

## Monday Report Jan 8, 2006

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The first ever Tour de Ski was a wild ride through Germany and Italy where we raced 6 races in 8 days. The demanding race and travel schedule of the Tour felled my teammates Devon, Dasha and Drew, while sparing Dan even though his name also starts with the letter "d."

Having pin-pointed exactly what I could've done better in Munich, I was eager to go for the win in the Asiago skate sprint on January 4<sup>th</sup>. Everything was going perfectly and with some smooth tactics I entered the finish lanes in the lead in my semi-final. I sprinted for all I was worth but could feel the girls blowing by me in the final hundred meters. I look down and was horrified to see my legs had turned into petrified wood... ok that last part is not exactly true. But that's what it felt like. Having just physically exploded I learned that the B-final, where I would fight for 7<sup>th</sup> place, would be in 15 minutes. The "come on Chandra pull it together you can do this" self-talk was no match for the lactic acid raging in my system, and although I sprinted it out with my old buddy Claudai Keunzel, I came through in a disappointing 12<sup>th</sup> place. It was my best effort, and a reminder of how it feels to come into a sprint after just having done 3 races (it feels bad).

Unfortunately Devon came down with a sore throat the morning of the sprint race and had to pull the plug on his Tour de Ski, in which he was the sprint leader right until illness forced him to quit. It was tough for him to let go of that sprint leader bib without a fight, but it was definitely a much better option than coming home in a body bag and having to waste his World Championship preparation period getting his health back. Hopefully this will also work out for Drew Goldsack, who is quite sick, and Dasha Gaiazova, who bruised her rib in a wipeout in Oberstdorf.

I've persevered on behalf of team Kersh/Crawf and had a great race in the 15km classic race in Val di Fiemme to come 39<sup>th</sup>. This is my 2<sup>nd</sup> best distance result ever (my best is 31<sup>st</sup>) and it was a lot more fun than some of those lonely and discouraging distance races I had at the start of this trip.

I can't tell you how the final stage of the Tour, Sunday's "Hill Climb" in Val di Fiemme went because I'm sending this update before it happens, but it's sure to be a whole new racing experience for our team. We will start this skating race based on our time behind the tour leader and chase the girls in front of us across 6kms of flats before turning up an alpine ski at 33% grade for the final 4km uphill race to the finish line. Wow that is going to be hard.

The skiing will be hard, but the motivation won't be. It's the last race so I'll give it all I've got and empty the tank completely, because on Monday I'll be on a plane home to Canada! Hallelujah! One blissful month in Canmore, here I come. I'll be eating at Crazyweed with friends and family, racing Canada Cups at the Nordic Centre (my first races in Canada in a year and 3 months), getting Fast and Female '07 organized, and driving my new Prius... woo hoo!