

# Skiing Team Championships: Four clean runs lead Don Bosco boys, Tenafly girls to team state titles

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In a season that can be best described as inconsistent, the main difference to winning a team state title wound up being consistency.

Coming in first place in one specific event wasn't going to end up being a major difference maker by the time the final results were tabulated. Every team knew coming in that it was going to need four consistent runs in order to be in contention for a state title.

In the end, the Don Bosco boys and Tenafly girls were able to put together the best collection of its four runs to secure the boys and girls team state titles, respectively, at the New Jersey Interscholastic Ski Racing Association's State Team Championship at Mountain Creek, in Vernon.

Don Bosco's boys' group came in as the overall number two seed and capped off a strong race by sweeping the slalom and giant slalom events.

On the girls' end, Tenafly also completed a sweep of the slalom and giant slalom events through top 10 placements from Megan Yi (1:17.45, third), Samantha Cho (1:19.24, fifth), and Kristen Yi (1:20.38, seventh). Sydney Josif (1:25.88, 15th) rounded out the Tigers all-around performance.

After getting on to the podium but coming up short with a third-place finish in 2022, Don Bosco added a few key pieces and learned from its past mistakes to come out on top. Senior captain Connor Magee headlined the Ironmen's performance with a fourth-place finish, with his total time being 1:18.45. Right behind Magee was freshman John Devir in a tie for fifth place with a total time of 1:18.48.

To round out the Ironmen, senior Spencer Donohue finished 10th with a 1:23.64, and Straus Daniel finished with a time of 1:25.89 which was good for 13th.

Magee remembered last season thinking that Don Bosco had won the overall title before finding out during the awards ceremony they hadn't, and the feeling of disappointment immediately afterwards.

"Last year was kind of a rough year," Magee said. "We thought that we had it in the bag. When I was standing in the crowd when they were calling the awards and another team got called for second place, I remember feeling so good and that we had first place. Then they called another school first and I was so let down."

While it would've been foolish to count Don Bosco out, the team's failure to finish its runs at last season's state team championship meet serves as a lasting memory of what could've been.

This time around the Ironmen knew that they were a more talented team, but also a more mature team that didn't get nervous when it needed to perform at its best.

"Pre-first run, our coach was saying that we just needed to do what we do in practice," Devir said. "Thinking back to that first run, I just wanted to carve through it without needing to go all out and to finish. On the second run I was pretty confident that we were going to win so I pushed a little more and that was my best run of the year."

"I'll add that when [Devir] came in on day one, I knew he was the missing piece to the puzzle and to the state championship," Donohue said. "He was that one extra fast time that we needed to do it."

The Tenafly girls had gotten so close to fulfilling its dream of a championship several times in the past few seasons, and on Monday it got the job done after going through the pain of a loss.

Just a four-person team this season, each Tenafly skier knew that it had to support the other three in every single event. No one could outshine another, and if one fell, they all fell. They relied on each other so much, and it all came together when it mattered most in the state team championships.

Last season the Tiger finished in second place overall at the state team championships, and last week at the Race of Champions seniors Kristen Yi and Megan Yi finished in second and third place in each of the slalom and giant slalom events, as well as for the overall individual title.

The Yi sisters had teammates Samantha Cho and Sydney Josif to support them this time around though. While Yi finished the best out of the four in third place, she was assisted by the three other top 15 finishes from her teammates. Just one other school had four racers finish in the top 15, and that was second place Pingry.

“Since we’re only a four-girl team, even during some of our league races if one of us didn’t finish, we were done,” Kristen Yi said. “It’s really important that we all finished and backed each other. It allowed some of us to not have to go 100 percent all of the time because everyone performed really well. It really emphasizes our teamwork. We’re never trying to one up each other.”

“It’s absolutely critical that all four performed well,” coach Jeff Dzwonkowski said. “Coming in with only four racers, you have to be consistent. There’s no room for error when you have a small team. That was a major key to our victory today.”

For the Yi sisters, Monday’s victory marked the end to what has been a very successful high school skiing career together. It added to the significance of the moment that not only did they get to share it with their small roster, but as sisters.

“It’s a very gratifying feeling right now, especially with this being my senior year,” Kristen Yi said. “I got to do it with my sister so that’s a really nice moment too. We definitely have a lot of fond memories to look back at. It’s been a good four years of our lives, and very time consuming, but it’s a good culmination of our high school careers. All our hard work paid off and it’s just a really awesome moment.”

After observing its past shortcomings and mistakes, both the Don Bosco boys and Tenaflly girls were able to right the ship one final time this season in order to secure a lasting goal of theirs.

For next season it’ll need to observe what it did to get to this point, and how best to replicate it.

**GIRLS  
OVERALL**

TEAMS: 1-Tenaflly, 2-Pingry, 3-Vernon

**GIANT SLALOM**

TEAMS: 1-Tenaflly, 2-Pingry, 3-Vernon

**SLALOM**

TEAMS: 1-Tenaflly, 2-Pingry, 3-Vernon

**BOYS  
OVERALL**

TEAMS: 1-Don Bosco, 2-Sparta, 3-Blair

**GIANT SLALOM**

TEAMS: 1-Don Bosco, 2-Delbarton, 3-Sparta

**SLALOM**

TEAMS: 1-Don Bosco, 2-Pingry, 3-Sparta