

Austrian Championships Mass start Report-Damon Morton WINS

Dear friends, fellow biathletes and followers of sport,

Our small NSW Biathlon Youth Men's Team of Daniel Walker, Alew Lewis and Damon Morton ventured back to Hochfilzen, Austria,(Mega Biathlon World Cup Centre), for the Austrian Mass Start National Championships. It was the first time any of the boys have contested a Mass start in biathlon. The highlight was Damon sensationally winning the Youth 1 class by 2 minutes!

The snow was just unbelievable. There was at least 1 metre more snow than when we were there just 2 weeks ago for the Relay. And we thought there was 1 m then! The roads had walls of snow 2m tall and the targets were just above the snow line. For the two days we were there it didn't stop snowing! Masses of Schnee like we have never seen in Australia for a long time.

The Mass start races were really exciting with the athletes starting together and then shooting Prone, Prone, Standing, Standing. A large number of spectators and team coaches would follow the athletes from the shooting range and out onto a feature hill where the whole race could be viewed and athletes cheered and given splits.

Damon and Alex competed in the 6km Youth 1 (U17) event, which consisted of 12 boys. Damon had an unbelievable race shooting 1,0,2,1 and out skied his nearest competitor by 2 minutes and 2 seconds. He was very fast up the hills in the soft tracks and heavy snow and quick through the range.

Alex began his race well with 1 penalty and was keeping up with the pack, but 2,3,3 misses in the next loops saw him drop over 7 minutes on Damon and 5 minutes behind the next Austrian.

The Czech Republic National Junior Team also attend and won the Open Mens and Junior Mens.

Daniel also skied the best race of his season so far and after just 1 miss in the first half of the race was 5th and was following the Austrian who won his division last weekend in Martell. However, coming into standing he had snow in his sights and lost lots of time blowing it out and then went on to miss 4, 4. Despite this Dan skied the race out well and finished just under 20% and 7 minutes behind the winner.

Unfortunately all of the 'internationals'/non Austrians were technically 'disqualified' from the official results, which have been published on the Austrian Cup website. This means the athlete's names and shooting appear on the results, but the time and place is missing. This is apparently because we are not eligible to place in Austria's National Championships. But I think the truth can sometimes hurt and the truth being some of us and the Czechs did too well on this occasion!

However, the Czech coach and I did get our hands on some 'unofficial results', which provided the times and ranking of all competitors.

I may just have to scan these and place on our NSW biathlon website as part of the 'can you believe this' files.

Next week we travel to Trin in Switzerland for a Swiss Biathlon Cup, Sprint and Mass Start.

The boys are already looking forward to doing another Mass Start.

Here are the unofficial results in brief:

Youth 1

1st Damon Morton – Australia - 32.33

2nd Patrick Wallinger – Austria - 34.36

3rd Patrick Jakob – Austria - 35.06

11th Alex Lewis – Australia - 39.48

13 Competitors finished

Youth 2

1st Christopher Tauber - Austria 38.30

2nd Klaus Leitinger - Austria 39.29

11th Daniel Walker - Australia 45.30

13 Competitors in total

Junior Men

1st Michael Krcmar - CZE Republic 44.40

2nd Vlastimil Vavra - CZE Republic 44.58

3rd Lorenz Wager – Austrian 45.23

I didn't get a copy of the 'unofficial' Open Men's results, but the above Czech Junior Men were the first two across the line. After the first two shoots they had over 1 minute lead on the Austrians who had shot poor in prone.

Will send some photos shortly.

Cheers,

Cam Morton