CALEDONIA
NORDIC • SKI • CLUB

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# Program Report- 2025–26:

Director: Jeni Wigelsworth

Our programs brought people of all ages to Caledonia Nordic this year. Students tried skiing and biking for the first time, young athletes built their skills, and seniors explored new trails. Spring and summer programs kept the club busy well beyond the ski season. None of this happens without the coordinators, coaches, instructors and volunteers who give so much of their time.

## School Ski:

Carolyn Thorp continued to lead our School Ski program, welcoming students from schools across Prince George and Hixon, along with local youth groups. For many children, it was their first time on cross country skis. It is always fun to watch them find their balance and gain confidence over the course of a visit.

This continues to be a very popular program, with all available days filled throughout the winter season. Weather, trail conditions and cold temperatures led to some cancellations, but Carolyn and her team made the most of the days they could get students out on snow.

A lot goes into each visit, from organizing school groups and fitting equipment to helping students get out on the trails. Two new coaches completed their introductory coaching workshops this season, and we added skis, boots, poles and other equipment to keep the fleet ready for visiting classes. Shout out to our Canadian Ski Patrol for their donation (Operation Red Nose) to stock up equipment for our School Ski program.

A big thank you to Carolyn and the entire School Ski team for making so many first experiences on skis positive ones.

## Skills Development Program:

The Skills Development Program welcomed 110 skiers aged 3 to 13. Fifty-two children registered for Saturdays only (Bunnies and Jack Rabbits), while 58 registered for both Wednesday and Saturday. The once a week option worked well for families and helped us offer the program to children who are involved in other activities.

Belinda Hanlon coordinated 12 groups with the support of 21 volunteer coaches. Five parents completed their coaching courses and coached a group this season. Junior Racers also helped on Wednesdays, with Scott Moore, Skye Cadell, Maisie Haine, Gwen Ditto and Rowan Beaulieu providing consistent support. Thank you to all of our coaches for the time and energy they gave to the children each week.

Weather was a challenge, and three sessions were cancelled. When the trails were not safe for skiing, we offered snowshoeing instead. Families responded well, and the children had fun trying

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something different. Save On Foods once again supported the program with donations of cookies, iced tea mix and oranges.

As we prepare for next season, recruiting coaches will be important if we want to keep groups at eight skiers or fewer. Belinda has also recommended separating novice and intermediate skiers in the Saturday only program, organizing cookie duty before the season begins, and putting two chocolate races or other special events on the schedule.

**Cross Country & Biathlon:**

There were 67 athletes enrolled in programs from Track Attack through Masters this season. We introduced Masters Biathlon and Laser Bears, welcomed Sarah Beaudry and Beth Hillhouse to the coaching team, and saw the Varsity program double in size from the previous year.

Tuppy Hoehn and Ali Cadell highlighted the positive culture across the teams and the way our athletes represented Caledonia Nordic at races. Athletes also gave back by helping coach Jackrabbits and Laser Bears. Team managers Jodi Nelson and Robin Ditto provided valuable support, while Graeme Moore and Cam Grose led the waxing effort and helped train new parent volunteers.

Our athletes had strong results throughout the season, earning 28 medals at Biathlon BC Cups, five at Biathlon Nationals, 25 at Cross Country BC Cups and one at Cross Country Nationals. Isla Cadell represented the British Biathlon National Team at IBU Cups, IBU Junior Cups and the Youth World Championships. Several athletes also earned provincial aggregate results and places on BC Cross Country squads for 2026–27.

It was a demanding season for the coaching team. Racing ran almost every weekend from late November through March, and difficult snow conditions limited access to race trails and technical terrain for training. The new programs also increased the need for volunteer coaches and club rifles. As we look ahead, we will continue working to support athletes with different goals and build a stronger connection across our cross country and biathlon teams.

**Masters Biathlon:**

Masters Biathlon has become a popular part of our programming. We have a dedicated group of athletes who share a real passion for the sport and have been great to have around the range and on the trails.

The group trained together through dryland and on snow programs, and some took part in Biathlon BC and Biathlon Canada camps. Several also stepped up to race at Westerns and Nationals this season. It was great to see them challenge themselves and enjoy being part of those events.

This has been a great group, and we look forward to seeing the program continue to grow.

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**Explore More:**

Explore More brought seniors together for skiing, snowshoeing and time with friends at Caledonia Nordic. This season, 69 people registered for skiing and 44 for snowshoeing, with 23 taking part in both. Different group levels gave participants a chance to learn new skills and explore more of our trails.

Judy Addie led a wonderful team of instructors, leaders, hosts and ski patrollers. Mild temperatures and rain cut the program short, but participants made the most of the sessions they had. The instruction, time on the trails and social gatherings were all well received. Kathi Hughes' Fireside Chats and the informal Explore Even More outings gave people more opportunities to learn and spend time together.

Thank you to Judy and everyone who helped make Explore More such a welcoming program.

**CANSI:**

Our CANSI program delivered 94 lessons this season, and two new instructors completed their Level 1 training. Nicole Vaillancourt offered group lessons at a variety of times, including weekday evenings, Tuesday afternoons and Saturday afternoons, in response to increased interest.

The group lessons were well received, but weather made scheduling difficult. Sessions planned for three consecutive weeks sometimes took nearly two months to complete, making it challenging to find dates that worked for everyone. Instructors also saw a wide range of abilities within lessons advertised as beginner classic or beginner skate.

For next season, Nicole is considering a shorter format with three lessons in one week. This could make scheduling easier and help each group stay together from start to finish. Lesson pricing will also be reviewed.

**Mountain Bike Programs:**

Our spring and summer bike programs had another great season. We welcomed 52 riders to the Spring Bike Programs, followed by 188 participants in our summer bike camps. The camps were full again this year, and it was great to see so many families spending time at Caledonia Nordic through the warmer months.

Riders built their skills and confidence while exploring the trails and having fun with their groups. For some, it was their first experience riding on trails. Others returned ready to take on new challenges. There is something pretty special about seeing a rider accomplish something that felt difficult at the start of the week.

Gabby Hoehn did a fantastic job as Head Coach, supported by an amazing group of coaches who brought energy, patience and encouragement to the trails every day. A big thank you to Gabby and the entire coaching team for making the programs such a positive experience for our riders.

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**In-School Bike Program:**

Our In-School Bike Program, delivered in partnership with HUB Cycling, reached 561 students at seven Prince George schools this year. The program helps students build their cycling skills and confidence, whether they already ride regularly or are getting on a bike for the first time.

Fifty students were identified as new riders, and 31 learned to ride during the program. Teachers, education assistants, parents and, at times, older students helped support those learning. It is great to see what a difference that extra help can make for a child who is just starting out.

Jennifer Keim coordinated the program with a team of six instructors, including three new instructors trained this year. School staff continued to tell us how much they value the program, and every school invited to participate took part. Thank you to Jennifer, the instructors, HUB Cycling and the staff at each school for helping more children experience the freedom and fun of riding a bike.

**Land Based Learning:**

Our Land Based Learning program welcomed approximately 400 students to Caledonia Nordic this year. Developed with the School District 57 Indigenous Education Department, the program gives students a chance to spend the day outside, learning through activities connected to the land and Indigenous knowledge and practices.

During their visit, students rotate through hands-on activities. They learn about hunting through archery, explore gathering and medicinal plants, and work together to build shelters using materials found on site. Groups have also learned about traditional food storage and taken part in drumming circles. The activities give students a chance to try something new, ask questions, and make connections to what they are learning at school.

It has been great to see how engaged the students are when they get outside and take part. Thank you to the instructors, Elders and Indigenous Education team who have helped us build and deliver this program.