

April 2018
Mentorship Edition

**GIRLS IN SPORTS
ARE EMPOWERED
FOR LIFE**    



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Mentorship

When I started cross-country skiing at the late age of 18, I was fortunate enough to have 10 - time Paralympian Colette Bourgonje as my mentor. After Colette retired and I started on the World Cup circuit, I was the only female

skier on the team. Luckily, my new found "left arm," Emily Young, soon joined the World Cup Team. Between rooming together for weeks on end and doing long training sessions together, we created a bond that fostered both determination and mentorship. Although I had started skiing before Emily, she was no rookie to high performance sport! We combined my limited knowledge on ski technique, with her sport background from wrestling and triathlon, in order to create a learning relationship. Realizing that we were better together, we challenged and supported each other so we could both have success on the trails and range. After three years of training together, singing mash ups to get through long workouts, and saying to each other 'we got this' on scary downhills, our partnership led us to each earning our own individual Paralympic medal!

Brittany Hudak - Paralympic Bronze Medalist - Biathlon

Like Brittany, cross country skiing came into my life later...and though this is not my first high level sport, I have learned how much team atmosphere and support can impact not only your experience but your results! From 2015 until our numbers grew this past season, the two of us have been the Canadian ParaNordic Women's team. We train together, room together, and travel together, for over 1/3 of the year...and we even race in the same category! This could come with its challenges, but we have made this situation into one of mentorship and friendship. Every race, we wish each other good luck, calm each other down, or crack a joke to ease the pre-race jitters. Knowing that I have someone on course that is supporting me, as much as I am supporting her, allows us both to ski our very best. Other than the fact that together, Brittany and I have both a left arm and a right arm (allowing us to share gloves and poles!), we also bring knowledge from past sports and life experiences that can make each other stronger, more confident, and provide guaranteed laughs when someone needs a pick me up.



Emily Young - Paralympic Bronze Medalist - XC

**Top: Emily helps pull Brittany to bronze in the final loop of the final biathlon race in PyeongChang (Zimbio)*

***Above: Hugs afterwards foreshadowing Emily racing to bronze in the final cross-country race in PyeongChang (FasterSkier)*