

Plain Valley Ski Trails / Nordic Team

History of Plain Valley Nordic Team

By Rob Whitten

I've been sliding around on snow in one form or another since my Father taught me to downhill ski when I was 12. I've been hooked on it ever since and like my Father did for me, I love to share my passion for skiing with others.

My kids Jake and Katie were lucky enough to grow up in Plain and had the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club ski team programs available to them for both Alpine and Nordic skiing. They were hooked, and this began my deep dive into Nordic skiing and racing. After the kids were off to college I had time to scheme about ski trails in Plain. We started the Plain Valley Ski Trails in the Fall of 2011 with just a single tract of land that a friend was kind enough to allow me to use for this crazy idea.

By 2014 I was ready to start the Plain Valley Nordic Team for the youth in our community. I convinced a handful of kids to join the team, and at the end of that winter season the PVNT attended its first race at Mt. Spokane. The results were not great - we owned last place in every race we entered! But we had fun and we knew we had a lot of work to do. And sliding on snow was certainly a lot of fun! From there we set lofty goals, and developed plans as to how we would achieve them.

In the nine years since, the team has grown from 10 skiers to 120. Every goal I set in those early years was met. Not just met, but crushed. The team has had tremendous success.

Success for us meant that we shared and instilled in our young skiers our love of the outdoors and in teaching them that a skier's success didn't mean that they finished ahead of a teammate, but that it meant doing the very best they could when they stepped up and faced the challenge of racing.

Slightly hidden in all of this is the fact that we are teaching important life skills to our community's youth through competitive sport and growing amazing young adults with a wide range of experiences both within and outside of our community. This is really what we are all about.

There are other more finite measurements as well. Today, we have four skiers that are Nationally ranked in the top 10 in their age division. We routinely place skiers on the podium wherever we race, and we have become a leading team within our Pacific Northwest Division (the PNSA). These were not our goals, but these results have manifested as a result of how we have defined success - instilling a love of the outdoors and a focus on doing the best you can do.

