

World Cup Week in Whistler



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As I pushed out of the start gate for the first training run in last weeks downhill and heard the course workers cheering away, I almost couldn't believe that I was actually going to be running the new women's track. "Finally," I said to myself. It was such a great moment that first day; the sun was shining, and the snow was hard (as we racers like it). All week I tried to really take everything in, because there will never be another first time down that track. I took in the views, the feelings, and the course and enjoyed every moment.

I had such a blast that first day and I am pretty sure that the rest of the World Cup field did to. All I heard that day was about how everyone liked the course.

The new women's track in Whistler is quite technical. It starts in the steeps and with some turns and it doesn't stop until you are at the bottom. Many of our other downhill tracks on the women's circuit are quite different compared to this one. Usually there are much longer turns, more flats and softer terrain.

This means that overall you are traveling at a faster speed but the Whistler track feels just as fast as others because you are constantly going over terrain, jumps and around sharp turns. This course is one that will benefit girls who are very good technical skiers and who feel comfortable in the air.

I really enjoyed racing at home and getting a chance to show the Whistler crowd what we do all winter long. Some people asked me if I felt any added pressure because I was in front of my home crowd and to be quite honest I didn't. If anything I was calm and relaxed because I knew my surroundings. A good friend of mine wrote me an email last week before the races and in it she included a quote from Billie Jean King. She said, very simply, "pressure is a privilege..." And she is right.

It is great to write about my experiences in my articles but last week I felt like now I could share it in action. I felt comfortable and at home racing in Whistler and on the new track and I think the rest of my teammates did too. I loved pushing out of the start gate and hearing the course workers and the crowd cheer my name, and cheering for Kelly, Emily and all the other Canadian competitors. It gave us a lot of pride and it was inspiring. We don't get that in Europe.

We raced hard over the weekend and I know that every one of the Canadian athlete's wanted to step onto the podium for the fans but unfortunately that didn't happen. Eric Guay had a fourth as did I, and John Kucera finished fifth in the giant slalom. We were oh so close, but come 2010 I truly believe that it will be the others nations that will be oh so close. As a team and as a country we have what it takes and we are building towards being the best; this is just the warm up.

Coming up next for the Canadian team is a final few weeks of racing in Europe. This coming week I will be joining our tech team along with Emily Brydon to race the World Cup Giant Slalom in Germany, and then a downhill in Switzerland. The men are in Kvitfjell this weekend and then will follow that up with a giant slalom and slalom in Slovenia. Everyone will finally meet up in Bormio, Italy for the World Cup Finals.

I want to thank everyone who helped out at the World Cup events last week and also a big thanks to all the supporters who came out to watch the races. We love hearing you cheer for us and we especially like racing in Whistler. And I can't forget to thank Mother Nature for cooperating!