

The British Skibob Team Report 2004/2005

A generous offer from the Swiss Snow Bike Team saw Denis Osbaldeston and Simon Marsh driving out to the Sudtiroal in November 2004 to join their pre-season race training session. The cable-car swung alarmingly in the wind on its way up to the Hotel Grawand, perched 3212m on top of the Schnalstal Mountains. Strong winds closed the lifts on the first day with a wind-chill of -37oC, but gave a chance to acclimatise to the altitude. The Glacier below provided a dozen or so teams from around Europe with a steep top section, levelling out to a triple chair-lift, on which to set out their courses. The Swiss were encouraging, providing much needed video analysis and coaching. After two and a half days of hard work, a corner had been turned and new racing techniques had been understood if not mastered.

The pair then entered the FISB-A Race held in Lungotz on 6-7th January 2005, about an hour's drive from Salzburg. Rain and warm weather spoilt the first day's racing, and then falling temperatures meant the piste turned to ice. However, the lessons learnt in Italy must have helped as Denis came 5th in the Super-G in Senior Men's Class 3 and Simon managed 3rd in Senior Men's Class 1.

The following two days were World Cup races. Simon improved his time in the Super-G and finished ahead of Denis, the Japanese and the Turkish racers. A missed gate in one of the Slalom races meant Simon didn't get a combination time, but Denis stayed on course to earn valuable FISB points.

Kevin Rochfort (Senior Men's Class 2) was the only British racer who made it to the Czech Republic for the World Cup race in Jablonec on 22nd-23rd January 2005, where he finished a respectable 20th in the Super-G and 21st in the Giant Slalom. He then went on to race at Destne, Czech Republic, on 4-5th February 2005 where he narrowly missed out on some World Cup points, finishing a respectable 16th in the Slalom and 18th in the Giant Slalom.

By March 150cm of snow had fallen in Austria, and Denis and Simon were joined by Darren Walker, the current Senior British Champion, and Richard Platt for the Senior/Junior World Championships held in Lungotz from 2nd – 6th March 2005, with over 140 entrants from 8 Nations. Excellent conditions and familiarity with the piste helped both Simon and Denis improve on their January times. After a gruelling journey from Scotland, Darren was one of three to miss gate 45 in the Giant Slalom, which spoilt his chance in the British Senior Championships, with Richard finishing a whisker ahead of Denis. In the Slalom race, a mistake by Denis put Richard ahead and 5th in Senior Men's Class 3. Simon took 5 seconds off his previous time in the Super-G, coming in 12th in Senior Men's Class 1. Darren had been working hard at his technique in his favourite discipline and finished just 2 seconds behind in the same class. A determined Denis, clipping a number of gates on the way, finished a commendable 5th in Senior Men's Class 3 and a second ahead of Richard.

The final Combination results for the Seniors World Championship put Simon 12th overall in Senior Men's Class 1 and winner of the British Senior Men's Championship. Richard came in 5th overall in Senior Men's Class 3, one place ahead of Denis, giving them Silver and Bronze respectively in the British Senior Men's Championship.

The next race of the season was the World Cup Final in Missen, Germany, from 11th-13th March 2005, which saw the Elite Men battle it out for the final World Cup points of the season and for the overall title of World Cup Champion 2005. Missen also served as the stage for the British racers to contest the British Elite Men's Championship. The first day's racing was Giant Slalom, of which a Combination result was taken from the two different courses raced, where Nic Platt, the current British Men's Champion, finished in 19th place, and his brother, Tim Platt, in 21st place despite losing a footski three gates from the finish. Richard Platt just managed to finish ahead of Denis in 22nd place. The Slalom followed the next day, where the drama continued as Tim Platt crashed out six gates from the end, this time obliterating his footski completely and ruining his chances in the British Men's Championships! Nic Platt came in first amongst the British racers and 20th overall, with it becoming British Men's Champion for the fourth year running. Again Richard Platt edged Denis Osbaldeston in the Slalom, finishing 2nd in the British Men's Championship with Denis in 3rd place.

(Simon Marsh / Tim Platt)

The British Skibob Team would like to thank our generous sponsors and supporters: **Ski Bartletts, Skibob Association of Great Britain, Beans of Bicester, Positive Altitude clothing, Skibike Ltd, Racer Ready magazine, Binatone, Rudd Chains; and our travelling support: Shirley Platt and the Osbaldeston family.**

British Skibob Team 2005:

Elite Men's Class: Nic Platt, Tim Platt

Senior Men's Class 1 (30-40yrs): Simon Marsh, Darren Walker

Senior Men's Class 2 (40-50yrs): Kevin Rochfort

Senior Men's Class 3(50-60yrs): Richard Platt, Denis Osbaldeston.

British National Championships results:

Mens Champion: Nic Platt

Men's 2nd place : Richard Platt

Men's 3rd place: Denis Osbaldeston

Senior Men's Champion: Simon Marsh

Senior Men's 2nd place : Richard Platt

Senior Men's 3rd place: Denis Osbaldeston