

## Mono Nordic Ski Club hosts annual cross-country race

**By Brian Lockhart**

The Mono Nordic Ski Club hosted its annual cross-country race along the trails at Monora Park in Mono on Saturday, January 24.

This popular event brings competitors from across the province who earn points for Nordic and cross-country skiing competitions in the Southern Ontario Paraffin Race Series. This includes racers from various clubs, universities, and high schools.

The snowy weather this year provided excellent conditions with plenty of snow and well-groomed trails along the challenging course.

Founded in 1985, the Mono Nordic Ski Club is celebrating 40 years as an organization and has hosted ski races every year since it began.

Nordic and cross-country skiing are popular sports across the province, and the Mono Nordic Ski Club has an enthusiastic membership that enjoys getting out on the trails during the winter months.

“We have 20 different teams here from Nordic clubs, high schools including ODSS and Mayfield, and university teams from Guelph, McMaster, and Waterloo, as well as lots of ski clubs from all over southern Ontario who come and race,” explained event co-organizer René Beukeboom. “Our youngest competitors are U8, and we go up to the Masters division.”

Competitors compete in age groups, with the distance increasing as age increases.

The youngest competitors race a 1.5 km course. At the U18, U20, and masters divisions, racers compete on a 6 km course.

“We have over 170 racers today,” Beukeboom explained. “There is an interval start, so as a division, each racer starts 15 seconds apart. This year we did the order backwards and started with the older kids first, with the hope that the day warms up in the afternoon for the younger kids.”

With the interval start, racers must rely on their own instincts to judge their pace on the course.

The temperature for the day was -15°C, as the race happened to take place in the current cold snap.

The course becomes quite challenging at the longer distances, as the trails have many hills and push racers to their limits to keep a good pace.

A lot of spectators turned out for the day to cheer on the racers and provided a lot of encouragement as the competitors sprinted down the final 100 yards to the finish.

Organizers would like to thank the local businesses that donated door prizes: Barley Vine Rail Co., BMP Group, Booklore, Dave's Butcher Shop, Global Pet Foods, Moguls in Mocean, and Orangeville Nissan.