

## Katerina Paul

### 2016/17 Overseas Report



My season began in Sun Valley, Idaho. I am starting to sound like a broken record but it has become such a great base for me training and it feels like a second home.

I was initially training with the Sun Valley Post-graduate team and the Sun Valley Gold Team, an inspiring group of individuals that made me really enjoy training and travelling. I competed in the first part of the American Race circuit (Super Tour); my first races went pretty well, looking back I know I should be happy with the results I achieved during my first year as a Senior/U23 athlete. Luckily I managed to qualify in top 30 in both of my Super Tour sprint races, which I was pleased about.

I planned to come over earlier to train and race while I was waiting for the Australian Junior Team to come over in preparation for the FIS World

Junior/U23 Championships. Once the team arrived I moved into the AusXC House and continued to train under Rob Jones, the team travelled to Utah for US Senior Nationals, disappointingly I was sick for most of it and I barely got to compete only in the two sprint races, which on reflection I probably shouldn't have raced in as it didn't help the weeks training leading up to U23's. We continued to do a couple of minor races but nothing too important to finish off the rest of our time in Sun Valley.

My first U23 World Championships didn't feel as foreign as it has in the past at



*FIS Nordic World Championships Lahti Finland  
5km ;classic qualifying race – 3rd place*

previous World Juniors, I had raced at Soldier Hollow in Utah before and as I said earlier America has become somewhat of a second home. Despite it being familiar, it didn't make it any easier for my races. The jump from junior to U23 was hard as the quality of skiers improved so much. I was feeling a little down about my week there as I know I could race faster, but there are plenty of ups and downs, I tried to just put all my disappointment aside and put my motivation into my next big jump in Europe.



*FIS Nordic World Championships Lahti Finland  
Womens Sprint*

I flew into Europe and travelled to Estonia, where I met up with the World Cup/Senior Team. Suddenly going from oldest to baby on the team, it was nice change because I don't really know what I'm doing yet and I could take it as an opportunity to learn from our best!

My first World Cup was the main focus of my time in Estonia, I have never been so nervous but I came away with a "better than imagined" result, placing 54th.

The result gave me some much needed motivation and happiness coming into my first Senior World Championships, a huge two weeks for me, and the team. The support of the coaches Valerio and Rob along with our hero wax techs Randy, Bryan and Paul was amazing. I couldn't have asked for better support. I placed 3rd in the 5km Classic Qualification, a minor race for people looking to qualify for the distance events, I also competed in the skate sprint, team sprint and the relay. Which thanks to Jess, Aimee and Barbra's set up allowed me to not get mown down by the Norwegian

relay team, a historic day for us as it was the first time in 24 years that an Australian female relay team has not been lapped out!

Next up was a real highlight of my trip, travelling for the first time to Norway for the Drammen City Sprint World Cup. Luckily I was there with Drammen veteran Phillip Bellingham, as he showed me the layout of Drammen and without his and Rob's help I would have been truly lost, and clearly no clue in what I was doing.

My result at Drammen gave me my first-ever individual "Wooden Spoon", but it was such an experience and I loved every bit, so I am so grateful to finish on a positive note to end my season.

Thank you so much to BNSC for the support over the years, it is beyond appreciated! I am looking forward to the season beginning and to continue on racing into the future.

Katerina Paul

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