

## Rupholding Report by Cameron Morton

Hi,

An update to you all with our progress at the British National and Military Biathlon Championships (23rd – 30th January), Rupholding, Germany.

We have 7 Australian athletes competing here in Rupholding along with several hundred Brits including civilians, the Army, Navy and Air force. It has been great to hear the British coaches comment about the improvement of all of our young athletes.

I have only Damon and Alex Lewis competing from my team as Daniel is now on a separate program preparing for World Youth Juniors in Finland.

So far we have participated in the U17 Super 16 sprint race and the Junior 15km Individual Biathlon event.

On Tuesday our campaign got off to a fantastic start with Damon winning the X C Sprint Race (freestyle). Unfortunately there was a problem with Alex's entry and an official thought he was too old. Although we pointed out the mistake prior to the start he wasn't permitted entry.

Yesterday the two boys ran in the 15km Individual event. This is the traditional biathlon event where for every miss you get 1 minute added to your ski time.

We went into the race with the aim to ski at 90% and aim to shoot really well. Damon had another amazing race and nearly pulled off this race plan perfectly shooting 0,1,0,2. Afterwards he said it was the hardest he has concentrated on shooting, but this concentration just slipped at the end.

Damon finished 4th in U21, just 2.5 seconds behind 3rd. He was 3rd Youth U19 and 1st U17 Boy. Further, he will win an award for being the best shooter for this race which included over 50 participants. A fantastic effort considering he was also the youngest participant. It was the longest biathlon race Damon and Alex have yet participated in, while the course was very flat and advantaged the bigger bodies. The Army didn't want any hills so as to avoid falls and rifles being broken by novices. His result was more credible given that those not far ahead of him included Britain's Youth Olympians (2 years older) for both biathlon and X C, who have both raced in IBU Cup for Britain this season. He also was just ahead of Australia's IBU Cup athlete Dyllan Harmer (5th) who recently qualified for the 2012 World Senior Championship in Rupholding, Germany, (he also qualified in an individual event.)

Alex Lewis also had quite a good race missing 0,2,2,2 and placing 9th Open Junior, 6th Youth and 2nd U17 Boy.

Away from racing we have been trying to relax and enjoy ourselves a bit and take advantage of being in a town where there is actually something to do other than ski and shoot. It has now been 6 weeks away from home and much of our time has been spent in small villages where there is little to do but race and train. With our accommodation we have received a Free Pass to all of the local attractions and facilities in and around Rupholding. So the boys have gone to the Vita Alpina Swim Centre nearly every night and enjoyed the hot pools, water slide, wave pool and saunas. We have also gone up the Rauschberg gondola to see the view of the local area and have gone ice skating.

Not to mention a couple of classic ski tours around the district. I don't know where they get all their energy from.

Tomorrow we will start in a 10km Sprint race. This will be the boy's first ever biathlon Sprint at this Olympic distance. There are 160 entrants so it will be a huge race and great experience for them.

Following are the results of the 15km Individual

1st Callum Irvine – 54:58 – U19

2nd Scott Dixon – 55:50 – U19

3rd Christian Lewis – 57:18.7 – U21

4th Damon Morton – 57:21.2 – U17

8th Alex Lewis – 1:07.25 – U17

I have been very impressed with the way the Brits have welcomed us and also have run the races thus far. I would like to provide a big thanks to all the officials and the Army Winter Sports Association for running the event and allowing us Aussies to participate.

Regards,

Cam