

Welcome to 2010: Megan Tandy Athlete Update

2010 is here at last: the year we have all been waiting for! This year has represented the Olympics for me for so long that I almost can't believe it has really come. This fall I spent almost 4 months in Europe starting this September and stayed through until after the first World Cups of the season. My coach and I planned my fall this way with the goal of reducing the stress of travelling overseas and to take advantage of some great training opportunities. It feels great to be home after such a long trip, but it was definitely worth the extended travel plan!

As you may remember from my last update, my trip to Europe started out with Summer Biathlon Rollerski Championships this September. All my hard work and determination, in combination with some awesome coaching and the support of people like you, paid off with 2 Gold medals ending my time in the Junior Category as Junior World Summer Champion. After the races I began a 4 week training camp with the BC High Performance Team and coach iLmar Heinicke.

Skihalle...Switzerland...Early Snow...& Norway

For the first 2 weeks after the rollerski races our team stayed in Oberhof, Germany where we trained in the DKB Skihalle. This meant that we were able to ski indoors in perfect conditions on a 1km track in the mornings and continue our training with rollerskiing, biking, strength and shooting in the afternoons and evenings. It also made this the earliest ever I have been able to train on snow before the season, which is a huge benefit!

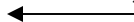
After our time in the skihalle we spent 5 days in Andermatt, Switzerland where we rollerskied passroads in the Alps. It is one of my favourite areas and one of the most beautiful places I have ever been. Soon after arriving our coach heard about early snow in Oberwiesenthal so we packed up and headed towards the skiing in mid-October.

We spent the next 10 days as guests of iLmar's parents and were able to ski and shoot on real snow for the first time this season. The early snow time was great and we had some lovely ski sessions! Coach iLmar and my BC team mates headed back to Canada near the end of October and I stayed another week with iLmar's parents - this time focusing on some rest and recovery.

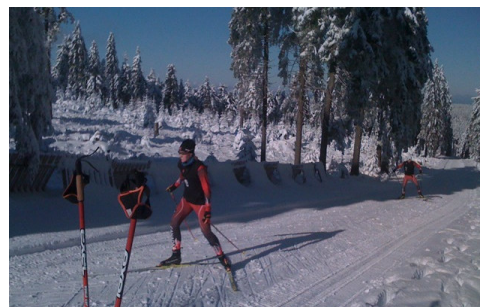
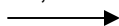
For the next 4 weeks of training I stayed as the guest of my first High Performance coach, Knut Tore Berland, in Lillehammer, Norway. It was a great change of scene and I was able to train on more snow in Susjoen alongside many other national team athletes from around the world. Training with so many other athletes was motivating and exciting and made me eager for races. It was also wonderful to be on snow yet again. I have never before had so much training time on snow before the season and I was very excited and felt very lucky with the opportunities I had this year. During my time in Norway I raced the first Norwegian Cup in Beitostolen as well.



Rollerskiing a Passroad near Andermatt, Switzerland



Skiing on Early Snow in Oberwiesenthal, Germany



Ready for Racing:

Near the end of my time on Norway I traveled to Beitostolen with Knut Berland and the Norwegian Team to race the first Norwegian Cup of the season. The races were really competitive because they were also the selection races for the Norwegian World Cup Teams. It was great to do some low pressure races, especially to gain some mental edge before the first World Cups. The first race went well and I placed 9th, the 2nd race was not as good with 5 misses but it helped me know what I didn't want to do in the upcoming World Cup races. After the races and another week of good training I travelled to Sweden where I joined our Canadian National Team for the first World Cup Tour.



Mass Start Race in Beitostolen

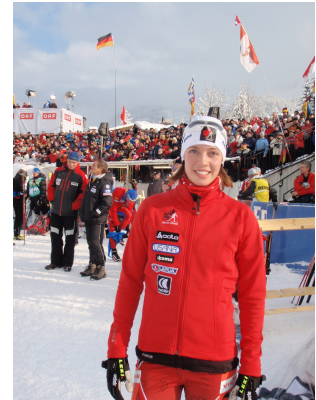
During my first week with the Canadian team we trained in a tiny town called Bruksvallarna in Sweden near the Norwegian border. It was pretty quiet and we were able to have a relaxed week of training together before we made the 2 hour drive to our first World Cup Site in Oestersund.

Off to the Races: World Cup 1, 2 & 3

The first World Cup was in Oestersund, Sweden. I was really looking forward to the first major races as I felt confident about my training and was eager to see how much progress I had made since last season. The first race was a 15km Individual. The race started out awesome and I went into my fourth and final shooting with only 2 misses, unfortunately I felt very unstable and missed 3 of my last shots placing me in 93rd. Overall I was disappointed with the result but I was motivated by the analysis – looking at my overall ski time and shooting time let me know that my goal of placing top 60 was within my reach if I could bring everything together for the right race. The next day I became very sick with some sort of 24 hour stomach flu or food poisoning. It is never fun to be sick on tour and it caused me to miss the next races and forced me to take a few days of recovery before I could begin training and prep for World Cup 2.

The second World Cup was in Hochfilzen, Austria. I was feeling pretty tired leading into the race but began to feel more race ready in time to start. Despite not feeling in prime condition, the sprint seemed to start well with clean prone shooting. I thought that things were going well, but the reality was that I had crossfired – shot the targets in the wrong lane. In terms of the race this mistake is the equivalent to missing all five targets. I have never quit a race and despite knowing that a good result was not possible I chose to ski my 5 penalty loops and continue racing. I have never crossfired during a competition before, and I am sure after this experience that I will never crossfire again! I had a chance to redeem myself during our Women's Relay where I had the best shooting on our team and skied the second fastest leg. It was a fun race and I felt completely recovered from the previous weekend's sickness. It was also good for me to prove to myself that I had it in me to put everything together.

In the Warm Up Pen Before the Relay Race →



With Recovery Drink Minutes after finishing the Sprint

The third and final pre-Christmas World Cup was in Pukljuka, Slovenia. This was my first time racing at this site and I loved the hilly race course. I was really determined to do a top 60 race and qualify for the Pursuit, especially since the previous 2 race weekends had been disappointing. The first race was another 15km Individual and this time I had a faster ski time kept the shooting well controlled. With 18 hits I placed 35th and made my first ever World Cup points. I was really pleased with the race and super excited for the upcoming Sprint. The Sprint race was on a very cold windy day which made for tough shooting conditions. I hit 8/10 and was the 30th fastest skier (my best World Cup ski time to date). I placed 21st and was thrilled to be in the top 30 and to have such a good starting position for the next day's Pursuit race. It was also great to see and feel the improvement in ski speed. I could feel the affect of the previous 2 races in my legs and was not feeling quite as strong for the Pursuit, but I skied hard and shot well with 17 hits placing 35th for the second time. Overall I was completely satisfied with the last World Cup: 3 times in the top 40, my first world cup points and my first pursuit. They were not perfect races but they were good ones and they helped give me an idea of my potential and confirmed we are still on the right path with my training. Not a bad start to my first year in the Senior category!

Olympic Qualifications & What Comes Next

Based on World Cup Results I qualified for the Olympics ranked 2nd overall in Canada. As of now Biathlon Canada will send the names of the top four qualified athletes to the COC, the COC will then approve and nominate those athletes to the Olympic Team at which point Biathlon Canada will be able to officially name and announce our Olympic Team. The Team will be announced near the end of January. For me, this means that I know I will be racing in the Olympics and although the ranking of the qualified athletes is public, I cannot officially say I am on the Olympic Team yet. For myself I am thrilled and as motivated as ever - I cannot wait until the Team is official so I can share it openly with everyone!

After a brief Christmas break with my family I had intended to travel to race another 2 World Cups in Germany and Italy; however, I caught a cold shortly after Christmas and based on the recommendation of my coach as well as a sports doctor and the national team coach I have chosen to stay in Canada and train over January in preparation for the Games. I will train here for the next weeks before joining the Olympic team for a training camp in Mt Washington, shortly after which we will move into the Athlete Village in Whistler. The Games will be underway before we know it!

Thank you once again for all you have done to support me and help me succeed along this journey. With every good training session, every successful race and every qualification I am better able to represent Canada and the people who have helped me to get here. We are now just over 1 month away from our Olympics and I have never been prouder to wear the maple leaf. Thank you for everything and I wish you a Happy New Year!

Sincerely, Megan Tandy

www.megantandy.com