Here are some excerpts from Andrew’s latest email:

Yesterday was the skate distance race. If you have looked at the times, it was definitely not a 10k. To put it in perspective, the Chugiak 10k classic earlier this winter took 27 minutes. The winner of our skate "10k" won in 36 minutes. Tyler's GPS heartrate monitor clocked the lap distance as 7.12k making it almost a 15k race.

Due to cold temperatures hovering around -26 celcius at the original venue at Folldal, the organizers changed the venue for both yesterday and today to a site 12k west on more farmland. Don't be fooled thinking that farmland is flat. This course had THE BIGGEST HILLS I have ever raced on. I think it took me 4 to 5 minutes to climb one of them, then the downhills were so gradual that we had to skate down them, so no recovery between monsterous hills. Another detail was there was no stadium, so the start and finish were at different points with the finish higher than the start. The views were beautiful from the course but I was hardly paying attention to that during the long climbs reaching those vistas.

Today was extremely exciting. Due to the venue change, there was only enough room for classic skiing in a mass start so all three legs were classic. The order remained though, so I was still the starter. We were seeded in order from finish of last year's relay, so I was in fifth position. The trail was only wide enough for three lanes so I was in the second row. I was very relaxed for this race, once again surprising myself at not being psyched out by the foreigners beside me. Out we went and I found myself in third in the middle lane so in the center of the pack. Being in the center meant I hardly was working on the doublepole so I stood up a lot to avoid skiing over the guy in front of me. By the way this is the same course as yesterday except just one lap. When the mountain hill started everyone was on each other's skis making it difficult to stride properly, then the lane to my left dissapeared and those in that track scrambling into my lane while the far right lane was powering up without conflict. I yelled hup as I saw the person in front of me lagging being a front group forming. He didn't move so I jumped around him and luckily the track was clear all the way up to the leaders, so I bridged a gap forming a group of four. I was so relaxed striding up the hill, it was the feeling that I get when I know I will win because I'm hardly working: quite the opposite from yesterday which was what it feels like to slowly die in agony for 37 minutes. Today was different. The monster hill was all stridable and I was so relaxed that I decided to go for it. I jumped out of the line and passed everybody. Then I led for a few k and

even put some distance on the field just doublepoling downhill. Then they used each other and caught me right before the hill that Justin was on the day before. I let a Fin pass me because he seemed really anxious to be in front and I thought why not let him. Then I just followed the Fin all the way up the hill and realized we were leaving everybody behind. It was this hill yesterday where I thought that maybe I wouldn't be a great skier after all and on this hill today where I thought I'm going to be a future world champ you Fin so take this and I passed him on the top of the hill. I looked back and no one was behind us. Then I started the long 3k downhill to the finish and I started to realize that I actually was kind of tired. I thought I would let the Fin lead downhill a little bit and doublepole while I tucked so I stepped out and he led, then when I recovered I tried to pass him multiple times. The thing was we were doublepoling downhill and pretty much reaching terminal velocity on skis, because we were dead even next to each other, neither of us gaining on the other. I kept going back and forth from trying to pass him and being dead even and drafting to rest up for my next attack. One small hill was left before the transition and we were dead even again and from nowhere a norweigan caught us and we blew through the downhill transition zone fin, me, norweigan, in a line tagging off to our teammates. It was quite a while before the 4th person came through.

Officials radioed from different checkpoints so we heard where Scott was the whole time. We heard that there was a pack of 4 again and Scott representing USA was leading the race at the top of the hill Justin was on the day before. Then when they came through the transition Norway 1 was in the lead by a few seconds with a Norway development team in second and us directly behind. Scott said the heavy norwegians were faster on the downhill than him. Finland was about ten seconds following Scott. Then it was a really long time. We got word that there was a group of 3 with Tyler in third. Then with one k to go they said it was a group of two with the united states 7 seconds back and another 20 to Finland. The two Norway teams sprinted to the finish and Tyler was a very respectable 15 seconds or so behind them. We were so close! The girls also got third.