

## *Australian Junior Biathlon Team report 22nd Jan 2009. Canmore, Canada.*

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For the last week we have enjoyed sunshine and clear skies here at Canmore. Today the weather is changing for a chilly few days of highs in the range of minus 19. Our training at the range this morning was at minus 7 but felt like minus 12 with the wind chill and it was snowing. Giles, Dyllan and Ash did very well in the conditions. Giles shooting around 90% accuracy for the training session was a highlight. Dyllan is learning to shoot with a numb trigger finger and Ash's shooting is almost back to her true form- fast & accurate. Being on the range in these conditions means I put on as many clothes as I can and resemble the Michelin man.

Last weekend the NorAm Cup #6 was held at Canmore. All 3 Aussies competed in the sprint event on Saturday. This competition was a part of the selection for the Canadian team, so the pressure was on for all athletes.

Dyllan and Giles both shot 1+2 penalties and were not too far behind some of their training mates from Canmore. They came in 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> with only 24 seconds separating them. Ash lined up for her first Biathlon race with only a few days of reacquainting herself with her rifle. She shot 5+3 penalties and came 21st. Through the scope it was crushing to watch 5 split shots all around the clock on her prone bout and 3 misses in standing that on paper would have been thru the same hole... but that's biathlon!

Sunday was the pursuit race. The start list is determined by the finish position from the sprint race on Saturday and a 5 second interval between each competitor. Shooting was PPSS with penalties. This format sets things up for a very interesting race and lots of pressure. Giles came into the range in front of Dyllan and after shooting 2 penalties never looked back. Dyllan got acquainted with the penalty loop a bit too early with 5 misses on his first round of shooting. The second prone and first standing shoot went OK for Giles with 2+2 misses but unfortunately in his last standing he missed 4. Not good for him as he also didn't count to 4 in his penalty loops and received an additional 2 minutes for his miscalculation. Dyllan came into the range on his second prone with way too much hart rate. Another 4 penalties. He redeemed himself on the first standing with only 2 penalties but then lost concentration on the last and had 4 more to ski. Along the way he also miscalculated and also received an additional 2 minutes for his miscalculation. The solution...Shoot well so you don't have to count as much! The final result- Giles 21<sup>st</sup> 2+2+2+4 and Dyllan 22<sup>nd</sup> 5+4+2+4. Ash did not compete on this day because of her shoulder. She did a fantastic job behind the video camera and giving sight adjustments to the boys on the course. Jackie had been in charge of this task for the sprint race and was chief photographer and cheerer on Sunday.

After a weekend of racing Monday was a day off. A day trip to Sunshine Down hilling was organized. It lived up to its name and we had a beautiful day. I even crossed to the dark side and had my heels stuck to the skis. The views from the top of the mountain were spectacular! A great fun day- and even better when we got a lift home from a Canmore local right to our door.

Tuesday was a time trial for the Canadian teams. We did not expect to be able to participate but the opportunity came up so it was back to biathlon business. The boys finished at the tail end of the field. Dyllan shot 2+3 and Giles 2+2. Ash shot 2+2 and came 12<sup>th</sup> out of 14. Everyone was quite pleased with their results for the day.

More and more teams are now arriving in Canmore for the WYJCH. There is definitely a European flavor on the range at training now and the excitement is mounting.



Keep warm or stay cool. Toscha. Coach - Australian Junior Biathlon Team.