

## The Road to Biathlon World Youth & Junior championships 2011. Valdidentro Italy. 8-9 January 2011.

It sounds like firecrackers going off but it is actually 30 lanes of biathletes zeroing at the opening of official training for the Italian Cup in Valdidentro in Italy.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of January, Dyllan and I took a five and a half hour road trip from our home away from home- Obertilliach in Austria to the town of Valdidentro in Italy. Nestled in between two valleys and swarming with downhillers there is a 30 lane electronic biathlon range. The tracks are cut into the side of a hill and wind their way up the valley.

I attended the team captains meeting which was communicated in Italian and using some basic English and quite a bit of sign language worked out what the course was, our zero lane, start number & start time. For this individual race all the men, junior and youth would race 15km.

Our accommodation at the Alpen Hotel just across the street from the trails was great and they allowed us to wax in their laundry room. Interesting conditions as it was +3 and raining on old snow.

With skis prepared, a good zero and race plan, Dyllan was off for 5 laps of the 3km course. There was a killer hill just as you leave the range that went up for 250m. Thankfully plenty of spectators line this hill and gave encouragement to everyone.

Dyllan shot 2 1 1 2 and gave his all in the ski laps. Of those competing in the youth category he placed 12<sup>th</sup> in a time of 58:01 and 14.7% behind the winner.

The following morning it was all go again for the pursuit race. Dyllan started in a mass group five minutes behind the starter. He skied well and kept with the bunch but crashed on a soft corner trying to stay with them. On the next lap after shooting only 1 penalty he picked up one skier but came unstuck on the same corner. A bit rattled, he continued and shot clean on the second prone shoot. Being near the back of the field his confidence wavered and the two standing shoots were not as solid being 2,3.

The overall result 15<sup>th</sup> shooting 1 0 2 3.

Full results are at: <http://www.sciclubaltavaltellina.it/>

No Q time for WYJCH here but an outstanding effort in a very strong field of Italian talent. We now return to Obertilliach to train for the next race.

Toscha Stopar  
Biathlon Coach

