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## SPORTS

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## ■ NORDIC SKIING

## Ukos sisters lead Oxford brigade to OFSAA

CORY SMITH  
Sentinel-Review

WOODSTOCK — Marissa Ukos surprised everyone, including her coach.

Paul McEvoy didn't expect his Grade 11 senior girls' Nordic skier to finish 37 seconds ahead of her next opponent to win gold at the WOSSAA championships.

"I was sort of expecting top five," McEvoy said. "It was, 'Is she going to medal or just miss out on a medal?' When she finished it was amazing, especially when we haven't had that much snow to practice on."

Ukos was one of 13 skiers to qualify for provincials next week in Huntsville. Ukos, in her first year as a senior, dominated the course at Highlands Nordic near Collingwood. A powder shortage moved the race from Thamesford.

"She really pushed herself really hard," McEvoy said. "I went around the course with her once before the race, and she doesn't get tired. She's got good form. If we had more snow she'd be even better."

Ukos' younger sister, Emily, qualified for OFSAA after placing 11th in the junior girls' division. The siblings' similarities are unmistakable, McEvoy said.

"She (Emily) is going to do her best when she sets her mind to it," he said. "It's good for building our team, too. The teams that do well get more people interested in them and we'll have a bigger and better team the next year."

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The Ingersoll Blue Bombers captured silver in the senior girls' team event and relay. Emily Kruger was the top Bomber, finishing eighth. Teammates Hannah Kruger (13th), Melinda Lee Leblanc (12th), Michelle Harrison (18th), Becca Shaw (22nd), Heather Griffith (28th) and Natalie VanOostveen (32nd) also qualified for provincials.

Huron Park's senior girls finished fifth in the team standings, led by Laura Alexander (21st).

Nicole Williamson (23rd), Jesse MacAlpine (25th), Natalie Geerlinks (27th), Heather Griffith (28th) and Charlie Bates (37th).

Tori Dean-Grootjen of WCI placed 38th.

Joining Ukos from the junior girls' division are Ingersoll skiers Sarah Bittorf (13th) and Laura Hopson (14th).

Laura Swatridge of IDCI was 25th, WCI's Gillian Hill placed 26th, and Huron Park's Sarah Gautier was 32nd and Robin Bamber 34th.

In the junior boys' division, Ingersoll's Austin Webber was 27th, Max Chevrier 39th and Will Irvine 40th. Nick Gerten 30th, Darren Holden 31st and Jacob Farrow 43rd competed for Huron Park. Andrew Gosnell of WCI was 37th.

Westan Blacklock of IDCI finished 17th and was the top Oxford skier in the senior boys' division. Huron Park's Will Chesney finished 18th to earn a return trip to OFSAA.

"He's just powerful. He's a tank when he moves," McEvoy said. "He's built and has got these arms and legs that just pump. He's good at climbing."

Michael MacKenzie of WCI 28th, while Huron Park's Mike Thompson placed 32nd.

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MARK DEWAN photo

Huron Park's Marissa Ukos skis to a first-place finish in the senior girls' division at the WOSSAA Nordic skiing championships Tuesday near Collingwood. Thirteen Oxford skiers qualified for OFSAA next week in Huntsville.