

Canmore Nor/Am shows Biathlon Ontario team “a force to be reckoned with.”

In fast and challenging conditions, Ontario biathlon team members showed they're “a force to be reckoned with” at last weekend's North American/Calforex Cup #1 in Canmore Alberta. The competition, held on the Canmore Nordic Centre's icy trails, opened the 2009-10 biathlon season.

On Saturday November 28, Biathlon Ontario members posted nine top-10 finishes. In the Youth Men category, Patrick Skelton was 7th and Ian Campbell 8th. In Youth Women, Brenda Dickenson finished 7th with Erikka Niemi close behind in 8th place.

In Senior Girls, Catherine Moogk finished 7th, and in Senior Boys Drew Bursey was 5th, and brothers Tyler and Brett Davie were 8th and 10th respectively.

More high finishes – and a medal – came on Sunday, with Ian Campbell posting a 6th in the Youth Men, missing only twice in 20 shots in four bouts. In the Women's category, Alicia Hurley was 9th, and in Youth Women Erikka Niemi, Silke Hynes and Brenda Dickenson finished 8th, 9th, and 10th respectively.

In Senior Girls Catherine Moogk was 9th, and in Senior Boys Drew Bursey finished 5th and Alex Lake 10th. In the Master Men 45+ category, Jeremiah Hynes came 3rd for a bronze medal.

“This shows that Ontario's biathletes can compete with the best in the country,” said Biathlon Ontario Head Coach Michelle Armitage. “I'm very proud of the team,” she added as they packed for their return to Ontario. The team had trained in the area the preceding week, adjusting to Canmore's altitude and what was, for most of the athletes, the first skiing of the 2009-10 season.

Of note was the depth and strength of the field in IBU (International Biathlon Union) categories: namely Youth Men and Women and above. All but four members of the Canadian National team raced as well as members of both the Canadian and US development teams, plus teams from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and very strong local Alberta teams that train regularly at Canmore. It made for tough competition at the highest level outside the national championships.

Full results can be found on the Biathlon Canada website at www.biathloncanada.ca, and on Biathlon Ontario's site at www.biathlonontario.ca.