

Ski Season 2008-09: Change is the Only Constant



The Anaconda-Pintler Range from Mill Creek highway, near Mount Haggin Nordic Ski Area.

I write this journal entry on a Sunday afternoon in mid-March. Ellie is home with me, but Alex and Jen are up in Whitefish where they will ski tomorrow (and maybe tonight under the lights). My place on the sidelines has been typical this season. I have only skied one day (last weekend) at the resort with the family due to a knee injury, and prior to that I had made it out for only four days around Christmas time. At that early point in the season, I decided to take a break and see if physical therapy would help my knee problems. Two months later, I can say that it hasn't.

On the positive side, I have Nordic skied quite a bit (>20 days) this year and even participated in two races. Most of my skiing was done either in Missoula or on our weekly trips up to Discovery. While the family enjoyed the slopes, I skied at either Mount Haggin (about 25 miles from the resort) or on Disco's modest groomed trail.

The 6-7 days at Mount Haggin were (though lonely) the best of the season for me: good snow, beautifully groomed trails, consistently sunny weather, and gorgeous scenery (see the picture above & below). Back in the mid-90's, I spent a lot of time backcountry skiing on Mill Creek Pass, just 2 miles from the ski tracks, and it was great to spend time in that part of Montana again. I have to say that it's one of my favorite places anywhere.

This is my first experience with a debilitating injury. It's been really frustrating, but good has come of it: I'm cross training more and so am in better shape, I did a lot more Nordic skiing than last year, and I have a rekindled interest in racing (I hope to do some bike races this summer). Looking back at what I wrote about last year's ski season—the best of my life and all at the resort—I'm struck by the realization that the only constant in life is change.

What will the future bring for me with skiing? Certainly, a larger percentage of days on Nordic skis. As for days at the resort, I'm not sure. The kids and Jen are downhill skiers to the core. That used to be me, but with knee troubles now, I am no longer a part of that world. Will I return to it? You'll have to read next year's ski season journal entry to find out.

Other Nordic days: Lolo Pass (2), Seeley Lake (2), Rattlesnake Corridor (8).



Another shot of the Mount Haggin area.