

2019/20 — Overseas Athlete Report

Brianna Oldis



As a member of the *Junior National Team*, I was delighted to take part on the European tour 2019/2020. The trip was primarily based in Davos, Switzerland over the 8 weeks, whilst also travelling on three separate occasions around Switzerland, Austria and the Italian border.

Reflecting on this trip, I have many special memories and highlights to look back on. Going to different areas within Europe was a huge experience for me, as it was my first time ever on the continent, so getting the opportunities to see the beautiful landscape was amazing. Travelling and racing in Campra, a small village on the border of Switzerland and Italy, was my favourite race weekend on the tour. I loved experiencing the atmosphere that comes with high level racing, due to the fiercely competitive nature of Swiss and OPA Cups (a level of racing just below World Cup). I got enjoyment from the Italian language over the loudspeaker, despite not being able to understand what they were saying, or even if it applied to me. It was truly inspirational getting to watch some of the races, and a standard for all us junior Aussies to aim for in the future. I also really enjoyed the challenging racecourses encountered on both days of racing whilst in Campra, as it pushed me far out of my comfort zone, and I learnt so much about myself as a skier, as well as a racer.

My past few summers were spent travelling around the United States of America, training and racing with various clubs around the country. Although I gained lots of great experience from these trips, there were advantages to travelling alongside my home-team mates too. I thoroughly valued getting to know my teammates more, as well as the coaches.

My main goals, prior to undertaking this adventure, was to stay healthy for the duration of the trip, as well as improve my technique. I had decided to make my objectives unrelated to race results, as I have had many setbacks in the last few years, including sicknesses and serious injuries. I felt that by taking away the pressure of racing well, I was able to stay motivated on prioritising health, which I have learnt is very crucial to becoming a successful athlete! I am proud to have achieved these goals, as I stayed healthy for the entirety of the trip and was able to take part in all three high level race weekends at optimal health. This resulted in me surprising myself with the results that I was capable of. This motivated me to want to train hard and stay healthy for many years to come.

Over the course of the trip, one of the biggest things I learnt was just how amazing our winter in Australia is, and how we are so, so lucky to have beautiful skiing over the winter months. A lot of the places we visited for races were far from the standard of skiing in Falls Creek (In my opinion!). I remain hopeful for the Australian winter this season and I hope to see many others too.

I absolutely loved the trip and I wish that I could relive the whole thing all over again. A massive thankyou goes to the **Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club** for helping me to take part in this journey and thereby strive towards my future goals. The generosity and support from this club helps me, along with many other athletes, to stay motivated and aim high as a Cross Country Ski Athlete.

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