

Australian Junior Biathlon Team report 15<sup>th</sup> Jan 2009

Life is good here in Canmore. The team house is functioning well. We are a 10 minute easy walk to the Nordic Centre and we have our own team room there for the duration of our stay. The biathlon range is fantastic with 31 targets that are set to 2 minute reset for training. (Pull target to change from prone to standing). There are plenty of trails to explore for hill training or just an easy cruze.

Grocery shopping is a little further to go. We have found the shortcut into town (a walking path that takes us over the river and pops us out at Safeway. We go with empty back packs and a list that will hopefully not overflow them. The way back takes a little longer because of the weight and the hill the locals call "suicide hill" we need to go up.

Giles and Dyllan had their first real Biathlon race last weekend Calforex Cup #3 at Camrose, Four hours drive from Canmore. Saturday was the sprint and Sunday the mass start. Both fared well in the sprint, Dyllan placing 6<sup>th</sup> in his age group and Giles 8th in his. Sunday proved to be interesting with very strong winds playing havoc with shooting. The attitude of take the penalties and go was adopted by many. Dyllan 9<sup>th</sup> & Giles 10<sup>th</sup> in their divisions in this race. Results at: <http://www.biathlon.ca/>

This week has consisted of rest and preparation for the race this weekend. It is the NorAm Cup #6. Athletes from all over Canada and the USA have been arriving. It is the selection race for the Canadian team for the World Juniors so some of the crew Giles and Dyllan have been training with are starting to feel the pressure. There are some other nations here also preparing for the WYJCH. We have seen Belarus training at the same time as we have this week. I must say some of their juniors look very grown up!

Ash & Jackie flew in on Sunday, Ash from Switzerland and Jackie from AUS. Unfortunately Jackie's luggage which had Ash's stock in it went walkabout in luggage land. It finally arrived Tuesday night at 1am. Ash has now been working on coming up to speed on her shooting and is doing a great job. Her one armed skiing technique is not holding her back (although she would prefer to be at full power) and she is not too far behind the others.

The Canmore team is fabulous and are good fun to work with. They are a really great team consisting of 15 or so athletes that are training and racing together under the guidance of team coach Roddy Ward. They even understand my Aussie accent on the range for corrections and feedback. Giles and Dyllan have been training with them for the last 4 weeks. I have had the opportunity to work along with Roddy with the more advanced athletes during training. What a life to live in a town with snow and a top class biathlon range!

It's time to put on my boots and layer up ready to stand on the range for this afternoons training session. The weather here is warm at the moment so it is actually very nice standing on the coaching mound and looking at the view in between looking through the scope.

Cheers, Toscha