

British Skibike Team - Race Report 2007

Building on the success of 2006 (a British male breaking into the top ten at the World Championships in Graechen, Switzerland), 2007 saw the British Skibike Team win their first Silver medals in nearly 30 years!

The season started with considerable promise as we welcomed back India Muirhead to the team after an absence of 2 years and although we had a smaller team, we had planned to make it to various race meetings throughout the season.

The first half of the season was dogged by lack of snow, which meant that by the World Championships in February only two World Cup races had been held.

Senior and Junior World Championships in Berg Im Drautal, Austria 22nd - 24th February

Originally planned to be held in Destne, Czech Republic, it was moved at the last minute to the Karnten region of Austria to save it from being another victim of poor snow. The British Team still managed to adjust their plans and was represented by India Muirhead (17yrs), Darren Walker (36), Denis Osbaldeston (59) and Richard Platt (61). Nic Platt also joined the team as Team Trainer and to get some valuable warm up before the Elite World Championships.



British Skibike Team at Berg im Drautal 2007



Ric Platt, Silver Medal, Slalom & Combination

Due to a lack of time the Super G and Giant Slalom both took place on the first day and despite a lengthy walk to get to the finish our supporters turned out in force. The Super G started in glorious sunshine and saw India set the tone by beating one of the Czechs to 7th place in the Junior Girls class (15-18yrs). Darren was the next Brit, some 58 racers later and although finding it difficult to adjust to a rented skibike, managed to beat an Austrian into 10th place in the highly competitive Senior Men's class 1 (30-40yrs). Denis followed in Senior Men's class 3 (50-60yrs) finishing 9th and finally Ric came 4th in Senior Men's class 4 (60yrs+), less than a second from a medal position. No one could wipe the smile off India's face after having beaten all the British 'old timers' for the first time, although

the guys all put that down to her having a vastly superior start number and therefore a far smoother course without any ruts!

There was only enough time for just a few practice runs to get into the rhythm of Giant Slalom before we were looking at the course. India continued her good form coming 9th and leading the Brits again. Darren improved to 9th and Denis to 8th both out of 11 racers. Ric was frustrated finishing 0.10sec from the Bronze medal in 4th again despite Bruno Peter, winner of the Super G, crashing out and cracking a rib!

The second and final day was time for the Slalom. There were the usual 2 separate runs on different courses. After the first course India was lying in 8th having beaten a Polish girl and just 2secs behind a Czech. Darren was 9th and Denis 5th only 0.61sec behind 4th. Ric had a strong run putting him in bronze medal position 0.32secs behind Bernd Flor in silver.

By the afternoon the cloud had descended and poor visibility threatened to cancel the second run but the organising committee took the gamble to proceed and by the start of the race it had cleared up somewhat.

On the second run, India managed beat the Czech but unfortunately not by enough so remained in 8th place. Darren comfortably held on to 9th in his class. Denis dropped to 7th in a tight group but kept an impressive 5th position overall based on his first run. Ric had a blistering second run beating Bernd by just over a second and claiming his first ever silver medal and the first silver medal for the Team in nearly 30 years!

Finally the combination of all 3 races saw India in 8th, Darren 9th, Denis 7th and Ric 2nd and therefore winning his second Silver medal of the Championships!

Congratulations to everyone!

Elite World Championships in Aigen Hochficht, Austria 4th-10th March



There were 68 competitors from 16 nations with a new face amongst the British Team this year to compliment a few of the regulars. Nic Platt (28), Nic Jones (29), Darren Walker (36), Denis Osbaldeston (59) and Richard Platt (61) were joined by Al Lea (29) who claimed the accolade of 'tallest racer' by some distance at 6ft 4ins.

The competition opened with the usual splendour of the opening ceremony which, with the whole championship, was broadcast on Austrian TV (ORF) providing much needed publicity for our sport.

As in Graechen the previous year it started with a 2km Downhill, so the first two days were reserved for training and getting to know the piste that we'd be throwing ourselves down later. In fact the course was reasonable and well within the capabilities of the Team even with it being Al's first international race!

The race was won by David Krejci from the Czech Republic and Nic Platt led the British contingent in 20th place out of 31 competitors. Denis followed, 0.33sec ahead of Ric who in turn beat Darren by 0.76sec. Finally Al convincingly beat his nearest rival by over 3 seconds. Nic Jones unfortunately was unable to make it out for the compulsory timed training run the previous day so was not allowed to compete.

The following day saw the Super G contested on the same piste but with an extra 8 gates. This race didn't count towards the overall combination result so was a chance for us all to push it a bit more. Consequently Denis crashed out and Al was disqualified having not quite got round one of the gates. However, Nic Platt finished 19th only 1.75secs behind the leading pack followed by Darren and Nic Jones. Unfortunately Ric didn't race as he was hosting a BBC TV crew that had offered to run a piece on the Team and the sport in general, which was an opportunity too good to be missed. The Gold medal went to David Krejci.

Day 4 was the Giant Slalom, again held on the same stretch of piste due to lack of snow on the one originally planned but this time with 42 gates. The snow had started to fall after 3 clear days which meant the racers struggled to keep warm before the start. David Krejci continued his dominance and won again. The Brits took a familiar order with Nic Platt leading (22nd) followed by Denis then Ric. However Nic Jones had a solid run and beat Darren by 2 seconds with Al closely behind.

Moving into the last day and the Slalom, the British Team had a strangle hold on the 'B' (non-alpine) Nations title with Nic Platt just having to complete the 2 runs safely to secure it. Denis was lying in 2nd closely followed by Ric. Nic held his nerve to retain the 'B' Nations trophy for the 3rd consecutive time from a field of 6 nations. Ric carried on his excellent Slalom form from earlier in the season to beat Denis by 3 seconds and thus leapfrog him into 2nd place. Darren followed in 4th in spite of an unorthodox attack on the penultimate gate which was overlooked by the gate judge. Al was 5th and won the SAGB's Tony Marsh Trophy, awarded to the best first time racer.



Darren Walker – Slalom at Aigen Hochfich 2007

The overall combination result saw 5 Brits making the top 20 from 31 racers with Nic Platt leading the way at 15th.

British National Championships

The Seniors and Ladies British National Championship was held at Berg Im Drautal and the Elites at Aigen Hochficht. A close fought competition saw Ric regain the Senior Mens trophy that he last held in 2003, India win the Ladies trophy for the first time and Nic retain his Elite Men's trophy.

Mens Champion: Nic Platt
Men's 2nd place: Darren Walker
Men's 3rd place: Nic Jones

Senior Men's Champion: Richard Platt
Senior Men's 2nd place: Denis Osbaldeston
Senior Men's 3rd place: Darren Walker

Ladies Champion: India Muirhead

(A full list of results for the British Championships and all other races is attached.)



Darren about to entertain in true Scottish style!

Finally the British Team would like to thank our supporters, especially Shirley, Karen Welsh, Karen Osbaldeston, Jenny, Creighton and Rohan. Mike Bushell and Nigel Craze of the BBC for coming to find out more about our sport and to Karen Welsh for helping us with the filming. 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), Positive Altitude Clothing (www.positive-altitude.co.uk), Binatone Telecom (www.binatonetelecom.com) and Skibike Ltd. (www.skibike.net).

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