



**Alexa Dow**

**BC XC 2023**



## What does your training look like right now? How will that change going into the championships



I took a bit of a break in late August as I had an extended track season; I travelled to Trinidad and Tobago with Team Canada to compete in the Commonwealth Youth Games for the 800m and the 1500m and I didn't get back until August 14. It was nice to have a little break as my racing schedule during the track season was pretty busy, but I'm excited to get back at it this fall for cross country season.

My running group trains together 3 days a week and then I mix in some strength work at the gym and some cross training in the pool. Our running group is headed to our yearly XC training camp at Sproat Lake which is always a lot of fun - we rent a big house on the water, do some team bonding, swim, cook good food, and run a ton. It's a nice way to boost XC fitness in a fun way.

## How do you get through hard training days?

I'm lucky to have an awesome running group with the Prairie Inn Harriers Youth Racing Team. We're all roughly the same age and we get along so well. We work hard and push each other, but we have a lot of fun at the same time. This makes tough training days and the bad weather we can get during XC season so much easier to get through. I've also learned to balance training so that I know what "good hard" and "bad hard" feels like in terms of training, and I know when I can push it and when it's not smart to do that.





# What is your favourite part about racing/ competing?

While I like cross country, I absolutely love track. Cross country for me is the strength and endurance build I need through the fall and winter for a great track season in the spring and summer. But, I do really enjoy trail running as I find that trails keep your mind off what your body is feeling and I like navigating roots and creek jumps and courses that have interesting parts to them. I've been racing since I was 9 years old and I just really love the atmosphere at meets and getting to see the other athletes that I've raced and watched for years. On the track I really like the challenge of lowering my times and in XC it's more about strategy and mind over matter. It's a good balance.



# What is your race-day routine?

I'm from Vancouver Island, so race day usually involves a ride on the ferries as many of the races are on the Lower Mainland. I just try to stay focused, eat properly, and get in a good warm-up. I have a playlist that I listen to and some of the songs on there I've listened to pre-race since I was 9 years old. I'm a little superstitious.





## Do you have a strategy going into the XC Champs?

My coach and I always discuss strategy, but it changes depending on the course, on the weather, on who I'm racing, and on what kind of a week I've had with training/racing. While I go in with a plan, I usually find that I have to also react in the moment to what's going on around me. I've always leaned toward a front-running approach but this changes based on how big the start is and what the course is like.



## What do you think about during the race?

People always ask me this and I always say "I don't remember", and that's the truth. I'm really focused when I'm racing - I guess you call it being "in the zone". I just block out everything else until the finish line. I usually don't really remember what I've thought or decided to do while I'm racing when I'm done!





## Is there any advice you have to other athletes going into their first championships?

My advice would be to enjoy the atmosphere and to get to know the other runners as you'll likely be seeing the same people at so many meets during the year. It's such a great community and you meet really awesome people through running in BC. And, wear gloves! My hands always freeze during cross country season.

## Do you have a favourite BC course for Cross Country racing?

I actually really like Crescent Beach where the BC Club provincials and the BC High Schools are being held this year. It's a nice mix of surfaces and trails/open areas, and as it's run as a loop it's good for spectators. It doesn't get too muddy like some of the slippery courses I've been on and the hills aren't as brutal as the hills on the Royal Roads course from last year's BCHSXC ;)

