

FIRST RACES OF

THE 2016/17 SEASON

Pre-Season Recap

In pre-season, Alysia Rissling was teamed up with brakeman Sara Dagenais for the first evaluation race in Whistler, BC coming in second place. We pushed 5.28 and 5.26, and Alysia had a personal best Whistler downtime of 53.33 in the first heat. The track was lightning fast during this trip, we reached a speed of 145.7 km/hr! (and we didn't even have the new sled yet!).

Canadian Championships

For the second pre season evaluation race, Alysia was teamed up with Genevieve Thibault in Calgary on October 30th. We pushed a personal best 5.67 and despite poor ice conditions came in second place. *History was made* when we also competed in the 4-man category with brakemen Sara Dagenais, Kasha Lee, and Alecia Beckford-Stuart. The race was the first time women had their own category in a Canadian Championships. The other teams were Kaillie Humphries' team, and a group of retired female athletes that Bobsled for team Canada in the late 1990s, piloted by Sarah Monk!



Meet Bagheera

The brand new sled arrived the morning of Sunday, November 6. We had a few different potential names picked out for the sled... but as soon as we pulled it from the crate we knew that a) it was a boy because of its hard frame and rigid edges, and b) the sleek looks and shiny coat reminded us of a black panther, thus *Bagheera* was the perfect fit. You would have to see Disney's "the Jungle Book" to understand the reference.





North America's Cup Race #1 (Nov. 11)

In the first international race of the year, in a super competitive field of 14 sleds including at least 5 teams I will be facing on the World Cup (including Olympic Champion Kaillie Humphries) I was teamed up again with Genevieve Thibault. We had the second fastest pushes in the field (and a personal best for both of us) of 5.64 on both runs. I made some driving errors on the first run and we were sitting in 4th. On the second run I was able to pull it together and lay down 56.81, a personal best downtime by almost 4 tenths! It was the second fastest run of the heat and we moved up to the bronze position, missing silver by only 2 hundredths. We were only a total of 0.52 seconds away from Kaillie Humphries despite her out-pushing us by almost a tenth in both heats. This is the closest I have ever been in any race ever, so we were very pleased with the result.

North America's Cup Race #2 (Nov. 12)

In the second race, I switched brakemen with the Canada 3 pilot. Our coaches wanted to see how match up would be. Catherine Medeiros and I pushed 5.69 on both runs. I drove much more consistently, and had the fastest run in both heats, earning the Gold! Although Kaillie Humphries did not compete in this race I was ecstatic we were finally able to edge out the Great Britain sled I've struggled to beat in the last 3 years.

Bagheera arrived during the official training of the first North America's Cup race. I was extremely happy to have it in Calgary, as I have the most experience there and felt I would be able to get the hang of it much quicker, even though I only had 8 practice runs remaining before the first race. There were growing pains, I spent the first two days trying to figure out just how to sit in the sled without my face getting rattled on the front of the cowling. Thank goodness my team mechanic is a genius, he spent 2 hours before day 3 of sliding manufacturing a wedge that would recline my seat to keep my face from bouncing off the front. All of the sudden I could see, and was able to drive much better and felt confident going into the first international race.

A huge thank you to everyone who came out to the Rissling Bobsleigh Push off Party!!!

It was so awesome to have a huge group out to watch the races on Nov. 11. Your cheers helped us to push faster! Thank you so much to all the sponsors, family, and friends that came out to support, and thank you to all who wished us well that were there in spirit. **We are now back in Whistler for the next 2 America's Cup Races on Nov. 23 & 24, and will stay until December 3rd to compete in the first World Cup Race of the season! Stay tuned for updates!**

