

## Xscape Jubilee Slalom

"Great fun"; "entertaining"; "very successful"; "a superb day's skiing". These were some of the comments overheard from skiers, spectators, organisers and sponsors during the Jubilee Slalom held at the Snozone in Milton Keynes on Sunday November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Organised by the E.S.C. and ESSkiA this event was a resounding success. 10 racers from each of 9 regions plus 20 from ESSkiA and another 10 from Wales enjoyed themselves competing on artificial snow. The wonderful facilities at Milton Keynes enabled all the athletes to show how well they could cope with the "real thing"!

It was a great opportunity for racers to show off their talents to the BSSF Performance Director, Graham Bell and Director of Coaching for the England Alpine Squad, Willie Taunton-Burnett. Marc Telling, Jamie Miles, Katrina Head and Scott Bryson, all members of the newly formed Home Nations Development Squad, were present either cheering on or racing against the other athletes. Other members of the England team were also present. These included Tom and Freddie Clough, Ed Drake, Georgie Hunt, Shanna Prince, Mikaela Mills, James Bennett and Matt Bruton.

The race started promptly at 9.30 with an open first course set by James Gilyead and a technical second course set by Willie Taunton-Burnett. The crowd gathered at the bottom of the slope, looking up through the glass barrier, enabling them to see some of the Nation's best regional skiers display their skills. This was the first time on snow this year for many athletes but for a few, it was a fitting end to a week or fortnight's training abroad. Several had raced back across Europe to make sure they arrived in time to compete. This race was important for them, regional pride was at stake, as well as an opportunity to show those who select the squads and provide the sponsorship just how good they were.

With 120 racers to get through and an army of volunteers officiating and assisting in maintaining the slope in a reasonable condition, the race was run with no obvious signs of any problems. Having dominated the plastic slopes for most of the summer season, Georgie Hunt (ERSA) continued to show the other athletes how to win, ending up more than 2 tenths of a second in front of his nearest rival Ed Drake (LSERSA). Jamie Miles (LSERSA), Scott Bryson (NESA) and James Bennett (LSERSA) closely followed Ed. Shanna Prince and Hannah Wright (both ERSA) dominated the girls race, with Fern Barker (ESSkiA) taking third place.

Many of the young racers representing ESSkiA performed extremely well taking podium places in their age groups. (David Ryding, Joel Wyatt, Fern Barker, Joanna Ryding and Monica Gash). It was a great opportunity for all to witness the up and coming talent among our younger athletes.

The times from the top 7 skiers representing each region were added together to decide the winning region. In third place was Eastern Region with a total time of 3 mins 29.57 secs. In second place was the North Eastern Region with 3 mins 25.58 secs and with a gap of only 1.1 secs, London & South East won the team event!

The whole day was a resounding success, so much so that hopefully it will become an annual event. Xscape must be congratulated on providing such wonderful facilities and giving so much support to this fixture. The presence of Campri, Dynastar, Manbi International, Nevada and Swix as sponsors of this competition must give us all hope for the future of English Skiing.

MANY THANKS TO EVERYONE!

*Sandy Telling*