



DAVID AND CLAUDIA HARDING
FOUNDATION

Bethany Widdup
Season 2015/16

Update: 6



I will start by telling you about my recent performances at the English Alpine Championships. Having written to you prior to travelling to Italy for the national championships, I stated that a big aim for me would be to win the slalom title, something I have never quite managed to do.

The slaloms were the first events in Bormio which suited me well as I was raring to go and wanted to achieve my goal. The first of the two slaloms unfortunately did not go how I would have liked with me crashing half way down the first run. However on a more positive note I was not injured and this race wasn't actually the national championships therefore I knew the important race was the next day. I spent the afternoon preparing for the following day as this was something I really wanted to achieve.

The race hill in Bormio is always quite an interesting one, it goes from steep to very flat and you never know what the snow will be like. One day it can be very solid ice and the next day it can be very soft. It was very soft for the race and although the course crew did as much as they could it got rutted up very easily, benefiting the earlier bibs in the race. Unfortunately I drew bib 15 in the draw (the top 15 ranked skiers get drawn randomly). I knew that the course would still be in ok conditions and tried not to let that play on my mind. After a very cautious first run, as winning the title meant so much to me, I was pleasantly surprised to see that I was reasonably well placed. After watching my video and seeing what I needed to improve upon for second run, I thoroughly inspected the second run course. My second run was technically quite messy, but often the fastest ones are. I wanted to give it 100% so that I could get to the bottom and think I couldn't have tried any harder. After both runs I ended up as the English Alpine Champion in Slalom, something which I have never achieved before and something that I am really pleased about. Although I knew I was capable of much more, sometimes that is the way it goes in skiing the result is what everyone remembers.





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Following on from the English Championships I then came home to the UK to race for Northumbria University in the finals. I always look forward to these events as it is all about being part of a team and representing the university. I had qualified to participate in two events both the individual and the team event. After being in second place after the first run by 0.02 I really wanted to go one better and take the win and full points towards the university total. After a second run that I could be happy with I managed to take the win by 0.30 and therefore took full points. The team event was next and went in ranked number 1, so there was some pressure on the team to perform. However like most people in duels, we managed to step up and come away with the win, adding to the university total and making it a clean sleep for me. It was really great to be a part of the team and feel like I have helped to contribute to a good number of points.





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After returning home from the English Championships I sat down with my coach and parents both individually and collectively and we all agreed that I had got into a real rut mentally with my skiing. This was stopping me progressing and actually making me go backwards and I ran the risk of a serious injury along the way. I therefore decided that it was sensible to end the season three weeks early, come home rest and recharge my batteries and have a good think about my future direction. I have also sat down with my sports psychologist to look back and try and work out the best way forward.

I hope that you understand my decision to end the season a little bit early and my English Championship win felt like a good point.





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Along with the individual awards Ambition also won the team award.



Helping out with the children's team event.