

NENSA U16 Championships 2017

Farmington Maine

The 2017 NENSA (New England Nordic Ski Association) U16 Championships were held March 10th, 11th & 12th in Farmington Maine at Titcomb Mountain. As for the past few years the Midwest Region has selected four male and female athletes from the JNQ U16 division to travel to the event, compete & represent the Midwest. This year three of those athletes came from Wisconsin (Madison, Wausau & Eau Claire) and five from Minnesota (Winona, Mora, Forest Lake, Bloomington & Minneapolis) The Athletes were accompanied by four Midwest Coaches (two from Wisconsin & two from Minnesota)

Titcomb Mountain played Host for the 2017 event, with a fantastic trail system that incorporated part of old alpine hill, this technical & challenging course was fun and exciting. The course leaving from the base of the alpine area in the stadium consisted of a approx 3km climb up to the top of the mountain some 70+meters up. Then turning back down with a number of descents with 180° turns descending the 70+ meters in under 2km. Titcomb's chief of course Tony Ramsey, along with TD Fred Griffin & NENSA Rep Amber Freeman created a fun & challenging event for the athletes.

The event opened on Friday with the 5km Freestyle event. Athletes went off in waves of 6 to take on the course. This day found 2 of the Midwest Ladies on the Podium, Alice House - Madison WI & Lauren Lackman - Wausau. Also in the top 10 was Anni Skillicorn of Winona & 11th was Ellie Munger of Minneapolis. The total Ladies field was comprised of 95 athletes from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont & Massachusetts. The Guys landed a 3rd place finish from Bloomington's Matthew Clarke, 4th from Mora's Cooper Lennox, 15th from Forest Lakes Nick Parent & 35th from Eau Claire Garrett Walters out of the 103 person field from the four states plus New York.

Day two saw temps at 0° F with 20+ mph winds. The organizers opted to delay racing until the afternoon for the Classic 5km. With the delay of the Classic race the 1.4km Freestyle sprints were cancelled for the day. Results from the Classic found the ladies finishing 5th, 8th, 17th & 29th. With those results and the weather making for tough racing all four ladies placed in the overall top 10 for the event. Lauren Lackman taking 4th, Anni Skillicorn 7th, Alice House 9th & Ellie Munger 10th! The Guys wrapped up the classic day with 7th, 24th, 32nd & 35th. In the overall with Nick Parent in 8th, Matthew Clarke in 11th, Cooper Lennox in 20th & Garrett Walters in 35th.

The most excitement of the weekends racing came down to Sunday with the Mixed Team Relay. The 4x3km event started with a lead-off lady in classic, followed by one of the guys in classic. Then to a lady for freestyle & the final leg with one of the guys in freestyle. With 52 Teams competing the Midwest being Coached by Wisconsin's Kristin Hanson came in with two evenly matched strong teams. At the gun the Midwest teams being lead by Ellie Munger and Alice House were at the front of the pack only being led out by only one of the New York teams (comprized fully of guys and only by a meter). With Ellie exchanging Team 1 to Matthew, on to Lauen & the anchor leg with Garrett. Team #2 from Alice, off to Nick, Anni & Cooper. As the tags continued the two Midwest Teams remained in the top 5 each lap. With the Last leg Cooper put on a push and secured a 2nd place finish. Garrett standing up on the downhills behind the teams in 3rd & 4th came into the final 100 meters and sling shotted around into 3rd place, seconds later his left pole snapped. While still in 3rd he fought to the line with one pole, the last big push threw him off balance and down to the ground. With a quick recovery prior to 6th, 7th & 8th coming in he kept team two in 5th.

All 8 athletes had an amazing time at the event and are looking forward to another summer of hard training and taking it to a new level for the next season. Thanks to the athletes & the Coaching staff. Led by Kristin Hanson from Rice Lake, assistant coaches Cory Mecl from Minneapolis, Jeremy Rapp from Alexandria & Bjorn Hanson from Rice Lake.

Photo set: <https://xcskiing.smugmug.com/CXCJuniorDevelopmentProgram/2017-U16-NENSA-Trip/>



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