

## 2012 Youth/Junior Biathlon World Championships

Australia's Team for the 2012 Biathlon Youth/Junior World Championships (YJWCH) in Kontiolahti, Finland consisted of 4 athletes - Dyllan Harmer, Daniel Walker, Damon Morton and Lucy Glanville - with Nick Almoukov and Cameron Morton in support as coaches, wax technicians, Team Managers and transport. Alex Almoukov also attended the YJWCH during a break in his World Cup/IBU Cup schedule and assisted as Team mentor and training partner. Toni Hulme managed the administration for the Team including competition entries, rifle entry to Finland, accommodation reservations and general communication with the Organising Committee and IBU. The structure of the Team worked well with administration support from Toni who was based in Australia, Alex mentoring the younger athletes and strong coaching and race support from both Nick and Cameron.

This was the largest number of athletes to represent Australia at a YJWCH and all athletes had met the qualifying standard for selection to attend these Championships. Within the Team, Dyllan competed in the Junior (U21) category and Damon, Daniel and Lucy were Youth (U19) category.

All 4 athletes found the competition of very high standard but were still able to achieve encouraging results. For Damon and Daniel it was their first Youth/Junior World Championships while Dyllan and Lucy had both competed previously. The conditions in Kontiolahti were tough – as temperatures were cold with a strong wind blowing across the Range. The previous week's World Cup competition had experienced temperatures greater than -20 degrees, but the weather did warm up somewhat for the Youth/Juniors competition and on Individual race day it was warmer with the temperature around -10 degrees with heavy snow falling at times. The track was quite soft and slow and conditions tough and cold. The large majority of the competition for the Individual Race struggled with the conditions and the average shooting was around 5 penalties.

Results are below:

	Individual			Sprint		
	Place		Shooting	Place		Shooting
Dyllan	80		(3,2,3,2)	81		(2,2)
Damon	80		(0,4,2,3)	67		(1,1)
Daniel	85		(1,2,2,2)	89		(1,2)
Lucy	52		(1,2,1,3)	73		(2,2)

The results of each athlete at these Championships provided the following personal milestones:

- Daniel achieved his personal best in competition shooting after only 14mths in Biathlon



Daniel Walker

- Damon recorded a very strong result in the Sprint Competition shooting exceptionally well to just miss the top 60 cut-off for Pursuit qualification



**Damon Morton**

- Dyllan – the step up into Junior Men from the Youth age category was tough with top athletes in the Junior competition being both strong skiers and fast/accurate shooters. In the past few years, Dyllan has been AUS best performed shooter but the tough conditions in Kontiolahti played havoc with his normal 90-100% shooting accuracy. However, competing in this next level of competition was great experience for Dyllan and has provided a good indication of where he needs to focus to continue his Biathlon development.



**Dyllan Harmer**

- Lucy's performances at these Championships were affected by her travel to and from Canada for 2 IBU Cup events just before this competition and she was not able to match the results she achieved in Canada - where in open competition she recorded a senior World Championships qualifying result.

Her Individual result had been on target to possibly achieve a 40<sup>th</sup> or better result, but an unfortunate 3 misses in her final shooting ended with her placing 52<sup>nd</sup>. A placing of 37<sup>th</sup> would have been possible had she only missed 1 in her final shooting, would have been a personal best for her.



Lucy Glanville

All athletes have further years to compete at YJWCH and their performances in Kontiolahti and the experience gained augur well for future AUS development at the Youth and Junior level. Biathlon in all IBU member nations at this level is progressing rapidly and the number of countries sending teams to these annual Championships is continuing to grow, as are the starting numbers with over 100 starters in the Junior Boys events. 16 nations gained medals in Kontiolahti, which is the greatest number of nations ever and is further evidence of the junior strength in Biathlon worldwide.



The 2012 Youth and Junior World Championships were an important milestone in the elite biathlon careers of these 4 young athletes and there is no doubt that with continued strong training, financial support and sponsorship, they will continue to represent Australia at this high level.

Cameron Morton

NSW Biathlon Coach and 2012 YJWCH Team Coach