

World Junior Moguls Championships

Press release

Place: Krasnoe Ozero (St Petersburg region, Russia)
Athletes: Ellie Koyander
Andrew Longley
Date: 3 – 4th March 2006

With the temperature hovering around -12 °c, the bumps at the FIS Junior World Moguls Championships were icy and hard. The steep 200m long slope at Krasnoe Ozero in Russia attracted some 80 World Class competitors from the Usa, Canada, Finland, Sweden, Kazakstan, Norway, France , Slovakia, Czech Republic, Belarus, Italy, Germany, Russia, Switzerland and last but not least Great Britain.

After a day of practice and after the qualifying round, the moguls became deeply defined and the ice became like polished glass. The sheer quality of the athletes was evident from the start with nearly everyone it seemed pulling high Degree of Difficulty tricks such as corked 720s, D-spins, Lincoln Loops, Backflips with full rotations. This race was not for the faint hearted and mental control and technical precision was called for.

Our two athletes Ellie Koyander and Andy Longley did exceptionally well in this their first international FIS race coming in 24th and 35th place respectively. If ever there was a misnomer for a competition it is this one. The word 'Junior' implies that this is a children's race however it involves skiers from the age of 15 up till the age of 20 . The race effectively benchmarks the careers of the 'young end of the range' of professional skiers that is to say those who hold an International Ski Federation (FIS) Licence.

The majority of skiers at Krasnoe were 19 – 20 year old hardened FIS racers with over 50 Europa Cup and even World Cup races under their belts. With several of the competitors fresh back from the Torino Olympics our two Great Britain skiers were the youngest competitors in the field by at least 2 years. Their achievement should not be underestimated as they were racing literally against the best young generation moguls skiers in the World and their results were beyond the targets set for them.

Ellie Koyander put in a strong first run with a 360 and twister spread as her tricks . Andy Longley pulled a huge 360 with grab as his first trick followed by a backflip with cross for his second.

The athletes views? Ellie Koyander commented after the race 'although I was a little nervous at being the youngest competitor in the race, as soon as I was in the start gate, the adrenalin just kicked in and I went into racer mode. This has been a career best for me and I was really delighted with my performance getting 16 points in the Worlds . I cant wait to come back to the Worlds next year!'

Andy Longley said after the competition:-

'I have a lot of respect for the guys who came out to Russia. Their skiing was just awesome! I am really pleased with my performance in the race I skied the best ever run of my life and made many friends. It was a fantastic opportunity to represent Great Britain at such an early age !.

Our young Brits are members of a 6 strong development team aimed at 'medalling' in the 2010 Winter Olympics in Canada. Andy and Ellie will take their experience back to the team and next year it is hoped that all 6 will take part in the Junior Worlds.

