

CanoeKayak BC High School Team is Victorious!



For the past 4 years members of CanoeKayak BC have entered as a High School team in Bellingham's Ski to Sea Race. This grueling event is held annually on the Sunday of the Memorial Day Long Weekend and features a seven leg relay. The morning begins at the top of Mount Baker with a cross country skier who after starting with 500 other teams, sprints to hand off to a down hill skier (**Morgan Gamache** - Pemberton). This team member must climb the mountain and then ski back down and hand off to a runner (**Doug Abbot** - Deep Cove). After a 10 mile (we are in America!) run, the baton is passed to a cyclist (**Sydney VanLoon** - Pemberton) who travels 36 miles to Everton. Here a two member canoe team (**Chris Abbott** - Ridge and **Liam Fisher** - Pemberton) begin an 18 mile paddle down the Nooksack River to hand off to a mountain biker (**Tory Saarinen** - Pemberton) who rides the dykes and back roads of Bellingham and passes to a kayaker (**Ken Muir** - Ridge) who paddles across Bellingham Bay to ring the bell in Fairhaven Park.

This year seven of the eight member 'Crazy Canucks' High School Division team were members of CanoeKayak BC clubs.

Team captain Sydney VanLoon has participated with the team since it's inception. 'This is a great way to finish off in my grad year and the fact that our team was the only High School one on the podium with 2 girls makes the victory even sweeter'.

Chris Abbott participated for his 3rd year and after two second place finishes was happy with the first place finish of the team. Abbott teamed with Liam Fisher from Pemberton to finish the canoe leg in 28th place overall and 1st in the High School Division.

Kenneth Muir participated for his first time and finished the kayak leg in first place in the High School Division. 'It was a great team event', says Muir but with only Muir and Fisher eligible for the event next year there will be a lot of recruiting to do in the off season.

Team alumni, Wes Hammer who began the tradition 4 years ago was on hand to cheer the team to victory and although he wished he had been a part of the team was glad to see them win.

CanoeKayak members pride themselves on their level of general fitness and this event is a great way to show the flexibility and adaptability of their training and to participate in an event with members from other clubs.

Other CanoeKayak BC athletes were seen on the podium in the Open (**Ian McKenzie** - Ocean River, **Graham Smith** - False Creek), Masters (**Hugh Fisher** - Pemberton) and Women's (**Sara Hopkins** - Fort Langley) events and many other members participated.