campbell, Tanana, 14:43, silver; 3. Sierra Corsetti, Unalakleet, 14:54, bronze.

**Junior high boys (5 kilometer):** 1. Asa Bergamaschi, White Mountain, 12:46, gold; 2. Shyler Johnson, Unalakleet, 13:24, silver; 3. Vance Gregory, Galena, 14:11, bronze.

**Junior high girls (5 kilometer):** 1. Season Haugen, Unalakleet, 15:47, gold; 2. Precious Lincoln, White Mountain, 15:48, silver; 3. Rosa Schmidt, Nome, 16:10, bronze.

**Biathlon (parenthesis denotes shots made out of 10)**

**High school boys (shooting without rest):** 1. Emerson Conger, Nome, 18:18 (7), gold; 2. Cy Conrad, Tanana, 19:47 (6), silver; 3. Brendan Wehde, 21:12 (5), bronze.

**High school girls (shooting without a rifle rest):** 1. Sierra Corsetti, Unalakleet, 24:00 (1), gold; 2. Ruby Campbell, Tanana, 24:08 (2), silver; 3. Jenna Buchanan, Galena, 24:56 (3), bronze.

**Junior high boys (shooting with a rifle rest):** 1. Asa Bergamaschi, White Mountain, 18:02 (7), gold; 2. Vance Gregory, Galena, 21:05 (4), silver; 3. Shyler Johnson, Unalakleet, 21:11 (3), bronze.

**Junior high girls (shooting with a rifle rest):** 1. Miranda Murphy, Nome, 21:32 (10), gold; 2. Season Haugen, 22:49 (8), silver; 3. Rosa Schmidt, Nome, 23:03 (6), bronze.

# Basketball clinic delivers more than skills to youth

For the second year in a row, Nome Eskimo Community delivered a basketball camp to area students during the Iditarod spring break.

This year, NEC sponsored the Triple Threat Iditarod Basketball Clinic. In 2008 NEC held the Mini-Mukluk Youth Basketball Tournament.

Nome Eskimo Community has offered Challenge Life basketball camps to Nome and the surrounding region for the last five years. Challenge Life

Triple Threat basketball clinics are free of charge for the youth.

Those who joined the clinic were greeted by familiar faces, Al Sokaitis and Mike Hajdukovich, founders of The Challenge Life Youth Foundation. Both returning coaches are not only dedicated to the sport of basketball, but strongly emphasize the ongoing health of Nome's youth through diet and sport education. The Challenge Life foundation is respon-

sive to each community it visits.

"The goal is to teach young people the value of helping others and sharing their skills. Included in this unit is an examination of the cultural heritage of the participants. Mentoring, cultural events and community involvement are used to teach the unit," Hajdukovich said.

The Triple Threat clinic ran March 15-18 at the Nome Elementary School gymnasium. Sokaitis was able

to connect with students after the Nome-Beltz Junior High School tournament and taught skills to at least 80 participants. The Triple Threat Iditarod basketball clinic registered at least 55 students ages 8 to 18.

"The Challenge Life program is about turning life's challenges into opportunities and not an excuse for failure," Hajdukovich said. "It is about building a physical and mental foundation that will stand up to life's unpredictability. It is about enjoying the beauty of life and giving back to the community where you live. The Chal-

lenge Life program is about winning the biggest game of all, the game of life."

NEC representatives believe the clinic plays a vital role for Nome's children at this time of year. "It is important for Nome Eskimo Community to offer positive programs to youth during the Iditarod break," said Marsha Sloan, NEC Tribal Services Director. "So many of the events during Iditarod are for adults, it's a priority for us to focus on our children and youth."

Hajdukovich and Sokaitis will return in August to host NEC's fifth Annual Triple Threat Basketball Camp.



Photo courtesy of Nome Eskimo Community

**MARCH MADNESS**—Coaches and participants in this year's Iditarod Break Triple Threat Basketball Camp gather for a photo at Nome Elementary School in mid-March. At least 55 area students participated in the camp.



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# HOROSCOPES

April 9 - 15, 2009

<p><b>CAPRICORN</b>            December 22–January 19</p>	<p>Your cup runneth over with gratitude this week, Capricorn. Make sure you return the favor one day. A secret is finally revealed at work, and you benefit big time.</p>	<p><b>ARIES</b>            March 21–April 19</p>	<p>Ask and you shall receive, Aries. Everyone needs a little help now and then. A concept is scrapped at work. Don't let it get to you. It really is for the best.</p>	<p><b>CANCER</b>            June 22–July 22</p>	<p>Voila, Cancer. Your to-do list for an event is nearly complete. Just one more thing to get, and you know exactly where to get it. Phone calls result in a flurry of activity over the weekend.</p>	<p><b>LIBRA</b>            September 23–October 22</p>	<p>Push, push, push, Libra. Give a project at home everything you've got, and you will succeed. A brush with tragedy recharges a friend. Learn from their mistakes.</p>
<p><b>AQUARIUS</b>            January 20–February 18</p>	<p>You're definitely on to something, Aquarius. Hop to it, flesh out your idea and present it to your supervisor. A long-lost relative returns bearing gifts.</p>	<p><b>TAURUS</b>            April 20–May 20</p>	<p>Riveting conversations with friends make you aware of how good you have it and inspire you to give more of yourself. Start with that lonely neighbor, Taurus.</p>	<p><b>LEO</b>            July 23–August 22</p>	<p>Racy remarks send chills through work. Do what you can to get everyone's minds off the matter, Leo. Humor is required. A financial need is met.</p>	<p><b>SCORPIO</b>            October 23–November 21</p>	<p>You're just looking for trouble, Scorpio. Take a step back and leave the situation to someone else to fix. A breakthrough at work leads to a speedy finish.</p>
<p><b>PISCES</b>            February 19–March 20</p>	<p>Gimme, gimme, gimme, Pisces. That's all you hear at home this week, and it's time to put a stop to the madness. Volunteer work could turn things around.</p>	<p><b>GEMINI</b>            May 21–June 21</p>	<p>Whew, Gemini! You're down to the wire at work but finish in time. A home improvement project turns out to be more difficult than you thought. Help is at hand if you ask for it.</p>	<p><b>VIRGO</b>            August 23–September 22</p>	<p>Just be yourself, and your supervisor will come to appreciate you in time, Virgo. Rash decisions at home get you into hot water. Work to resolve the situation quickly.</p>	<p><b>SAGITTARIUS</b>            November 22–December 21</p>	<p>Your financial worries cease this week, Sagittarius, as a new source of income develops. The parade of invitations does not stop. Pick and choose carefully.</p>

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