

# **THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM**

**Newsletter: March 16, 2018**



## **Fourth Race Weekend: February 24-25:**

The fourth race weekend of the 2018 MACC season was raced in spring like snow conditions. Saturday's slalom was raced on Superbowl with reasonably firm conditions. However, the conditions on the FIS side of the hill were a bit softer and with the State High School Championships to be raced there on Monday, Sunday's GS racing was moved to North Boyne, where the salted course held up well, even though it was a bit soft out of the course.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was successful, with 17 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Saturday and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Jeff Burnette (E2M), Zack Hampton (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Doug Fellman (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jamie Pawelek (BM), Dick Synowiec (SVCM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tom Klaban (SVE1M), Mike Altenburg (VAM), Bob Rentschler (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Doug Fellman (BM), Dick Synowiec (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Mike Altenburg (VAM), Scott Soucie (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Steve Foradori (SVCM), Jamie Pawelek (BM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Jeff Burnette (E2M), Mike Jablonski (SVAM), Bob Rentschler (VBM)

Our T-Bird "racer of the week" is **Doug Fellman** (BM) with two 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Not far behind, also with two podium finishes, are **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM), **Steve Foradori** (SVCM), and **Dick Synowiec** (SVCM), each with a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. They are followed by **Jeff Burnette** (E2M) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish, **Jamie Pawelek** (BM) with two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, **Mike Altenburg** (VAM) with a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish, and **Bob Rentschler** (VBM) with two 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 76% of our racers (13 of 17) make the podium this weekend, which is excellent. Hopefully, we can do at least this well in the final race weekend.

## **This Weekend's Activities:**

After the award presentation in the Snowflake lounge on Saturday, most of the Race Team went downstairs in the Clocktower where fellow MACC racer, Kathy Bauer and her Team Rust friends sponsored an all MACC party and baby shower for a young racer, where all ate, drank, and socialized well (as well as contributing to the new baby and her parents). Many thanks to Kathy!

## **Final (Marks) Race Weekend: March 2-4:**

The final race weekend of the 2018 season took place on North Boyne and Superbowl at Boyne Mountain with decent race conditions and weather and was an excellent finale to the season. We were very fortunate, in that the temperatures were warm during day but cooled off at night to allow good race snow conditions.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was again successful, with 17 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Slalom (Friday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Zack Hampton (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Doug Fellman (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Bob Rentschler (VBM), Jamie Pawelek (BM), Dick Synowiec (SVCM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Janie Guiliani (E1W), Scott Soucie (VAM), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zack Hampton (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Doug Fellman (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Will Heckman (E2M), Bob Rentschler (VBM), Jamie Pawelek (BM), Dick Synowiec (SVCM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Janie Guiliani (E1W)

### **Super Combined Cantor Cup (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Will Heckman (E2M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Doug Fellman (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Jamie Pawelek (BM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Dennis Parrott (VBM)

Our T-Bird “racers of the week” are **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM), **Doug Fellman** (BM), and **Steve Foradori** (SVCM), each with three 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Just a bit behind is **Will Heckman** (E2M) with two 1<sup>st</sup> place and one 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish. Also with three podium finishes, are **Zach Jablonski** with a 1<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, and **Jamie Pawelek** (BM) with three 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes.

With two podium finishes are **Zack Hampton** (AM) with two 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes, **Bob Rentschler** (VBM) and **Dick Synowiec** (SVCM), each with two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, and **Janie Guiliani** (E1W) and **Dennis Parrott** (VBM), each with two 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird’s had an excellent 71% of our racers (12 of 17) make the podium this weekend, which is a great showing.

### **The World Cup (Entire Season) Awards:**

1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Dick Synowiec (SVCM),  
3<sup>rd</sup> Zack Hampton (AM), Doug Fellman (BM), Bob Rentschler (VBM),

### **Racers of the Year:**

A number of racers had very impressive seasons and are deserving of being considered for the “Racer of the Year”. However, two stood out. **Zach Jablonski** won the very tough E1M class, making the podium in every race that he participated, except one. **Patrick Smithbauer** won the tough SVBM class, making the podium in every race of the season, which is a very tough thing to accomplish. Congratulations to **Zach** and **Patrick** as the “T-Bird Racers of the Year”.

There were other racers with noteworthy seasons. **Zack Hampton** finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in AM after being upgraded from BM after four races (leaving three 1<sup>st</sup>, a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 90 points behind), and had a handicap improvement of 11.79 (the third most improved racer in the entire program). **Mike Altenburg** was the seventh most improved racer with a handicap improvement of 7.25, **Tim Loula** was the tenth most improved racer with a 6.75 handicap improvement, and **Janie Guiliani** was the 12<sup>th</sup> most improved racer with a 5.86 improvement. These handicap changes indicate much faster skiing from all of them, which portends well for the future.

### **The Weekend’s Activities:**

Because Friday was a race day with a lot of T-Birds in attendance, our birthday boy, **Patrick Smithbauer**, chose the Whi-Ski Inn in Boyne Falls for dinner. The 15 T-Birds had a great time there with birthday wishes, good food, spirited conversation, and liquid refreshments.

On Saturday night, 25 T-Birds attended the MACC banquet at the Mountain Grand Lodge at Boyne Mountain. The T-Bird Race Team won eight World Cup season awards. Team members also won a large number of prizes donated by the sponsors of the MACC race program, making it a successful weekend in many ways.

This was also the weekend of the famous on-the-hill barbeque at the Halfway House on Victor on Friday and the Othmar Chalet at Superbowl on Saturday and Sunday. T-Bird racers feasted for all three days on Kowalski kielbasa and hot dogs, premium angus burgers, Better Made chips, Labatt’s Blue and Molson Canadian beer, as well as home-made cookies provided by **Mike Altenburg**. No T-Bird’s went hungry or thirsty this weekend.

### **Sick Bay:**

**Art Ellwanger** pulled a hamstring muscle in mid-season which basically ended his racing for the year. One attempt in the fourth race weekend proved unsuccessful and only time after the season will heal his ailment. Hopefully, he will recover for next season. However, this infirmity did not stop him from limited skiing to watch the other racers and, more importantly, act as our chef for the on-the-hill barbeque. Many thanks to Art for that!

**Doug Fellman** broke a number of ribs and punctured a lung after the first race weekend and missed the next two race weekends. However, when he finally returned to the race course, it was with a vengeance, as he won the last five races of the season, much to the dismay of the other racers in BM. Hopefully, this is a precursor of what we can expect for next season.

### **Mike’s Musings:**

**Zack “Formerly One Run” Hampton** showed what can happen to his results when he puts two runs together for a race. This season, he only had one race that he failed to finish and the results in both of his classes, his upgrade, his World Cup 3<sup>rd</sup> place in his new class, and his fantastic handicap improvement show his progress. Next season should be even better. Keep up the good work Zack!

My (**Mike J.**) season came to a premature end on Friday of the Marks race weekend, as I hooked the last gate of the first run of slalom, spun around sharply and fell, sliding through the finish on my face. With help, I was able to get out of the way just before the next racer finished. As I tried to get up and stand on my left foot, I realized that something was very wrong, as my ankle made (not so) funny noises and was painful to stand on. I finally put my skis back on and skied out of the finish corral, where I stood to evaluate my condition. I decided that my day was over and was able to ski back to the vehicle

(which was fortunately parked ten feet from the bottom of the hill). With help from two of my teammates, I was able to get my boots off and get my shoes on. My brother came over (since he was skiing and not racing) and took me home to change and then to the ER in Petoskey. The x-ray confirmed that I had a slight fracture in a bone in my foot and had probably over stretched some ligaments (which actually hurt more than the broken bone). I received a splint on the left leg and foot and a set of crutches for (semi) mobility. Because crutches did not easily or safely permit travel up the snowy hill to the Othmar, I did not return to Boyne Mountain to even watch the rest of the racing or enjoy the barbeque (double bumper) for the rest of the weekend.

The only time that I got out of my cottage this weekend was to attend the Awards Banquet on Saturday night on crutches (which, since I've never used them before, I was not very good at doing). At the banquet, I confirmed what I thought would happen, as getting zero points for the Friday slalom and missing the Saturday GS took me from 1<sup>st</sup> place in my SVAM class to 4<sup>th</sup> place and out of the awards.



A lot of people, including the ER personnel, the orthopedic doctor that treated me, and the orthopedic boot fitter (a ski racer and coach himself) found my injury hard to believe, as my foot was firmly enclosed in a race tight ski boot. As the event took place, I thought that my already sore and wrapped knee would be the likely injury, but it was not the case. Sometimes strange things happen. I guess that the few injuries that I've experienced in my 52 years of pushing the edge of the envelope while skiing is to be statistically expected.

So, in summary, I missed my Friday lunch to go to the hospital, missed the rest of the weekend racing, food, and activities, missed the following Wednesday night race league, and couldn't ski with my two grandsons the next weekend, all to spend the next six to eight weeks wearing a boot, while using a scooter (on loan from Dennis Parrott) around the house and crutches outside. This was not the season finale that I had planned. Oh well, that's life and ski racing!

See you next season (or at other T-Bird activities).

### **Your Thunderbird Race Team Director:**

#### **Mike Jablonski**

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# ***THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM***

**Newsletter: February 19, 2018**



## **Third Race Weekend: February 9-11:**

The third race weekend of the 2018 MACC season was raced in cool temperatures and very good snow conditions. The base was firm with a light coating of powder on top of it. The entire hill was usable, allowing the slalom courses to be set on the south (Superbowl) side and the GS courses on the north (FIS) side. Friday's Super GS was raced on North Boyne. This weekend also had the NASTAR Midwest Regional Championship at Boyne Mountain, which required some changes to the normal MACC courses and schedule to allow MACC racers to participate in both events. Because of the NASTAR event, we were fortunate to have former US Ski Team member Marco Sullivan as our pacesetter for Friday's Super GS race.

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was successful, with 13 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Super GS (Friday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (BM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Mike Jablonski (SVAM), Chuck Trewin (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mike Jablonski (SVAM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Zack Hampton (AM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Jamie Pawelek (BM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tom Klaban (SVE1M), Dennis Parrott (VBM)

### **Slalom (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Mike Altenburg (VAM), Jamie Pawelek (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM),
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Jablonski (SVAM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM),
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Will Heckman (E2M), Dennis Parrott (VBM), Zack Hampton (BM),

Our T-Bird "racer of the week" is **Steve Foradori** (SVCM) with three 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Not far behind, also with three podium finishes, are **Jamie Pawelek** (BM) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, **Mike Jablonski** (SVAM) with a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finish, and **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM) with three 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes.

The next tier, each with two podium finishes, are **Zach Jablonski** (E1M) with a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, **Zack Hampton** (AM) with a 2<sup>nd</sup> and a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and **Will Heckman** (E2M) and **Dennis Parrott** (VBM), each with two 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

The T-Bird's had 85% of our racers (11 of 13) make the podium this weekend, which is one of our best performances.

## **The NASTAR Midwest Regional Championship Event:**

The T-Birds had 10 racers participate in the NASTAR Midwest Regional Championships, which was held for the first time at Boyne Mountain. NASTAR stands for **N**ational **S**tandard **R**ace and it allows racers from different ski areas around the country to compare their handicap with anyone else and determine their relative speed on a race course. The national pacesetter, usually a US Ski Team member, is the fastest and has the zero handicap. So if you have a 20 handicap, you are 20% slower than the fastest racer in the country on this course. Our pacesetter was former US Ski team member Marco Sullivan, who has a 2 handicap. Classes are divided by age group and sex, with handicaps establishing your medal, with Platinum as fastest, followed by gold, Silver, and Bronze. Of course, we might be a bit slower than Marco on a World Cup Giant Slalom course which is ten times as long and twice as steep as Boyne Mountain and has an icy, water injected surface. But, any way you look at it, it is still exciting and fun!

Six T-Bird racers made the podium in this event. **Janie Guiliani** was 2<sup>nd</sup> with a 23 handicap in the Female 55-59 Platinum class, **Tim Loula** was 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 20 handicap in the Male 60-64 Gold class, **Mike Jablonski** was 1<sup>st</sup> with a 38 handicap in the Male 70-74 Silver class, **Art Ellwanger** was 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 42 handicap in the Male 70-74 Silver class, **Bob Rossi** was 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 46 handicap in the Male 60-64 Bronze class, and **Jamie Pawelek** was 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 53 handicap in the Male 65-69 Bronze class. It was nice to have Marco Sullivan present the awards to us.

## **This Weekend's Activities:**

After a tough day of Super GS racing and the awards in the Civic Center on Friday, 11 T-Bird racers headed to the Side Door Saloon in Petoskey for a variety of dishes and liquid refreshments. It was a noisy, but fun outing. After the NASTAR award presentation (with a meal sized appetizer buffet) in the Civic Center followed by the MACC awards in the Snowflake lounge on Saturday, the racers headed in a number of different directions. The Race Team is **FAST** and social.

## **Sick Bay:**

**Dick Synowiec** has become a GS only racer this season because of the last run down the hill on the last day of the NASTAR National championship at Steamboat in March of 2017. He hit a pile of very heavy snow in the middle of a narrow run, spun around and fell heavily on his shoulder. In the ten months since that incident, it still hasn't healed and really limits his range of motion and ability to ski as he normally does. Months of therapy has not solved the problem. So, he still skis, but his racing has been limited. Hopefully, in the future he can heal fully.

**Chuck Trewin** somehow managed to tweak his knee on Friday after completing the Super GS and didn't race in Saturday or Sunday's races. Hopefully, this will heal itself before the next race weekend.

**Art Ellwanger** managed to pull a hamstring muscle during the last race weekend, which he hoped would heal before this race weekend. He managed to play through the pain and race the Super GS and the NASTAR Midwest Regionals, but that was it for the rest of the weekend, as the pain became too much. We're hoping that the pull is not a tear and that he will be able to ski and race for the rest of the season.

Some of **Ted Jablonski's** many issues that kept him off of the race course last season have improved. However, last year's inactivity has left him out of skiing shape, much less racing shape. The rotator cuff has healed, but greatly diminished lower body and leg strength has greatly limited his skiing. He plans a summer of diligent exercise to return to his normal level of activity, including skiing (and racing).

## **Mike's Musings:**

The Super GS and the NASTAR championship brought our favorite racer wannabe fully out of the closet. **Bob Blair** raced the Super GS as a guest racer and posted times in the upper range of the C Men class and also raced the NASTAR championship to a solid Bronze / almost Silver handicap. Maybe, at some point he will actually race in the MACC program. We'll see!

**Scott Soucie** has missed a number of races this season, as his two sons, **Jason** and **Keith**, have been actively skiing and racing. We have watched their skiing skills improve dramatically over the years, to the point where they were able to compete in the NASTAR championship, with Jason earning a Silver medal and Keith earning a Gold medal. The boys also raced with Scott in the team race on Sunday. It has been enjoyable seeing their skills develop over the years, including competently skiing on Superbowl at Boyne Mountain. It looks like we have the next generation of MACC racers coming up in the not too distant future.

As always, **Mike Altenburg** made sure that the homemade cookies (or Speed Sweets) to propel the racers to improved speed, made it to the hill. Thanks Mike!

As I have said before, "skiing is fun", but racing with the T-Birds is "more fun". All T-Bird skiers, regardless of your ability level, should give racing a try. It is not only a good time (on and off the slopes) but will make you a much better skier. If you would like to find out more, or try it as a guest racer, please call or e-mail me. You will not be disappointed.

See you soon.

## **Your Thunderbird Race Team Director:**

### **Mike Jablonski**

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# THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM

Newsletter: January 29, 2018



## Second Race Weekend: January 20-21:

The second race weekend of the 2018 MACC season brought decent temperatures that provided fairly firm but not icy race conditions. However, the racing required a functioning chairlift to return racers to the top of the hill for their second run. The Superbowl chairlift was not operating consistently and the last Saturday course was limited to the women (who race first) getting both runs in, while the men only had a one run race. Fortunately, the chairlift was fixed for Sunday, and all the racers got their two runs completed. As Rosanna Rosannadana once said: "it's always something".

For the T-Bird Race Team, this weekend was successful, with 18 T-Bird Racers going through the courses on Saturday and Sunday. The T-Bird's that made the podium (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup>) are as follows:

### **Slalom (Saturday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Zack Hampton (BM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Scott Soucie (AM), Bob Rentschler (VBM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Janie Guilian (E1W), Mike Altenburg (VAM), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Chuck Trewin (VBM)

### **Giant Slalom (Sunday):**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Zach Jablonski (E1M), Zack Hampton (BM), Steve Foradori (SVCM)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Tom Klaban (SVE1M), Patrick Smithbauer (SVBM), Bob Rentschler (VBM), Dick Synowiec (SVCM)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Scott Soucie (AM), Jamie Pawelek (BM)

Our T-Bird "racers of the week" are **Zach Jablonski** (E1M) and **Zack Hampton** (BM), each with two 1<sup>st</sup> place finishes. Not too far behind are **Bob Rentschler** (VBM) with two 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes, and **Scott Soucie** (AM) and **Patrick Smithbauer** (SVBM), each with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishes.

In addition, **Zack Hampton**, has been recognized for his **FAST** skiing and has been upgraded to the AM class. Congratulations to Zack, and good luck in your new faster class.

The T-Bird's had 67% of our racers (12 of 18) make the podium this weekend, which is quite good. Hopefully, we can maintain or pick up the pace in race weekend #3.

## This Weekend's Activity:

This weekend, following the award presentation in the Snowflake lounge, we had 20 T-Bird racers and friends enjoying a pizza and chicken dinner at the **Bob Rossi** 12-sided cottage on the hill in Boyne Falls, with a fantastic view of Boyne Mountain lit up at night. The food, drinks, and the Better Made chips, along with the stimulating conversation, made for another great evening of T-Bird Race Team fun.

## Sick Bay

While recently race training in Colorado, **Doug Fellman** took an uncharacteristic fall and hurt his chest. He continued to ski with the pain, and when he finally went to the hospital after returning home, found that he had broken some ribs and punctured a lung. This caused him to spend a few days in the hospital and forced him to miss this race weekend at Boyne and to also miss his planned participation in the Masters Nationals at Okemo, Vermont. We're all wishing **Doug** a speedy recovery and return to the ski slopes and race course.

**Ted Jablonski** is still not racing this year. He is skiing, but the layoff last season and this past summer's limited activity while his damaged rotator cuff and hip were healing had a serious adverse effect on his skiing ability. He needs to work at strengthening his legs before he will be able to rejoin us on the race course. We wish **Ted** a speedy recovery too.

**Dick Synowiec** has become a GS specialist out of necessity. While skiing in late March of last year at the NASTAR Nationals at Steamboat, Colorado, he was almost down to the bottom of the hill on the last run of our trip when he hit a pile of heavy snow in the middle of the trail which spun him around, causing him to fall hard on his shoulder. Unfortunately, it is ten months later and the shoulder is still not healed, in spite of many doctor visits and therapy. The good news (such that it is) is that he is back on the slopes and racing in the GS. We also wish **Dick** a speedy recovery.

### **Mike's Musings:**

The weekend between the first and second race weekends was the first time this season that all three of our kids, their three spouses, and all five grandkids were up north at the cottage. On Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup> we had four of our grandkids on the ski slopes at Nubs Nob, two for the first time. The oldest, 5 ½ year old Jack, had a private lesson which really improved his skiing. When he was done with the lesson, he came shooting down the slope at a relatively fast speed and was heading for the chairlift. I was afraid that he was going to hit something, but he made a smooth stop and slid nicely into the lift line, where I joined him. I was impressed with his progress.

While Jack was taking his lesson, I was working with his brother, 3 ½ year old Luke, skiing with him on a tether. He was making nice turns with grandpa controlling his speed. Of course, he wants to do what big brother is doing. He saw his brother skiing on the north side of the chairlift in the mini terrain park and he wanted to try it. I told him that he had to go slow and the first thing he did was try to ride a rail. He actually did ride the rail for about 5 feet before dropping one ski on each side of the rail, fortunately not hurting himself. We stayed away from that for the rest of the day.

It was the first day on skis for the 2 ½ year old twins, Evan and Violet. They moved well on my living room rug with their skis and boots on, but were not quite as mobile on the slippery snow. They did not initially get the feel for the snow while sliding around and falling near the bottom of the hill. I decided that the best option at that point was to take them up the chairlift and to take them down between our legs so that they learned what skiing felt like, even though we were doing the moves for them. After a while, they were mostly supporting themselves and began to enjoy the trips up the chairlift and down the hill. The twins didn't want to stop, but my daughter and son-in-law were worn out. It was a good start for their budding ski career.

The last of my grandkids, 2 year old Emma, had not arrived until later on Friday, so her first day on skis was on Sunday at Boyne Mountain. She rode the magic carpet and skied down between her daddy's legs for a number of runs. She seemed to enjoy her time on the ski hill too. All in all, it was a great start to the grandkid's ski season and careers. We plan to have everyone on skis at least one more time this ski season. It was a lot of fun for everyone.

As I have said before, "skiing is fun", but racing with the T-Birds is "more fun". All T-Bird skiers, regardless of your ability level, should give racing a try. It is not only a good time (on and off of the slopes), but will make you a much better skier. If you would like to find out more, or try it as a guest racer, please call or e-mail me. You will not be disappointed.

See you soon.

### **Your Thunderbird Race Team Director:**

#### **Mike Jablonski**

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## T-Bird Race Team News – December 28, 2017

### **The Ski Season Has Started . . .**

Every year, the ski season begins for me with the off-the-slopes activities in northern Michigan. I attend the Skitoberfest at Boyne Mountain and the Open House at Nubs Nob where I pick up my season passes. This is also the start of the ski swap season, where I look for bargains in newer or better equipment for myself or to add to Mike's Ski Shop, where my grandkids, kids, and friends come to get equipped for their trips to the ski hills. I'm now up to 58 pairs of skis, 56 pairs of boots, 30 ski helmets, and over 30 pairs of ski poles. My wife thinks that I'm crazy (and she's probably somewhat right) because I like to get people skiing and hope that they will enjoy the sport as I have for the past 52 ski seasons. I've gotten lots of people skiing over the years by providing them with free skiing (at the bunny hills at both Boynes and Nubs), free use of my stash of equipment (all excellent quality and sized to fit), and free instruction to make their day enjoyable. It is a labor of love that has brought a lot of people into the sport (with a decent number moving up to the Race Team).

This year, the real skiing began in mid-November in northern Michigan with a brief cold spell that allowed the Boynes and Nubs to open for a few days before the weather warmed and they closed. Early December saw the cold weather and lake effect snowfall return, allowing the northern ski areas to again open. The generally cold temperatures since has allowed the ski areas all over Michigan (including the Detroit area) to re-open for what should continue for the rest of the season. As I write this, it is just above zero, which is even a bit much for a ski enthusiast (or as some think, a ski nut) like me. I have been back and forth to my northern Michigan cottage twice in the past six weeks, and have done a great job of timing my visits to miss all of the limited skiing opportunities. However, I did finally hit the slopes at Mt. Brighton a couple of weeks ago. Now that skiing is available all over Michigan (Petoskey received 21 inches of snow in two days over Christmas), there is no excuse for not hitting the slopes, to start reminding the body which muscles need to be retrained for the up-north (like Boyne Bash) or western trips and especially for *FAST* trips down the race course.

### **. . . And the Race Season is About to Begin**

As I write this, it is less than ten days until the start of the race season. The first race weekend of the MACC program is coming up on January 6-7<sup>th</sup> at Boyne Mountain. I should have three days on the slopes before then and the key muscles should have no excuse for poor performance when racing starts. What I would like to see are some of the T-Birds who have talked about racing in the past (and who are very capable skiers), but have not yet found their way to the race course, finally do so. Hopefully, this will be the year.

As I've said many times, you don't have to ski (and race) at the Bode Miller or Lindsey Vonn level to race with the T-Bird Race Team in the MACC race program. The program has classes for ALL ability levels of racers, awards for the top three racers in every class for every race, and a genuine good time on (and off of) the hill, while improving your skiing performance. Winter time does not get any better than that. So, give me a call (734-283-5510) or an e-mail ([mtjablonski@wowway.com](mailto:mtjablonski@wowway.com)) for more information and I'll help you get into the best winter time activity that you can imagine. You won't regret giving it a try!

Mike Jablonski

Director – T-Bird Race Team



# THUNDERBIRD RACE TEAM NEWS

November 29, 2017

## THE SKI AND SKI RACE SEASON IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING

Most of you are probably not thinking about skiing, much less ski racing, with the warm temperatures that we have been having in November. However, Boyne Mountain and Boyne Highlands opened for the season on November 11<sup>th</sup> and have been open on weekends since. Only a few of the slopes were open, but it is still a good warm up for the season. Unfortunately, I had to head south from my cottage just before the areas opened and haven't been back since. I will be back north in early December, but the temperature projections aren't looking good. Oh well, that is Michigan.

On course, not skiing doesn't mean that you should be doing nothing. This is a great time to have your skis tuned (ski bases waxed and edges sharpened) so that you will be ready when winter comes for real and the ski areas open completely for the season. It is also a good time to do a few exercises so that the first day on skis is not a shock to your body.

The race season will be starting in early January. This season, all races will be held at Boyne Mountain. The race weekends are January 6-7 and 20-21, February 9-11 and 24-25, and March 2-4. Participation in the MACC (Michigan Alpine Competition Council) race program with the T-Bird Race Team does not require you to be a World Cup level skier like Lindsey Vonn or Bode Miller to compete. The classes are divided by ability level so that everyone, including YOU can compete, so there is no excuse not to participate. And, you don't have to make every race weekend or every race. There are awards for each individual race, so you always have a chance of winning an award. You will be pleasantly surprised how much fun it is and how well you can do. So, consider joining us this season.

If you have any questions or need more information on the Race Team or ski racing, give me a call (734-283-5510) or send me an e-mail ([mtjablonski@wowway.com](mailto:mtjablonski@wowway.com)). We hope to see you on the slopes and the race course this season.

Mike Jablonski, Race Team Director