

British National Biathlon Championships 2014

Report by ADNBA Team Manager Bob Schouten

One Ashes Tour per year is not enough. So recently a dozen intrepid Australians, mostly from the Australian Defence Force Nordic Biathlon Association, took on the Brits at their National Biathlon and Nordic Skiing Championships at Ruhpolding, Germany.

Following a fantastic two weeks at Obertilliach, Austria, with more snow than they could handle and great runs in the Dolomitenlauf events the 'team' felt ready to take on the Brits in their Annual Championships. Unfortunately they were greeted with 'green grass' but lucky that Ruhpolding had recently hosted a World Cup event and the course had survived. Later minor snowfalls did top up the track and provide some variety for racing.

As it turned out, there were other Internationals, including biathletes from Ukraine, Germany and the USA. Sterling performances included Hamish McLean who finished 13th in the 20 km Men's Individual event and Irene Dunn who finished 8th in the Women's 10km Biathlon Mass start and 7th in the Women's 12.5km Individual Biathlon – borrowing Hamish's rifle on both occasions.

Even more impressive was the Aussie Military contingent in the Men 4 x 7.5 km Biathlon Relay (Army), where the team of Sven Howorth, Tim Costin, Sean McGrath and Tom Hale finished 20th out of 31 finishing teams (there were in addition 3 DSQ and 1 DNF). Again the boys backed up in the 30km Military Patrol using re-chambered (.22cal) British SA80 military issue rifles. They finished a credible 15th from 24 entries (20 finishers, 2 DSQ and 2 DNS).

As usual, the Brits made us feel very welcome and we look forward to the next tour, possibly in 2016/17.

Squadron Leader Bob Schouten – ADFNBA Team Manager