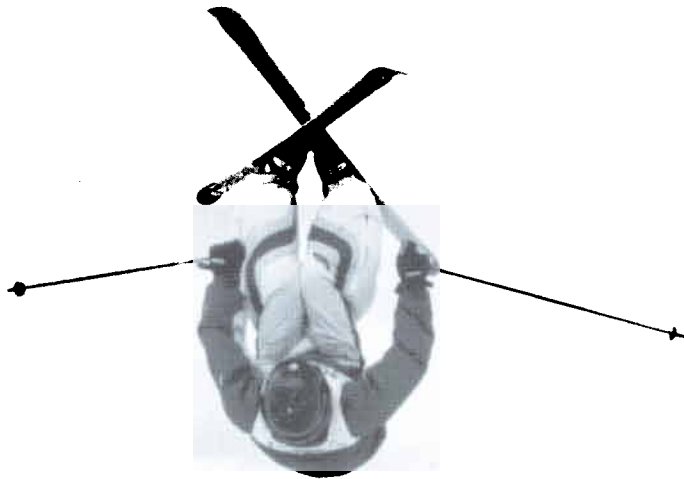


The Olympic Dream?



Since I was very young I have always been awed by the magic of the Olympics. Whether it's watching faultless super-athletes blow the rest of the field away, or an unknown come from nowhere to win, or an athlete try his or her hardest but be denied by injury or bad luck, the emotions are always true. You can easily spot the moments where athletes realise they have won, when their bodies just can't give any more or when they go to stand on a ski for their next turn and realise it's not there any more.

Like many kids, I had the dream of going to the Olympics. Again like many others, by the time I left school it was forgotten. At the same time as I started university, I also started competing in Mogul skiing and loved it. I decided I wanted to spend a year out after completing my course, so I also started saving. Contrary to popular belief it is possible for students to save. You just have to live with your parents, do some evening/weekend work during the term and have 2 jobs during the summer. By the time I neared the end of my course

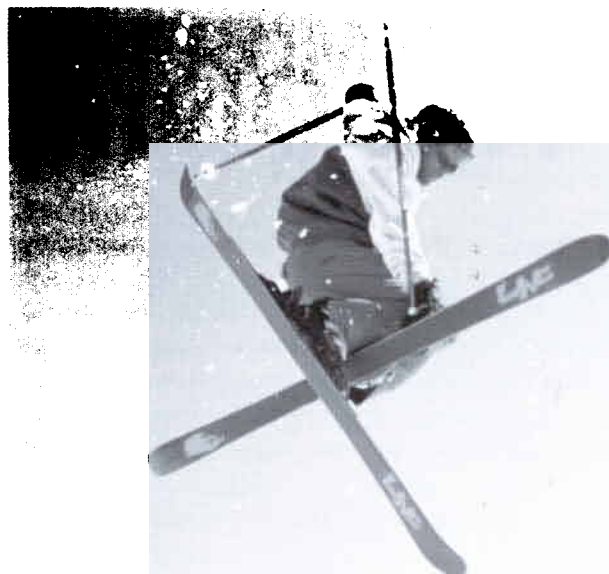
the Moguls were taking over and I was really looking forward to my year out to compete.

Then in February 1998 it happened. During my final year I stayed up until 3am to watch Sam Temple and Tim Dudgeon represent Great Britain in the Nagano Olympics. Both had been generous enough to help coach me and pass on tips, so I knew a little of what they were going through. I was finally starting to know what it must feel like to be there. That's when the Olympic dream came back, but this time it was a possible reality.

During the lead up to the Sydney games last summer, the Olympic torch stopped off in the ski resort of Mt. Hotham, northeast of Melbourne. I was there and was part of the show to celebrate its arrival. I even got to do a Big Air jump through the flame. This fitted in nicely with the start of the qualifying period for the Salt Lake Winter Olympics.

For this season, Sam has already qualified for moguls in his second Olympics, along with Joanne Bromfield. Myself? Well, I'm about to do my fourth

FREESTYLE INTO THE 21st CENTURY



So long has GB Freestyle been lost in the maze of confusion, working insilos, living in the shadow of both Alpine and lately Snowboarding. But now in the 21st Century, British freestyle is coming back with a vengeance. Emerging stronger, fully focused and working together as a team is a bunch of talented athletes = The Next Generation GB Freestylers.

Getting their act together in all department was crucial. Not only was it important for the athletes to start working together as team but also for the organising body of Freestyle. What has changed? Firstly setting out a full plan of the financial needs to run a full squad for the next five years. The next is the search to find and appoint an experience coach with a team including an assistant, fitness trainer and physio. All this is now under way and with the high profile the team have had at the recent London Ski Show has resulted in the opportunity of possible major backing. With the management dealing with all this, it leaves the athletes free to concentrate on their training and focus on achieving success on the slopes.

The Freestyle athletes have a tough schedule to run through to perfect their style and technique, with fifty percent of the work on the slope and the other in the gym. Lets talk about the physical fitness that is needed to keep these guys in tip top shape. The muscles that need the attention of toning are the thighs, abs, abdominal, biceps, back and wrist, but it is important not to build these up too much because their body must remain flexible to absorb the bumps and perform their tricks on the jumps. The exercises in the gym are with light weights with three or four repetition which will include plenty of stamina work

using the bike, rowing and running machine. Sometimes for stamina and flexibility the athletes will take part in hour long spin classes (locked in a room on a bike with several others and a crazy instructor, exercising to loud music). Moving from the toning of the muscles and stamina the next stage is to perfect their jumping technique. One of the demanding part of the freestyle course are the jumps and to train for this the athletes usually use a trampoline (sometimes with skies on) and water jumps (like those in Sheffield). Getting the body fit and mind focus is important, but then getting on the snow to practise turns and jump on the course is as important. Getting to know the course, its speed, bumps and lift from the jump assist the athlete to perfect their run. Practice as they say makes perfect and these Freestyle athletes will spend as much time as possible doing just that.

Putting all this together without any other worries will lead to success for these athletes. Already we have seen some fantastic achievement from some of the young guns. For the 2002 Olympics we have Sam Temple and Joanne Broomfield who have already qualified with a third Freestyle skier, Simon Bates, training hard and hopeful to achieve a qualifying place. But it is more for the 2006 Olympics in Italy that Freestyle will be a force with the likes of Andy Bennett, Martin Nankoo, Chris and Andy David, Laura Donaldson and Stuart Greenshields showing great promise to join Simon and Joanne in pushing for qualifying position. In the coming months we will bring you profiles and progress of all these Freestyle skiers, but keep a look out until then, the Next Generation GB will be making headline one way or another.