

Freestyle Aficionado

Local freestyle skiing aficionado Trent Kappler doesn't keep track of the amount of time he volunteers towards the Revelstoke Freestyle Ski Club every season as a coach and an organizer; he just does it for fun. Parents estimate it to be about 200 hours for this winter alone. "This winter I've been a bit slack I think," Kappler confessed quite seriously. Kappler's passion may be matched only by his humbleness.

Freestyle, a sport that the Canadian Team excelled at during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, incorporates a steep mogul field and two jumps. The goal is to have the fastest time, the cleanest run, and the most impressive aerials.

"[It's a] competitive mogul and big air team," Kappler said about the Revelstoke club, which has its own course at Revelstoke Mountain Resort (RMR) on Cannonball run above the Day Lodge.

On the weekends, during his "days off" from his welding job, Kappler is busy coaching up to ten youth, travelling out of town to competitions, hand-building the freestyle course, and helping organize the Rail Jam, which he also welded all the rails for. It doesn't end there: this summer he will work to complete a water ramp which will allow skiers to practise aerials and inverted stunts over Lake Revelstoke and get certified so they are permitted to do them on snow next season.

One thing is obvious: Kappler loves skiing. Although he grew up in the flatlands of Medicine Hat, Alberta, it didn't take him long to discover skiing and the mountains. His Revelstoke story is simple. "I only had to live here for two weeks and it was home- I knew it."

Kappler raised his two children in Revelstoke and started them skiing at an early age. Although he didn't have a background in freestyle, he had always enjoyed "watching the moguls," and he started coaching freestyle skiing 11 years ago for his eldest son, Dean, and nine other youth. Several coaching courses later Kappler is an accomplished level-three freestyle coach. He was largely mentored by Rob Kober, coach of the Canadian National Freestyle Team.

Currently, the Revelstoke Freestyle Ski Club consists of seven skiers ranging in age from seven to 18. Kappler's son Rylan, the team veteran, is developing some coaching abilities of his own. "He's doing an amazing job," said Kappler about his son's help with the club.

Kappler is also quick to acknowledge the financial and in-kind support the club has received from various community groups and businesses including RMR, Revelstoke Equipment Rentals, Columbia Basin Trust, Speers Construction, the City of Revelstoke, and parent volunteers.

Kappler's personal pay-off comes from seeing the first-hand progress of his skiers. "It's so gratifying to see a youth come up, to teach them how to ski; see them improve from bottom of the results list to the podium." His pride in the skiers is obvious. You don't see anyone else skiing like that. Mogul skiers just build the best all-round skier." Kappler laughs: "It's a biased opinion but..."

Kappler himself has never considered coaching to be a "job." "I think it would ruin it," he said about the idea of getting paid to coach the club. "It's like any other hobby that you do for fun." One thing is for certain: the Revelstoke Freestyle Ski Club would not exist without the passion and dedication of Trent Kappler. Although he plans to stay involved with freestyle on some level indefinitely, he is hopeful that someone else will carry the torch when he eventually steps down.

