

2009 World Championships

Liberec, Czech Republic

The World Championships of 2009 have come and passed. For the past two weeks Team Canada including myself have been staying in Liberec, Czech Republic competing daily. Our accommodations were simple but spacious in the Liberec University dorms. Our team started out with some disappointments but finished strongly with impressive results.

I competed in the fifteen-kilometer individual classic, the two-man sprint relay, and the four-man ten-kilometer relay. I would rate my success a seven out of ten. A ten would be finishing within all of my performance goals. In the fifteen-kilometer classic I skied very well and finished twenty-first. I was happy with the result for the given day but knew if the conditions had been perfect I could have skied my way into the top fifteen. I was in good shape but the problem was the snow was wet and sloppy, my least favorite, even feared conditions. Twenty-first is my best result at a championship to date so I can be happy with that. My next event was the classic sprint relay. Earlier in the year in the skate sprint relay in Whistler, Alex Harvey and I had teamed up to finish in the bronze position. Here I was teamed up with Devon Kershaw and we finished a respectable but disappointing ninth. This is a very good result in general but we knew that if the stars aligned for us we were medal potential. The conditions were again tricky for waxing and I went on skis with not enough grip wax. I tagged off to Devon in seventh place and he had a tough last lap and faded two more positions. We did all we could and skied our hardest and that is all anyone can ask for. The best was yet to come!



(Me racing the second leg of the four-man relay.)

My last race of the Championships was the four-man relay. I teamed up with three other strong men from the Canadian team and we put our work boots on. The race was a fast paced grueling effort. I was the second leg matched up against several World Cup, World Championship, and Olympic medalists. I went so hard that by ten kilometers I was seeing apparitions of Jesus Christ himself. It was only the cold snow on my face that told me I was still with the living on earth. Our team was in the mix at the front of the teams. We bounced around between second and fifth over the course of forty kilometers. With one short kilometer to go we were overtaken by the Italians and skied across the finish line in a historic fifth place and well ahead of race favorites including the Russians, Swedes, and French. The previous best result for a Canadian men's relay team at a Championships was eleventh place. Our effort was commended by several of the competing team's head coaches and coordinators. The top six at championships go to the medal ceremony to receive a crystal trophy. We were very excited to be on the stage for Canada one spot ahead of a nordic super power like Sweden.



(From left to right: George Grey, Devon Kershaw, Alex Harvey, Ivan Babikov)



(Men's relay awards. We are the red team on the right.)

This championship showed that our team is ready to vie for podium positions at the approaching Olympics in Vancouver. From here we will travel to Finland, Norway, and Sweden for the final three weeks of World Cups. It has been a landmark year for me and another couple good results will be icing on the cake. I am looking forward to some more racing and then a good rest in the spring!

Thanks for your support and interest...

George Grey