

# Finding your mojo



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The season is coming to an end, the alpine World Cup season anyway, and we are here in beautiful Are, Sweden for the finals. So far the men's, and women's downhill events have taken place and today will be the super G discipline.

I sat out the downhill finals this season after missing the top 25 by one point. That was a little tough to swallow! Kelly VanderBeek and Emily Brydon raced, placing 9th and 14th. In the men's race the Norwegian Viking, Aksel Svindal took the win and the Canadians finished with three in the top 10. This was another great result for the guys after their spectacular weekend in Kvitfjell last week where Manuel Paradis picked up his first World Cup win and a double podium weekend. It was great to watch and cheer them on.

In this past week, since the races in Bansko, Bulgaria, I have been doing a lot of reflecting on the season and on my preparation. I had big expectations coming into this World Championship year and have definitely not been satisfied with my results. I know that I can perform better out there on the race course.

In the sport of alpine skiing there are so many factors that can affect your mental state, which then affects your performance out on the slopes. It may have been a tough season for me but I know that I will come out of this year knowing more about what I need to do my best.

It's not just the technical aspect of your skiing, or the physical aspect of your strength. Your head lays a big part of the whole puzzle and within that there are many areas that can affect your top mental state. I had someone tell me once that it's like having eight plates spinning in your hands, and each one signifies a certain area of your life. When all are spinning then everything is cruising along and we are happy. But when one or two areas start to slow down and stop spinning then your mental focus and overall well-being can be thrown a bit. It's always about making adjustments, listening to your gut and listening for the signs of fatigue, mental and physical.

The World Cup season is long and arduous. We spend months at a time away from home, and away from our families and loved ones. And don't get me wrong, I absolutely love my lifestyle and my sport and wouldn't change it for the world right now.

However, it is very important to be aware of those small factors that affect the big picture of your daily life. Whether it's looking at the schedule to find a few days to get home, or finding a few days on the road here and there to break away from the team.

This week in Are, since I haven't been racing the downhill, I have been training for giant slalom and some super G while the girls are in the training runs. It has been great to get back into some training and I have been getting some great feelings back on my skis.

The freedom feels like it has returned to my skiing, and I think it's because last week, having had some time off, I finally had a chance to sit back and reflect on the season. It's all about finding that mojo!

This spring and summer will bring changes for me in my training and in my focus towards my training. All are good things and I am really excited about getting prepared for it. First things first though, I may need a vacation in there!

Up next for the Canadian team will be a camp in Whistler on the Olympic hills. Both the men's and women's teams will be there and we will have a total of 10 days of training. I hear it's snowing there right now which probably isn't good for those of you who want to powder ski, but for us racers the cold, hard snow is perfect!