



News

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

AUGUST 2010

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- Cross-country skiing
- Fitness
- Coaching
- Dry land training
- Development
- Health
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Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of Australian Biathlon News.

This new magazine replaces the earlier Australian Biathlon publication "Ski Shooter."

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide wide-ranging news and articles of interest, with a good dose of entertainment along the way, to those interested in the sport of winter biathlon in Australia.

Topics of interest include shooting, cross-country skiing, fitness, coaching, dry land training, development, health, local and overseas news, and juniors.

Biathletes, coaches, technicians, sports health professionals, parents, friends and anyone generally interested in the sport which combines the arduous demands of cross-country skiing



Alex Almoukov at the Victorian Sprint Championships, Mt Hotham, 25 July 10

and precision target shooting are invited to read and contribute to this newsletter.

We are planning to publish Australian Biathlon News regularly throughout the year, and welcome articles by anyone

interested in our exciting sport.

To submit articles, please contact the editor, who will gladly welcome contributions.

Ski fast and shoot true!

The 2010 season so far

We are almost halfway though our—very short— Australian winter.

The snow gods have not smiled on us, at least not yet. As always Downunder, we keep fingers crossed for another snow dump.

So far we have had three weekend events at the home of Biathlon in Australia, the range at Whiskey Flat, Mt Hotham, Victoria.

The first of these was a Come and Try Day on the Opening Weekend of the Snow Season.

The second was the Inaugural Colin and Alice Paul Commemorative Weekend.

The third was the Victorian Championships.

Reports on these events are inside.

From the Editor

These are exciting times for Australian Biathlon!



C & A Paul weekend equipment

Two years ago, on a family holiday, I stumbled upon and watched three school-aged children take part in the Victorian Junior Biathlon Championships at Whiskey Flat.

And that was in two races (yes, one boy, Dion, raced on his own).

Last weekend I watched those three, plus my own two boys, along with 9 others of school age, including 2 visitors from overseas and 2

local novices.

Several others were unable to attend, due to injury or school skiing commitments.

This is in addition to the adults taking part. On a day of limited snow, it was great to see the enthusiasm for biathlon.

Most enjoyable was the Colin & Alice Paul Weekend—see page 5 for more.

These are also testing times for the sport; with an influx of some 2 dozen juniors spread over the ACT, NSW and Victoria, it means great challenges for managing the needs of all biathlon partici-

pants, whose interests range from occasionally bowling up to Whiskey Flat for fun, to international competition.

However, the dramatic increase in junior participation can only bode well for the sport.

This newsletter will help keep everyone informed about the latest developments and offers everyone an open forum in which anyone can offer their opinions and ideas for all to consider.

Please, send in your articles and keep recruiting!

Emma Flanagan
Editor

“I am very pleased to report the continuing activity in Summer and Winter Biathlon”



AUSTRALIAN BIATHLON 2010 – SHOOTING AHEAD

This time last year I wrote in Australian Cross Country News about the increase in Summer Biathlon activities and training events, along with the increase in school ski clubs' participation in Biathlon.

A year on, I am very pleased to report the continuing increase in activity in all those areas.

This is fantastic, because the grass root level of biathlon is where the future of the sport is to be shaped.

Summer Biathlon

The final of these for 2009-10 was held at Wangaratta on 5 June last. Over a dozen ABA members met up at the Wangaratta Small Bore Rifle Club. That club has been continuing its upgrade of facilities, which makes it a great spot for our events.

In the last Summer Biathlon event until next October, the cross country skiing was replaced by either rollerskiing or mountain biking.

The official Distance event was followed by a series of fun, informal races. Teams of 2 competed against each other, with each missed shot meaning 5 penalty pushups – done by the other team member.

In related news, it was published recently in the general

media that the greater sport of shooting accounts for ¼ of a billion dollars revenue for Victoria alone each year. That's huge.

The Biathlon community will watch closely the development of the newly announced Victorian State Shooting Centre – how good would it be with the addition of a rollerski loop?

Training Events

Tuesday night training at Hawthorn

This is proving very popular. Among others, there is a regular group of 9 Juniors receiving biathlon instruction.

This means the ABA rifles which we bought last year are

From the ABA Executive Officer, cont'd ...



National training camp June at Hotham

I am proud to say that the ABA has just held a national-level camp for the first time in many years.

Aside from 2010 Olympian Alex Almoukov, all 13 attendees were school-aged

Juniors.

Three coaches, Cameron Morton, Nick Almoukov and Toscha Stopar, were in charge with athletes coming from the ACT, NSW and Victoria.

There was rain on the first day of training, but happily that made way for snow on the second.

There was enough snow coverage for skiing training on "Poo Farm Hill," the XC track to Dinner Plain at the edge of the Hotham Village.

Training at the range included one shot drills and mini relay races between small teams.

It was impressive to hear about the high standard of fitness among the participants.

It's great to see the 2009 Juniors recommitting in 2010, and bringing some new friends with them.

ABA Calendar of Events

The ABA website www.biathlon.asn.au is the best place to find out everything that is happening in the 2010 Winter Biathlon Season.

These include official races days

and other informal events, such as Come and Try Days.

We are especially keen to see female visitors, as the biathlon ranks are severely lacking in female representation, particularly at Senior level, despite ample opportunities for them.

It would be fantastic to see the female Senior Olympic spot filled for Sochi in 2014.

Paul Connor

"It's great to see the 2009 Juniors recommitting in 2010, and bringing some new friends with them"

The ABA EO at the Victorian Championships prizegiving

in constant use, a couple having been hired out for the year, while other Juniors have purchased their own rifles.

The emphasis of Tuesday Junior training is on basic skills, fitness and fun, following the Canadian Biathlon Training Model.

Most of the Juniors are talented skiers from independent school ski clubs, who are looking at Biathlon as an addition to their skiing background.

Melbourne training weekend

A training weekend was held on 29/30 May last, with Saturday at the Hawthorn Range and Sunday at the Melbourne International Shooting Club (MISC), Fishermans Bend.

MISC was extensively upgraded for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, and has an excellent 50 metre outdoor range, with electronic score sheets shown on a computer monitor at each firing point.

Scores can then be printed off the computer system.

Rollerski practice and fun races were held close to MISC, in an industrial area with lots of empty carparks on weekends.



National Camp, WF/ Poo Farm Hill June 2010



Biathlon Support by MISC

Australian Biathlon received a boost in July by the Melbourne International Shooting Club (MISC), which is based next to Holden at Fishermans Bend, Melbourne.

Biathlon Juniors Jeremy and Tim Flanagan are the inaugural Biathlon Sub-section Members of MISC, and are regular attenders at the 50 metre automated range (see the Executive Officer's Report for more details on a Biathlon training event held at MISC last May).

MISC is a large facility, and their management is keen to foster an ongoing relationship with Australian Biathlon.

MISC already has a 5 target falling plate setup available on the air range that the pentathlon shooters use.

However, this week MISC advised that they are happy to support setting up a biathlon target(s) at MISC. These are likely to be constructed on the 50M paper range and left in situ except when MISC need to run a benchrest com-

petition requiring use of all available targets.

The availability of this facility is a great boost, especially with the Hawthorn range affording only 4 lanes at any one time.

Easy access to rollerski areas and cycle paths close by make this a facility that is sure to get more use before the next Olympics.



Snow - where the B* hell are you?

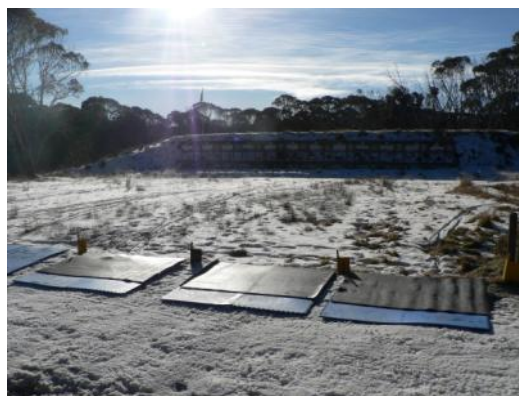
Whiskey Flat looks a bit sad and sorry so far this season.

It has been the lowest snowfall for some years.

Luckily, there was enough snow to ski on around the XC loops for the Victorian Championships last weekend.

Time to get on with the snow dancing ...

Groomer Greg O'D had his work cut out for him last weekend at WF



Victorian Championships 24 & 25 July



The Victorian Championship races were held last weekend at WF.

There was the greatest turnout of juniors (especially school-aged participants) for many years.

While the snow conditions weren't what we'd like them to be, the sun shone all weekend, so at least the visibility was good!

A full report will be given in the next edition of Australian Biathlon News.

Come & Try Weekend 12 & 13 June



Aislinn Kildea shows visitor John rifle technique

two local families in the Biathlon community, the Harmers and Kildeas.

ships at Canmore, Canada, in 2009.

There was only a sprinkling of snow at the Whiskey Flat Range, so there was no skiing on either day.

However, there were plenty of targets hit, and many of the participants indicated that they'd be back for more Biathlon fun this season.

**Ed. Note—Visitor and Mornington resident Gregory O'Toole signed up to the ABA & participated as a novice at the Vic Champs on 24 & 25 July*

The first 2010 Season Biathlon event was held on the Official Opening weekend of the Victorian snow season.

The Come and Try weekend at Whiskey Flat was conducted by

The emphasis was on encouraging fit young people to come and try out the sport.

Much of the demonstrating and coaching was done by Dyllan Harmer and Aislinn Kildea, who both represented Australia in Biathlon at the Junior World Champion-

“My parents were there at the beginning of biathlon in Australia, and I am very pleased to be here to continue their work for the future” - Greg Paul

Colin & Alice Paul Commemorative W/e 10 & 11 July

On 10 & 11 July, the Paul Family, long-standing supporters of Australian Biathlon, hosted the Colin and Alice Paul Commemorative Race Weekend at Whiskey Flat.

The late Colin and Alice Paul were founding members and stalwarts of the Australian Biathlon community.

More than fifty attendees from Victoria and as far away as Adelaide SA and even Grenoble, France, took part in the celebrations, including people having their first-ever go.

There may not have been much snow, but there was plenty of fun had over the two days.

Saturday started – and ended – windy. There was a modified distance race held in the morning, with fun relays in the afternoon.

Sunday's weather looked bleak, but happily the rain held off until

after the “ski patrol” event had taken place. Much like a modified scavenger hunt, teams went out around the Whiskey Flat range and undertook various entertaining tasks.

These included shooting and devising a team name (which was yelled frequently). There is always a “throwing” element in ski patrol events; this time a large ball had to be tossed between the 2 forked trunks of a large tree.

Amused spectators watched participants filling a giant toy truck with snow with mini snow shovelling equipment, and running it around the infamous pile of rocks affectionately known as “Mont Blonk.”

“My parents were there at the beginning of biathlon in Australia, and I am very pleased to be here to continue their work for the future”

said Paul.

“This is the first Colin and Alice Paul Commemorative Weekend. We are delighted so many could take part and look forward to next year's events.” ❄️



Team “Awesome Foursome” earns extra points with brrm brrm noises as they ‘motor’ around “Mont Blonk”

Shooting Rhythm by Kim Frazer



We often hear athletes talking about how they were “in the zone” during a competition.

The “zone” refers to a state of concentration where the technical aspects occur automatically, concentration is at its optimum, and performance is at its peak.

Unfortunately there is no magic formula for getting into the zone, and few of us

can achieve it every time we compete.

One aspect that assists in gaining the performance zone, and that top performers always demonstrate, is excellent rhythm throughout their match, and it is this aspect of performance that I will discuss in this article.

Kim Frazer is a small-bore rifle shooter and Vice-President of the Melbourne International Shooting Club (MISC).

Kim has represented Australia at the Olympic Games, and four Commonwealth Games where she has won three gold medals.

“The most critical actions are those actions directly associated with firing the shot, such as sighting, relaxing, and so on”

What is shooting rhythm?

We often hear from coaches that to shoot a 10 each time we fire a shot, we must do the same thing each time.

When we apply this principle to shooting rhythm, we are inferring that we must carry out all our actions associated with firing a shot, in the same order, and in the same amount of time, each and every time.

However even a novice would say that surely some actions are more critical than others

are, and this is absolutely correct.

The more critical actions are those actions directly associated with firing the shot such as sighting, position checking, relaxing, and so on.

Less critical, are actions carried out that are outside the action of firing the shot, such as loading, spotting, changing targets, and so forth.

One will find that with top shooters, even these less critical actions will appear to the casual observer to be carried out with the same consistency and in the same order and rhythm.

Anyone who has ever seen the multiple World & Olympic Champion Ralf Schumann compete in Rapid Fire will be able to compare the almost

mechanical performance of Schumann with perfect shooting rhythm.

Others have timed some of the top rifle shooters in competition and observed that their execution time – from picking up to putting down the rifle - for each shot is remarkably consistent, varying by only 2 seconds over a 60 shot match.

Shooting with rhythm doesn’t mean shooting fast, although this may be an outcome.

It does mean replicating the timing of the shot each time.

Dion Richardson at Melbourne International Shooting Club 30 May 10



Why is rhythm important?



Rachel Mackay takes aim at C&A Paul event 10 July 10

less even, and our performance suffers. We breathe at a rhythmic, repetitive pace – if you’ve ever tried falling asleep when you are panting, you’ll know that it just doesn’t work.

shooting rhythm, because our bodies function better when behaving rhythmically.

Now this doesn’t mean that if you shoot all your shots in good rhythm, but don’t take care of the basic fundamentals of firing a shot that your performance will be good.

Physiologically the human body likes rhythm and tends to relax more when rhythm is present. Let’s explore this a little.

Marathon runners and long distance swimmers all speak of the need to find a rhythmic sequence to achieve their best performance.

What it means is that if you get the basic fundamentals right, and then work on improving your rhythm, you will probably find your performance is better.

Our heart beats with a rhythmic sequence – when we are stressed, our heartbeat will be quicker, and

Hence in shooting, it is reasonable to conclude that our performance is more likely to be better with good

“Marathon runners and long distance swimmers all speak of the need to find a rhythmic sequence to achieve their best performance”

How can you improve your rhythm?

Before embarking on a program to improve your shooting rhythm, you must be at a stage where each of the elements of firing a shot is performed consistently.

For example if you need more than one attempt to mount your rifle on your shoulder for a shot, then you need to try to perfect this aspect before working on your rhythm.

Assuming the basics are sound, the next thing you need is a friend who is willing to time your shooting. You need to identify the point of each shot at which timing will start, and the point at which it will finish. For example you may like timing to start when you mount the rifle in

your shoulder, and conclude when you fire the shot. Agree these points and make sure these are clearly understood.

Your observer should note the duration of each shot, and the score – you probably need about 40 shots to get any kind of statistical certainty, and you may want to do the exercise on more than one occasion to confirm your results.

Once completed, graph your results and determine which time duration gives you the greatest proportion of 10’s.

For example you may find that 60% of your 10’s came from shots fired

within 7 – 8 seconds. (If you can’t find a friend to time you could use a tape recorder).

Once you are satisfied you have determined your optimum aiming time, you need your friend (or tape recorder) to help you train yourself to always fire within the optimum time. This is done by giving the shooter a start signal.

Then if the shot is not fired by the desired time, the shooter is stopped from firing and asked to recommence the sequence.

When should you vary your rhythm?

Perfectly consistent timing is not always practical.

Often weather conditions or other factors may require a change to the rhythm.

In these cases though, it is the non-critical aspects of the rhythm, such as the duration between shots that should be altered. The actual aiming/firing

time should still remain consistent.

Keeping a consistent flow of shots is only recommended when adverse conditions are not experienced.

Once adversity such as weather, nerves or other difficulties occur, a break in your shooting is neces-

sary to allow time to refocus, and regain your rhythm. ❄️



Whiskey Flat 25 July 10

