

FIRST HALF RECAP

FIRST 2 WORLD CUPS

Whistler World Cup

Teamed up with Melissa Lotholz, we had the 3rd fastest pushes in the competition. We were going 2 seconds faster than we had been going the week before in the North America's Cup races. Top speeds were over 142 km/hr. My top of the track was as good as it could get and unfortunately I lost a bit of time at the bottom, and slipped just out of the medals. Needless to say, 4th place on the World Cup is a fantastic accomplishment some people go their whole careers without ever experiencing. My sled loves to fly in Whistler, I can't wait for World Championships there in 2019!

I also would like to note that in the Canadian Championships earlier this season, Kaillie Humphries beat me by almost 3 full seconds. Now, with a faster brakeman and Bagheera the sled, she won the Whistler World Cup, but was only 0.59 sec in front of me. The gap is closing!

Happy New Year!

I hope you all have had a wonderful Christmas season. I wish you nothing but health and happiness in 2017. As the North American portion of the season has come to a close I am filled with so much gratitude for your continued support. It has been an incredible start to the season. Here are the current standings before the Christmas break:



Rank	Athlete	Points
1	KAILLIE HUMPHRIES Kaillie	525
2	HUMPHRIES Kaillie	525
3	HEGGSTAD Christina	390
4	RIBBLING Aleks	378
5	FRANZET Barbara	345

As Kaillie Humphries continues to dominate the bobsled world, this is the closest another Canadian has been to her in the World Standings since 2011. I think I made a huge statement in the beginning part of season to my competitors, teammates, and bobsleigh federations. The message was, "We're here".

Although we are only 2 races into the World Cup season, it feels pretty incredible to be only behind 2 former Olympic medalists and a seasoned World Cup vet. I'm afraid that this ranking will be short lived though. You gain the most points in World Cup races, and I will be missing 2 of these races in Europe. However, my goal of being in the top 10 this year is very realistic, and will set me up for the most success going into the Olympic season next year.



Lake Placid World Cup

Lake Placid, New York is my favourite track. I've been lucky enough to get quite a bit of experience competing there in my first few years in the sport. Europeans are scared of the tight transitions, but I find it exhilarating! It is also notoriously hard to beat Americans on their home track. Their sleds were developed and tested and bred to be exceptional on the track.

In general, I was exceptionally proud of my driving in Lake Placid. I did make one costly mistake in corner 2 on the second heat, but other than that my speeds were impressive.

For the first time what let us down was the push. I was teamed up again Genevieve Thibault and we just couldn't get our mojo back in time. We had the 6th fastest pushes in the competition, but were significantly behind all three American sleds and Kaillie Humphries.

To put it in perspective, they say that 1 tenth faster push at the top of the track equates to 3 tenths at the bottom. Kaillie and her brakeman out-pushed us by 15 hundredths, but only beat us down by 24 hundredths on the first heat, so it goes to show for the first time I may have had better lines down the track!

We finished in 5th behind Kaillie and the 3 American sleds, and retained our 4th place overall IBSF ranking.

The Progression of the Plan for Second Half...

When this season started we already knew Bobsleigh Canada didn't have the budget to send my team to Europe until the end of January. However, because I am ranked too high internationally, I am ineligible to compete on the North American Cup for the remainder of the season. The original plan to go to Park City after Christmas was now toast, and instead my federation had me sitting at home doing nothing until mid-January. This would mean I would miss 3 World Cup races, one on a track I've never been to and will surely be on the tour next year. I was distraught. This was not a coaching decision but an administration issue. Because the hold was strictly financial, I offered to cover the cost of my team going early. Many email and phone fights later, we got the approval on January 1st, and left to Germany on January 4.

We missed the first World Cup race in Altenberg, but arrived early in Winterberg for the second race so we could get some extra training runs in. I've never been to this track, so the goal will not be a top 6 finish. This is unrealistic in a field of 20 sleds, many of whom consider this their home track. Genevieve and I have set a realistic goal of finishing in the top 10. We are just so happy to be here getting this experience so next year we will be ready to contend for a win while qualifying for the Olympics.



Next week, instead of following the World Cup tour to St. Moritz, Switzerland, we will be going to Altenberg, Germany for a week of on-ice training. Altenberg is considered one of the hardest tracks, and it will be good to get some more experience on the track without the pressure of preparing for a race. As much as I would LOVE to race in St. Moritz, the track is made of natural ice and created a bit differently every year, so will not directly help with my performance next season qualifying for the Games. Altenberg will host the World Championships in 2020, and I know I will be thankful for this extra week of training when the time comes.

After the week in Altenberg, we will join the World Cup tour in Königssee, Germany and finish the remainder of the season following the tour. I have intentions of competing with my 4-woman crew in both the Königssee, Germany and Igls, Austria World Cup races, just waiting to see if there is a sled I will be able to rent for those weeks.

Thanks again for all of your support....

...the next report will be coming to you from another part of Germany!



Where to Find us Next

The Winterberg World Cup race is tomorrow, January 13, at 6:34 am Mountain Time. The second heat will begin around 8:00 am.

If you are up early you can check out one or both heats at

<http://www.cbc.ca/sports>

The link for the live broadcast becomes available a few minutes before the race.