

Biathlon Easter Camp Report 2010 by Cameron Morton

Introduction

I am pleased to report that we ran a very successful residential Biathlon training camp at Mt Hotham over the second week of the Easter holidays from Monday 5th to Friday 9th of April, 2010. The camp was organised as part of the NSWXC and Biathlon Association's regular training events. These 'events' currently include a monthly dry land weekend training camps in Jindabyne which focus on fitness and skiing technique and longer training camps over the school holidays. NSWXC and Biathlon is aiming to run a preseason camp at Mt Hotham – dates to be confirmed - before running 6 days of XC on snow ski development and training at Perisher. Coaching was provided by myself to the more experienced 'state' team athletes and Barry Field provided coaching and instruction to the new and beginning athletes.

Attendance

The camp was attended by 8 NSW team athletes and 4 athletes from Victoria. The high standard and quality of the athletes attending the camp was testimony to the fantastic development which has occurred over the last 9 months. 9 of the 12 athletes had their own rifles, while 2 rifles were hired privately through the ABA. 10 of the athletes had been training overseas in the last northern winter doing either X C skiing and biathlon. These numbers are encouraging for the development of the sport.

Program

A very full program was provided with sessions including a pre breakfast morning run, am training at biathlon and pm rollerskiing and other training and evening sessions. The more advanced athletes experienced a 'training camp' where the focus was on undertaking a quality block of training and coaching. This included daily running combined with shooting drills and a big emphasis on distance rollerskiing on the Hotham road. The new athletes focused on learning how to shoot and were introduced to basic rollerski technique at the airport. Evening sessions included reviewing shooting positions, goal setting, psychological profiling, technique review, safety, wind shooting, rifle cleaning, stretching and lots of dry fire. It was really good to see athlete's improve over the week. A strength circuit session was also conducted.

Injuries

I'm glad to report no major injuries, however, we did have a minor sprained ankle from running into the range and one minor calf strain. We noted that the field in front of the range is too bumpy to run around and into the range in the preferred direction.

Accommodation, Food and Cost

The camp was conducted at Bembooka ski lodge and was catered for by Selina Morton, who did a fantastic job providing nutritious and high carb meals throughout the week without working ovens! Fees paid for the Camp covered the cost of food, accommodation, coach's expenses and coach's remuneration. Each athlete provided their own ammunition.

Coaching

I would like to thank Barry Field for his excellent coaching support. Barry really enjoyed working on the camp and brought a wealth of experience to the camp. He is extremely organised, planned and resourceful. He worked the beginner athletes really well teaching them all the basic techniques to shooting and skiing. He also complemented my coaching of the more advanced athletes by providing his opinion of how they can improve. It is fantastic to hear that Barry is committed to regularly coaching a number of athletes from Scotch College in Melbourne and is becoming more involved in Biathlon again. We look forward to seeing these athletes and Barry at the Hotham Biathlon races and even some X C races this season. Thanks again Barry and we look forward to working with you again when an opportunity arises.

Parent support

These camps do not happen without the commitment and support of the parents. Thank you to the small band of parents who provided their assistance. It is much appreciated.

Recommendations

1. To investigate other options for the food/catering for **pre-season** camp as Selina won't be in a position to cater.
2. The shooting mound is very bumpy and uneven and requires urgent maintenance and grading to level the mound. I recommended some urgent works to upgrade the shooting place and support Toni Hulme's email to the Committee yesterday regarding the Range and on-going maintenance.
3. Note that running around the paddock is dangerous and athletes are subjected to rolling their ankles. Consequently we quickly changed to running in and out from the hut side and kept to the made track. It would be great to link this track up with a range loop.
4. To continue to focus on 'training fitness' on these camps and to target high level development. An element of fitness testing should be included. It is the belief of Nick and myself that for athletes who do not have good fitness or good technique that they should be assigned a coach to work with them on this, as Barry did with our new athletes. Here I recommend a greater emphasis on fitness and ski training to get ready for the winter and less on shooting for such athletes. The athletes who are already fit and have good technique can do more shooting. NSWXC and Biathlon will not have any

development athletes at such camps as Biathlon in NSW, given our limited resources is a 'state' level program and an appropriate level of XC skiing is necessary before athletes can graduate to Biathlon NSW. We encourage those who wish to do Biathlon in NSW to join our NSWXC Squad and commence shooting at an approved Range under the guidance of a shooting coach.

5. To discuss possibilities to run a National training program early July in conjunction with our NSW program. We will discuss this at our committee meeting on the first weekend in May.