

World Championships, Russia 2011

Familiarisation finished!

We made our way down from Suzdal to Dubna this past Friday after a couple of days relaxing and seeing the sites, getting our heads straight from jet lag ready for familiarisation yesterday and today (Saturday and Sunday in Russia). The time difference is 8 hours, so as I write this it is 12pm Sunday in Dubna and 8pm Sunday in New Zealand. Thankfully the trip from Suzdal to Dubna was not as memorable as the one from Moscow up north, and we made it in reasonable time – about 5 hours. We had planned on 4 at the best, so we did not have such a car full of crazy skiers as we did on the first day!

We checked into Hotel Dubna (estimated 1 – 2 star hotel equivalent in NZ!) on Friday afternoon - No Air Conditioning in about 33 degrees! Ed and Nicola are at another hotel, and then there is a third hotel for officials as well. Overall, it really does look like the skiers got the short end of the stick with the hotels! More experienced teams like the Brits and the French are staying at hotels of their choice – after being here at past world cup stops they seemed to have it all sussed out.

Cole, James, Lance and Renee along with Ed, Nicola and Annalies have now be joined by Mike, Lynley, Megan and Aaron. I guess we should be thankful that we have a full team that arrived safe with all of our gear! The only injuries to speak of are Megan's MCL in her knee, and this has only been giving her trouble for jump. She jump familiarised this morning though, so with any luck we will see her at 100% in the tournament. Megan and Estaban had a "memorable" experience of their own getting to Dubna, being delayed out of their home town of Baton Rouge in Louisiana, missing their connecting flights and only arriving roughly a day and a half after they should have! Unfortunately, this meant they missed slalom and trick familiarisation yesterday (Saturday) along with the rest of us.

All in all everything is going well. Even though familiarisation consisted of two trick passes (not in the trick course and at the same time slalom was running), two slalom passes and ONE jump only (!), everything looks set for a great tournament. The bank is lined with permanent grandstands which are apparently at full capacity during the competition, so it looks as though the atmosphere will be absolutely fantastic both on and off the water with that amount of spectators. It is certainly a different World Championships to what we are usually used to, with fishing boats and often barges passing us on the other side of the river (the backdrop has almost a Karapiro or Piarere feel to it), but all in all they have done a reasonably good job taking steps to reduce the washback etc.

Competition starts tomorrow with slalom (Cole, Renee and Megan we think), with jump happening a couple of days in. The competition will run from tomorrow (Monday) through to Sunday with a break day/back up weather day on Friday. Aaron is looking in fantastic form after his performances this year to date, and we are really looking forward to watching both him and Megan ski which we don't always get at home.

[Take a look at the photos page](#) where there are some updated images of the site and the team. We will hope to take many more over the coming days with the competition starting and the crowd building. Take a look at www.iwsf.com for the seeding and running orders, and we will also try to get copies of these to put up here. Stay tuned!

The 2011 Worlds Team