

Dave Rees Award

Saturday June 15, 2019

Nordiq Canada Awards Banquet

Saint-Sauveur, Quebec

I am so happy to announce that the winner of the Dave Rees award this year — which is presented to a man or woman to recognize outstanding achievement and commitment in the national development of cross-country skiing — is my former coach and boss and mentor and friend, Brent Bottomley of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Sadly, Brent passed away quite suddenly in September of last year while competing in another sport he loved to do - mountain biking.

Brent's wife Kym and daughter Michayle are here with us tonight and I am honoured to spend a few moments here to tell you that Brent was an absolute CORNERSTONE of the cross country ski community in Manitoba. He was THAT person who left us with a profound and lasting legacy in our community and his contributions to our sport reached well beyond the Divisional level.

Brent's history in Cross Country Skiing lasts over 3 decades and I don't even know half of it but let me give you some highlights...

- Active ski coach for 38 years.
- Level 4 CANSI Instructor & Evaluator. Former Vice Pres CANSI. Contributed to the first edition of the CANSI Instructors Manual, literally "wrote the first book" on teaching skate ski technique.
- Former Executive Committee member, Cross Country Canada Board of Directors.
- Chairman of the Manitoba Board of Directors for a total 17 years.
- Founder of Red River Nordic Club in Winnipeg.
- Designed and help build the Grand Beach Provincial Park ski trails in Manitoba.
- Champion of the Windsor Park Nordic Centre (which is our public ski facility and training centre in Winnipeg).
- Coached at a World Championships plus 4 World Cup tours in Europe, Russia & the US.
- Provincial Biathlon Coach, coaching 2 athletes who went on to compete in the Olympic Games - Jim Carrabre & Paget Stewart
- Race Chair of 5 Canada Cups
- Developed first ever Sprint race series in Canada – North American Sprint Championships - I have an old newspaper clipping in the Association office with a photo of a race taking place in front of the Manitoba Legislative building.

But I think Brent may have been most proud of his creation of the Prairie Storm Ski Team. In the mid 90s he formed an all women's ski team in Winnipeg, the first of its kind.

He loved coaching Prairie Storm.

Brent recruited me to Prairie Storm in 1999 even though I had no idea how to ski. He was an AMAZING coach. And an absolutely BEAUTIFUL skier. Technically perfect. It was INSPIRING to watch him.

He had great sense of humour and was well known for his "BRENTISMS". Things only Brent could say with meaning. There were many but the one I heard the most was "There's no place

I'd rather be!". Which usually meant you were in a place that you really would rather not be at all.

Like on a pair of skate skis at the local downhill winter park, in the dark, at minus 30 with the blowing snow almost completely blacking out the lights of the ski hill, but you're there because it's hill training night and there's Brent over your right shoulder yelling "there's no place I'd rather be, Karin!".

One characteristic of a GREAT Coach is the innate ability to INSPIRE, right? Well, Brent had that.

I know that Brent and Dave Rees knew each other, perhaps very well. I don't know their shared history. But they were definitely active members of the ski community at the same time. And I do recall Brent speaking very highly of Dave Rees, it was clear to me that he had a lot of respect for the man. So I know that it would have meant a lot to Brent to receive this particular award tonight. He would feel very honoured.

So, I am grateful to the Awards Committee for selecting Brent Bottomley to receive the Dave Rees award this year and I invite Kim Bottomley up to accept it now. Thank you.