

The End is the Beginning



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I sit down to type this article in a wonderful jet lag daze after returning from Europe and feeling very happy to just be home. Well, for one day anyway, but that's better than nothing! I am also thankful that this will be the last jet lag that I will be dealing with in the next few months because I really love waking up at 4 a.m., wide awake!

I have just returned from Bormio, Italy where the World Cup finals were held and by the time this hits print I will have been in Quebec City for two days of racing and then finally out to Whistler for the end of the week. Wow!

My last two weeks or so in Europe went well, besides the fact that events were cancelled. We started off in Germany for a giant slalom race, which was cancelled because of bad weather. Really high winds, pouring rain and fog doesn't really provide for ideal racing conditions! So, Emily Brydon, myself, and Rob Boyd packed up our van, known as "bluey" and drove seven hours to Switzerland. I should add that the day before we had driven five hours from Austria to Germany.

At least I got to play some Guitar Hero with the tech team girls; that made the trip worth it. On the same weekend the men's team was up in Norway where they raced two downhills and a super G. They walked away with some great results; Manny Osborne-Paradis was top-five in the downhill and Robbie Dixon just missed the podium and came away with a career-best fourth place finish in the super G. The race hill in Norway was a brand new track for Robbie, which makes his result even more impressive.

The following week it was off to Switzerland, to the wonderful resort of Crans Montana. It was my first time visiting the resort and I had a great time. We stayed in a great little hotel and were treated very well. It was also really nice to be in the French speaking part of Switzerland because I could actually speak the language, although most of the staff in the hotel and people in the town were actually Italian! I am working on that language too... Bonjourno!

That weekend we raced a downhill and a super combined. I skied well in the downhill with a few little mistakes and settled for a sixth place finish. It is a great placing but I am finding myself no longer being satisfied with just sixth! But it still is good to be amongst the top girls every weekend, and with that result I solidified my overall third place ranking in the downhill standings.

From Switzerland it was off to our final stop in Bormio, Italy where I could finally practice my Italian, sort of. I could probably communicate with a three year old at this point.

We arrived driving through the rain, and immediately had a training run the following day. It would end up being our only run down the track because unfortunately the weather did not co-operate and both the men and women's downhill races were cancelled. On the day that the men's training run was cancelled I was actually sitting out on the balcony of my room in shorts and T-shirt reading a book! I really did enjoy the track in Bormio, it was really fun to get a chance to run the course there.

However, it is a little hairier in December when the guys race the World Cup. At least in March the sun is on the hill and the snow is a little more forgiving.

Conditions throughout the week were very spring-like and a little on the warm side for ski racing. But, the rest of the events went off fairly smoothly and at the end of the week all of the globes were awarded for each discipline. They also awarded the globes for the other FIS events on the same night and I was completely unaware of this at the time.

The snowboarders and freestylers were there and we got to see many of the other Canadian athletes getting awards in their respective disciplines. I also caught up with Maëlle Ricker briefly over a glass of champagne to celebrate our results. It was really great to see some other Canadians there.

I am happy to be back on Canadian soil and very happy to be returning with a third place medal in the downhill standings — I really don't feel like I am number three in the world but it will be nice to try and be number one next season. We had a great season, Kelly and Emily both finished in the top-10 in downhill and Emily also finished in the top-five in super G.

You might be able to catch us training in Whistler over the next few weeks as we get next season underway, and we will take advantage of the opportunity to get some runs in on the women's Olympic track. I also hope to get a little powder skiing in.