

Phil Bellingham

2016/17 Overseas Report



This season I had mixed expectations for how well I would go. I did a lot of hard training early in the year but had some unfortunate injuries from playing football during the Australian season which set me back a bit then did some hard training again before heading overseas.

I also changed things up a bit this year with my coach. I decided not to return to

Sweden with Callum Watson as I had the opportunity to work with Valerio Leccardi the new Australian team coach. We started working together in October in Mt Beauty before I headed over to his home town Davos, in Switzerland. I had about 3 weeks there to adjust to the altitude and get some time on snow before the first races for the season.

The first few races started surprisingly well. There were three weekends of racing in a row, a Swiss cup, a World cup in Davos and a Continental Cup. In these races I managed some of my best results to date and also achieved a result in the top 60% of the field in the World Cup sending my possible Olympic qualification in the right direction. These races really put me in a good mind set and put any doubts I had about my form to rest.

This form was very short lived as I then plummeted into a large form slump. I raced the first two stages of the World Cup Tour De Ski and the high aspirations I had recently developed were cut down pretty quickly. I didn't have the spark I needed, I felt flat and had potentially over done the training leading into the event. I came out with some pretty average results and wondering what I had to do to turn things around. The following week at the Continental cup in Slovenia it was a similar story.

I took some lighter weeks in terms of training load and soon things started to turn around. The following week I showed some better form. I was about 8 seconds behind the winner at the World Cup sprint in Toblach, Italy and feeling a lot better about where my skiing was headed. The following week I had the opportunity to race a city sprint in Eastern Czech. The race is held throughout an old power plant and with a big crowd it's a good atmosphere. With a good feeling back about me and a little luck along the way I somehow managed to come away with a win there which I was stoked about.



*Phil (right) with team mate Callum Watson
New Korean Olympic Stadium for 2018*

The following weeks held some ups and downs. In the World Cup in Falun, Sweden I felt great but about 300 meters from the finish line I caught my ski tip in the snow and face planted, so that was a major missed opportunity and a frustrating piece of humble pie I had to eat. The following week we flew to South Korea to check out the Olympic venue for next year. Korea was an interesting place with a bunch of super nice people. The World Cup races went quite well here too. I finished 38th in the classic sprint and Callum and I were just 3 seconds away from qualifying for the final in the team sprint. Another one of those “just missed out” moments.

The team then regrouped in Estonia for a training camp and a few races before heading into world championships in Lahti, Finland.

These World Champs’ races were really enjoyable for me. The events there this year suited me with the opportunity to finally race a skate sprint at World Champs. I ended up in 43rd in the skate sprint and felt like my form was pretty

solid. Paul Kovacs and I then went on to have solid races in the Team Sprint together as well as the 15km Skate. I decided to start the 50km skate which wasn't originally on the plan but I thought I'd give it a go. Luckily for me, being the heavy lad that I am, the race course set up as hard as a rock like an ice skating rink and I was able to have what was probably the best distance race of my life!

After having a few weeks off from training I am now back in Mt Beauty doing my final Uni placement at the secondary college here and starting to build up my training for this coming Olympic year.

Many thanks again to the Birkebeiner Nordic Ski cCub for their continued support!

Best Regards,
Phil