

Local talent cleaned up when the best of British returned to Sheffield Ski Village for the fourth UK leg of the AIM Series 2003 – The Artificial Halfpipe Championships 30/ 31 August 2003.

During a sunny Sunday 30+ Freestyle Skiers from across the country came to Sheffield Ski Village to compete in the third Artificial heat of the **AIM SKI** Series 2003 (Artificial, Indoor and Mountain). As one of UK's most developed dryslopes, including Britain's only artificial Halfpipe and static funpark, Sheffield Ski Village is known for its strong freestyle scene. The slope is the training grounds for many of UK's absolute top freestyle skiers and snowboarders; therefore the standard of riding over the weekend was excitingly high.

With Britain's top 4 skiers all being South Yorkshire locals and using the Ski Village for their main summer training, it was the ultimate combat-of-tricks in the pipe. The tension soared when a few of the favourites all messed up their first run of the super final, apart from British Team member, Andy Bennett, Sheffield who was pretty solid throughout the competition. In time for second runs the crowd was hanging on in excitement when, one after one, the skiers seemed to be able to keep their cool and all perform smooth runs. Most spectacular was 'the king of the inverts' **Mike Wakefield** from Wakefield, who after falling in his first run eased through a run of a high McTwist, to an Allie-oup flatspin (540°) to finish with a perfect flatspin, leaving him unbeatable to his fellow contenders. Second place went to British Team member skier Tom Last who also took revenge with his second run of; straight air parallel grab, followed by a flair (backslip 180) and a 540 safety. Bennett finished third with a smooth run of 540 safety, allie-oup opposite and an air to fakie.

The AIM Series is the highest level of competition for snowboarding and freestyle skiing in the UK, following international rules and regulations for judging and course design. A competition circuit of six UK based events grant direct qualification into the **British Snowboard and Freestyle Ski Championships** in Les Deux Alpes, France, March 2004.

The next event on the AIM Series calendar will be the Artificial BIG AIR Championships in Halifax on the 27th and 28th September 2003.