

British Skibike Team – Race Report 2009

FISB A Race Lungotz, Austria 4th – 6th January 2009

Our racing season started and ended in January due to the Seniors World Championship being moved from mid February to the third week in January. The plan was to enter the annual FISB – A races in Lungotz, Austria from 4th to 6th January and then do some training on our way to Bischofsmais in Germany for the World championships. I like the course in Lungotz where the fear factor is very low so it makes for a straightforward entry to the seasons racing!

Karen and I set off on the 2nd January using the Norfolk Line from Dover to Dunkerque. We go this way for two reasons, firstly it is usually the cheapest and secondly because the long drive back is half an hour shorter when you don't have to go to Calais!! We overnighted in Southern Germany before carrying on to Lungotz where we had hoped to arrive mid morning so that I could start playing on the skibike! At this point I would like to recommend being as far as possible away from the routes from Munich to Austria on Saturday mornings – the exodus to the slopes is horrendous with bumper to bumper traffic for about 50 miles – even the Germans couldn't do more than 40 miles an hour!! The upshot was we didn't get on the slopes until half an hour before the lift closed. I immediately bumped into the German team who told me that there was an Austria cup race the next day and they were going to race in a guest class made up of them and me! I got in two runs before the lift closed – not quite the race preparation I had in mind!!

The weather was glorious the next day, as it was for the whole time we were out there and the piste was in superb condition even for the guest class which went at the back. There were two slalom races and I managed to improve my time by over 3 seconds in the second run – good training for the FISB A races to come. I spent the rest of the day practicing with the Germans including them letting me use their gates. Great fun but after about 30 trips up the T-bar I was just a little shall I say tired!!

The first race in the “main event” was a Giant Slalom and there were the usual classes (ladies, men, schoolchildren, juniors and the “old fogies” classes of which I was in Class 4). As usual we old timers raced after everyone else and I saw that Bruno Peter the former world champion had arrived to race in my class. He went off two ahead of me so I had no idea of his time. I think I can say that I nailed it on my run and it was great to hear as I crossed the finish line the loudspeaker announce that I had the fastest time of the class – two seconds ahead of Bruno. The looks of disbelief on both of our faces would have made a great picture! He graciously said that he couldn't have gone any faster. He got his own back in the Super G the next day beating me he thought by two seconds. So it was down to decimal places for the combined times but the organisers decided to ratchet up the tension and make us wait until the prize giving. Then the placings in our group were announced in reverse



© D. Osbaldeston

Denis Osbaldeston with his Gold medal!

order just to make it more interesting and when the names were announced the room broke in to uproar – I had beaten Bruno by five hundredths of a second!! I haven't let the result change my life in any way!!!

Austrian Championships Lackenhof and Training at Aigen Hochficht, Austria

When I came down off cloud nine I asked if I could be a vorlaufer for the Austrian championships taking place that weekend in Lackenhof about three hours from Lungotz, so Karen and I spent three glorious days there with me alternating between skiing and skibiking. I got to lead off in all of the races and posted pretty good unofficial times – it really makes a difference when you get to go before the good guys beat up the course!

We then spent three days sightseeing in Vienna and Bratislava before driving back to Linz Airport to pick up my brother Bill who was making a comeback after 30 years away from the sport. He cleverly got me to carry all his gear in the car so he was able to fly hand luggage only! We drove up to Aigen where we introduced him to my favourite training resort of Hochficht. We managed to get three days of fairly intensive training in before heading off to Bischofsmais for the “Big One.”

Senior World Championships in Bischofsmais, Germany 16th - 18th January 2009

The last time Karen and I had been in Bischofsmais was in 2006 when the championships were cancelled because of too much snow and we were snowed in for two days eventually having to dig the car out of snow which was almost up to the roof! No such problems this time with fast but fair pistes which even Bill was looking forward to racing on after his long rest. We met the English lady racer Natascha Whybra-Dottelbeck at the opening ceremony. She had been training with the German ladies and it was to be her first championships.



Bill & Denis Osbaldeston © D. Osbaldeston

Bruno Peter put me firmly in my place this time beating me comfortably in all three races but he had to settle for second place overall behind Erwin Egger. I managed to claim yet another scalp in Bogdan Stankowicz, another former world champion beating him in the Super G and Giant Slalom by a total of six seconds which I knew I would need because the slalom is not my strongest event and he is as good at it as he was when I raced him over thirty years ago! My first run was disastrous and he made up nearly five seconds on me. I just hurled myself down the second run but he beat me again but this time by less than a second and I was able to hold on to third place by six tenths of a second.

Bill meantime had been quietly improving his times and places and finished a highly creditable sixth overall. Similarly Natascha started carefully but by the last race was fairly flying and finished a creditable fourth in her class.

It was an excellent championship and it was great to have my brother back racing after so long. I wonder is there any other sport where siblings have represented their country thirty three years after first doing so??

By Denis Osbaldeston

British National Championships

Unfortunately this year's Elite World Championships and also the scheduled British National Championships in Ustron Poland were cancelled at the last minute due to a lack of snow. Despite a couple members of the team having already made the journey, in one case a 2 day drive, and witnessing what seemed to sufficient snow depth to hold the races, it turned out to be the correct decision. By the time of the scheduled first day of racing a forecasted warm wind and 20 degree sun had all but stripped the mountain of the small amount of snow that had been present. Luckily for the rest of the team the decision was made early enough to cancel flights and fortunately receive a full refund, as ironically it happened to be the weekend when the UK ground to a halt from 6 inches of snow!

Consequently this season's Elite British Championships was unable to be run, however we did manage to hold a competition amongst our Senior competitors at the Senior World Championships in Bischofsmais, Germany, as detailed by Denis in the above report. The results of which are as summarized below:

Senior Men's Champion: Denis Osbaldeston
Senior Men's 2nd place: Bill Osbaldeston

(Detailed results for the British Championships and all other races is attached.)

So a big congratulations to Denis for retaining the Senior Men's trophy and to Bill for renewing a 30 year old rivalry with his brother – long may it continue!



Denis Osbaldeston

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Finally the British Team would like to thank all our supporters for their efforts over the season, especially Karen Osbaldeston. Also we'd like thank our sponsors: Skibob Association of Great Britain (SAGB - www.skibob.org.uk), SkiBartlett (www.skibartlett.com), Beans of Bicester (www.beansonline.co.uk), Binatone Telecom (www.binatone telecom.com), Skibike Scotland (www.skibikescotland.co.uk) and Skibike Ltd. (www.skibike.net).

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