New York Claims World Championship in Ped-Olympics

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So, what’s a Ped-Olympics?
What’s a ped-athlete?
Who is the World’s Greatest Ped-Athlete?

Unless you were at the 1985 Fall Conference of the Empire State Pedologist (ESP) Society in North River, NY, you probably don’t know the answers to those questions, or really have any reason to give them much thought.

The ESP Society is a professional organization of soil scientists in New York. This year at their annual fall conference, the entire 2nd day’s agenda was devoted to activities that combined soil survey skills with athletic competition for the world’s first-ever Soil Survey Skills Olympics, better known as the “Ped-Olympics.”

Opening ceremonies consisted of a torch lighting and a torch relay among veteran soil scientists. The torch was carried from Ped-Olympic Headquarters at the Garnet Hill Lodge in North River, down to the playing field near the shores of beautiful Thirteenth Lake. The events were dedicated to good science and to good sportsmanship, both of which prevailed throughout the games.

Three teams were fielded for the occasion. Each team proudly displayed their team colors of dusky red (10R 3/2), dark reddish brown (2.5YR 3/4), and yellowish red (5YR 5/6). Team captains designated ped-athletes from their teams to compete in each of the events.

Veteran soil scientist and torch bearer Frank Hutton won the “Backyard Sneak-A-Thon.” In this event, if the soil scientist was caught sneaking around on the landowner’s property then he or she had to explain what they were doing there.

Al Averill from the Westchester County Soil Survey Party took honors in the “Sharp-Shooter Dig-A-Thon.” Averill dug to a depth of 70 cm in the 2-min time allowed for the event. Ped-athlete Brian Grisi was a close second with 69 cm.

Undaunted, Grisi came back in the next event, “The Slippery Log Walk-A-Thon.” Grisi traversed the precarious 30-m course in 3.53 s. This included a sprint across a 20-foot-long log spanning the cold open waters of Thirteenth Lake. It was an awesome display of agility and concentration.

Soil Survey Party Leader Steve Indrick from Westport in Essex County, NY devastated the field in the Channer Skipping event. He swept both the distance and the most number of skips categories with a single throw that skipped 17 times and traveled a full one-third of the distance across Thirteenth Lake.

The 300-m “Canoe-A-Thon” was an event which required ped-athletes to paddle 150 m out into Thirteenth Lake to determine if an object visible from shore was in fact bedrock or just a boulder. Once the observation had been made, the team raced the 150 m back to shore. Steve Page and Steve Bonnell teamed up and claimed victory in one of the most closely contested events.

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