

April 8, 2024

To whom it may concern:

We are writing to enthusiastically recommend Avery Ellis for a Flyin' Ryan Adventure Scholarship. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what sort of athlete Avery is on any given day, or what flavor of adventure she prefers, because she's so wholeheartedly adventurous in so many things that she's constantly growing and evolving as a human. She's a mountain biker, a cross country skier, a backcountry skier, a runner, a coach, an artist, an artisan pizza-maker, a national-caliber ski wax tech, and so much more. We've known Avery for about a decade, and we're happy to report that she continues to surprise us with new endeavors all the time.

Avery reached out a few weeks ago, asking for a letter of recommendation for this scholarship so that she could continue to challenge herself as an enduro racer by heading over to try her luck in Europe. Last week Avery sent a message mentioning that she'd sliced her leg open after a binding malfunction while skiing at the Dartmouth Skiway. She was largely unperturbed by the accident - proud of herself for having first aid supplies and touched by the friendship of a former teammate and lifelong buddy who spent 7 hours in the ER with her, wearing her tele boots the whole time. To those who know Avery, it was wholly unsurprising that she would have friends looking after her for hours post-accident. That is exactly the sort of friend that Avery is to so many people.

We first met Avery when she was a talented high school runner and cross country ski racer with a penchant for adventure sports. She raced the 24 Hours of Great Glen every year, putting adults to shame with extraordinarily quick night laps. Often we'd hear that she wrapped up a weekend of racing with an evening skin up Big Jay with her dad. Avery was an adventure athlete before she even knew it - sport is both a competitive outlet and a part of her everyday life.

After five years of pursuing cross country ski racing at Middlebury College, we were stoked to learn that Avery was focusing on enduro racing. Her first full season on the Eastern States Cup unfolded in typical Avery fashion: blood, bruises, broken equipment, and wins. Lots of wins. Ask Avery about how her season went and you're more likely to hear a triumphant tale of fixing a broken AXS derailleur with a rock and some zip ties than any mention of the final result. For Avery the results pale in comparison to the process.

Recently Avery attended the US Ski and Snowboard Junior National Cross Country Championships (JNs) as a wax technician for the team from New England. She had attended the event a few times as an athlete, but this was her first time back in a support staff role. Paired up with fellow techs who had waxed at World Juniors and World Cups, Avery soaked up knowledge and leaned on her fitness and grit to ski more kilometers than any other coach over the course of the week. New England skiers won numerous medals and the overall team title at the end of the week, due in no small part to Avery's dedication.

Avery would make a great Adventure Scholar for the Flyin' Ryan Foundation. She is a Renaissance woman through and through, expressing herself as an athlete, adventurer, artist, and coach. She seeks outlets where she excels--biking, skiing, art--and where she is continuing to learn, like coaching, waxing, and enduro racing. Like a true adventurer, Avery's joy comes through the process, not the result.

Sincerely,

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