

## 2019/20 — Overseas Athlete Report

### Adam Barnett



I would like to start by thanking Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club for supporting me financially this season to help me achieve my goal of competing at the World Junior Championships in Oberwiesenthal Germany.

Last year I started the Australian winter very strongly but unfortunately by the end of the season I narrowly missed out on my aim to qualify for the world junior championships in Germany. After weighing up my options I decided to use both AUSXC junior tours in Davos Switzerland to endeavor to qualify in Europe for the championships. I started my campaign with some very strong results in Campra Switzerland in January and undertook some very beneficial training with the team. Our last two race weekends were in Realp, Switzerland and Italy where I had a variety of results but all had positives to take away from them.

After racing in Italy we headed back to Davos on the 10th of February just before Covid 19 took it's hold on Italy. The mood arriving back in Davos was tense as many of us who were aiming to qualify for the World Juniors including myself hadn't managed to do that. The news came to us a couple days later saying that all people on this final section of the trip had been granted a discretionary qualification due to our performances in earlier races. From here the excitement from everyone was building as the competition approached. We left Davos on the 26th of February for Oberwiesenthal.

In Oberwiesenthal all of the athletes were spread across four hotels. Our hotel had the Polish, Russian, Slovenian and Japanese teams along with a few other smaller nations like us. This was really cool to be surrounded by such incredible athletes away from the stadium and race track. My discretionary qualification granted me the opportunity to race the 10km classic individual start as well as a spot on the



relay team. As the 10km was on the 3rd day of competition it gave me time to get settled in and experience my first major championship without the pressure to compete on day one. When it came for my turn to race I was so excited to get out on the course and race my heart out and that's exactly what I did. Although I didn't hit my goals spot on, I raced the best I have ever raced which was really awesome at this level of competition. All the hard work in training had paid off exactly when I needed it to. After this highlight I then had another three days until the relay. On the morning of the relay the four boys set some optimistic but still realistic goals about how we wanted to finish the race. The first classic leg was taken by Declan Burke then I had the second classic leg, followed by Bentley Walker-Broose and Fedele DeCampo who finished with the skate legs. We all smashed out our sections of the race and skied so hard and fast for each other and Australia in challenging conditions. We managed to beat Lithuania and were within 40 seconds of Bulgaria.

Overall I am extremely happy with the outcome of my northern hemisphere winter. Although my 19/20 year was not as straightforward as I would have hoped and my success did not come in the easiest fashion I think I have made the biggest jump in my skiing ability in all parts of the sport. I can firmly say that this has come from the large support circle that I have had over the years and how strong it has been in this past year. This includes my coach Callum Watson and the Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club as well as many other groups, individuals and of course my family. I'm extremely excited to have this circle going into the 2020/21 year and onwards.

My aim is to continue this improvement when we are next able to be on snow and compete. In the meantime I am continuing with my dryland training and preparing for my future competition goals.

*Adam Barnett*

*May 2020*