

Hello PVNT community,

Over the recent years, we moved to a biannual Newsletter. Previously, we were doing skier's profiles. We missed doing those so we decided to revamp it. They will now appear in a monthly highlight, separate from the Newsletters.

This month, we highlight a former skier of the Wenatchee Valley:
Derek (Buster) Richardson



Buster is a fresh PVNT & LWSC alumni. He now skis for APU in Anchorage, one of the best teams in the country. This winter, he won his first Junior National title. Moreover, he had some impressive results at the senior level that allowed him to secure his spot on the national team.

From a team's environment perspective, we were very lucky to have him. Buster was a positive and encouraging leader to his teammates.

From a performance standpoint, he allowed us to set new standards. Cross country skiing is a hard sport to evaluate. There is not much hard data for evaluation compared to cycling or running. He made the team understand that what we thought to be good, wasn't. He redefined the benchmarks of what we should aim towards. Especially, considering the validity of his progression, our future skiers know they have a shot at making it to the next level.

Interestingly, our current skiers, some of them at a younger age, are already matching or improving those benchmarks.

From a program director perspective, I enjoy the idea that our platform, Plain, Leavenworth, and the Wenatchee Valley at large can provide for that kind of pathway. It provides some level of validation to what we offer. We also know that a young kid can benefit from several programs and find his way past us. I am looking forward to Buster's next venture and cannot wait to see where it leads him. I am looking forward to other kids breaking what we think we know and inspire us, one way or another.

~ Pierre

June 2023 - Skier Profile Interview featuring
Pierre, PVNT Program Director & Head Coach and Derek (Buster) Richardson

At what point did you think you had a chance to make it to the next level, and skiing was something that could open new doors for you?

I don't think there was a specific time when I realized I could ski at the next level. I always had this belief that I could take sport to the next level. I didn't know whether it would be soccer or skiing. Before high school, my main passion was soccer, and skiing was something I just did in the winter. However, at the beginning of high school, I decided to pursue skiing, and from that point on, I believed I could ski at the highest level.

What decisions did you make once you came to that realization?

Once I had decided to take skiing more seriously, I started actually training for it. At the beginning, the training was by myself and not very structured. It has only been in the last year that I've changed my life to revolve around training, and I think that change in lifestyle can account for a lot of my recent development.

Do you think that the Wenatchee Valley is a good platform for young skier development? What are the strengths and weaknesses you see?

I think that most places can be a good platform for skier development. I believe anyone can find ways to maximize the benefits of where they are training. I do think that the Plain team has a good team environment where people show up to train hard but have fun along the way. There can be discussions about the benefits of certain facilities like roller ski treadmills or roller ski tracks, but I believe those things have a small impact on overall development, and the team environment is probably the most influential aspect of development.

What was most instrumental in your development?

I think one thing I have done well throughout my development has been continuing to train and trusting that what I am doing is correct. Believing and trusting in yourself is something that a lot of athletes in general struggle with. This means being okay with being last in intervals or not racing how you want or whatever. One thing that I like to think about is that every time I train and race, no matter how it goes, I am one step closer to reaching my goals.

What advice would you have for the youth moving forward and potentially following in your footsteps?

I would say to be tenacious. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to want to be good at something. Embrace the hard work and use it to motivate yourself to get better. And most importantly, have fun along the way! We are pretty fortunate to have this lifestyle. I am excited to see how all of you do! It won't be long until you guys are passing me!