

2019/20 — Overseas Trip Report

Patrick Manning

On the 6th of January I left Melbourne with my family on a flight to Canada, where I would be spending three weeks training in Silverstar, British Columbia. Throughout the trip I trained with two fellow athletes and Birkebiener Nordic Ski Club members: Liam Flanagan and Adam Stecher. I began training the morning after arrival, but I found I wasn't yet adjusted to the new time zone, altitude, and temperature. I learned the importance of commencing my training gently, going for slow skis, and exploring the trails. After several days I was adjusted and ready to start some more serious training, including intervals and technique focussed sessions.

The trails and conditions in Silverstar were outstanding, with daily grooming and perfect snow most days. I was able to see the value of consistent conditions, as waxing classic skis was not so difficult and I could focus on my training instead. Additionally, with such a large range of trails getting bored of them was not a problem, and it was always easy to find the ideal trail for the type of training. As much as I love Falls Creek, it was refreshing to ski on Canadian trails, as there was something adventurous about a new set of trails. The only problem Canadian conditions brought was several days of below minus 20 degrees, which was challenging. We had to restrict our training for these days as the cold air would hurt our lungs and also freeze our glasses.

Training with Adam and Liam was very beneficial as we could learn from each other and it is always better to ski with company. We were able to push each other on interval sessions and keep each other entertained on longer skis. We also had the opportunity to train with Sovereign Lake Nordic Ski Club, which was quite eye-opening to see how they approach the sport. They were serious about their training and had well-structured sessions, which were amazing to be a part of. They all regularly trained with each other throughout the week and were focussed on their team, and training by oneself seemed like an irregularity for the Canadians. It was good to see how friendly and open the Canadians were, as we were welcomed into the sessions with open arms. Although the Canadians were serious about their skiing, there was something familiar in the way they enjoyed each other's company and they loved the sport. Along with the valuable training we did with the club, my best experience was a long ski we did with three Canadian boys at night. We were told that they "*don't use headlamps*" as we followed them down steep curving trails at speed.

I aimed to improve both my technique and fitness from the trip, and I noticed a significant improvement. As well as becoming a faster racer, the trip definitely built my love for the sport and was one to remember. I thank both **Birkebeiner Nordic Ski Club** and my family for the support and making the trip possible.

Patrick Manning
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