

C Sport ▸ Other Sport ▸ Saffron Walden

Ski whizz! Billy Major aiming to plot a course to 2018 Winter Olympics and beyond

Saffron Walden skier Billy Major is targeting a place in the Great Britain squad for the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang after a season that saw him crowned men's champion at the British Alpine Championships



SHARE



COMMENTS

BY MICHAEL VAUGHTON
13:18, 25 MAY 2017

SPORT



Billy Major in action at the Delancey British National Alpine Ski Championships. (Photo: Vanessa Fry Photography)



Type 'top European ski resorts' into your preferred internet search engine and Saffron Walden, funnily enough, does not get a mention.



But Billy Major is doing all he can to put the town on the skiing map as he bids to secure a place at the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea.



SHARE



Major, 20, hit the heights last season as he was crowned overall men's champion at the British Alpine Championships in Tignes, France following podium finishes in downhill, super G, giant slalom and slalom.

He describes the campaign as a whole as mixed, with a dislocated shoulder suffered in a cycling accident setting him back initially and forcing him to play catch-up.

But wins in FIS races and a trip to an Olympic test event were other highlights as he now aims to step out on the biggest stage of all.

"They'll probably decide around January time for the Olympics, so that's the big aim for next season," said Major, who is part of the British Europa Cup squad based in

Austria.

"I try not to focus too much on just that because there's still a whole season around it.

"If I do get to go then I know I won't be going to win gold because I'm still young and not quite at that level yet, but I think the experience when it comes to the next Olympics would make quite a big difference.

"If I don't get picked then it won't ruin my season or bring me down, I'll just get on with it and try my best. Either way I have to be realistic and take whatever comes.

"As we did quite well last year there are two more British guys joining us this year and another person's coming in to help us with preparation.

"It's now a really good setup, so I want to stay as fit as possible, have good training and then hopefully it will all work out."



Billy Major lifts the trophy at the Delancey British National Alpine Ski Championships. (Photo: Vanessa Fry)

Major, whose parents have their own ski company in France and who honed his skills during time at a school in the French Alps, was delighted to be crowned British champion.

That achievement was not all about speed, with tactics and split-second decision making playing a big part.

"It's one of those weeks where you obviously want to ski as fast as you can, but you also have to think about the title," said Major.

"If you crash then it's a race and points lost towards the overall title, so you have to

be quite clever during the whole week.

"I obviously skied well, but not to my best because I had in mind that I needed to get down to get that overall title."

Major spends most of his time between October and April at the Lofer resort in Austria, with summer skiing taking place wherever the snow is best in Europe.

Working on tiny details is the name of the game when it comes to shaving valuable tenths of a second off times in all of the disciplines, and a big appointment by British Ski & Snowboard last October could help push Major and his British teammates on.

"Our basic technique is all pretty good, but we need to keep working on the little things that can make a big difference when it comes to taking that next step," said Major.

"We've got a new performance director, Dan Hunt, who has worked with Team Sky and British Cycling, so he's really good at trying to sort that kind of stuff out.

"Finish times can be so close and that's when you realise it can come down to pushing a bit harder or not making a little mistake on one turn.

"Just trying to race that out of your skiing is probably key to being the best in the world. There's more to it than that, but that would make quite a big difference."

Seeing his family in Saffron Walden and spending time with friends in Cambridge are luxuries Major rarely gets to enjoy as he carves out a professional career in the sport.

But he is determined to make the most of his opportunity and believes patience is a vital ingredient.

"I've been home and seen my parents less than 10 times this year. I'm actually okay with that because you do have to make sacrifices," said Major.

"We kind of live out of a bag all year round, but you just have to get used to it and get on with it.

"I'm always quite ambitious, but I don't think you can rush it.

"Sometimes it's hard because you want to make that next step of progression and it might not come for weeks or months, but then all of a sudden it clicks into place.

"You have to be patient sometimes, which I find quite hard."

Not only does Major put in hours and hours of hard work on the snow and in the gym – he works with Cambridge University strength and conditioning coach Tristan Coles during time on home soil – he also has to overcome a serious financial hurdle.

Some funding does come from the sport's governing body, but a large sum has to be supplied by the skiers themselves each season.

"A lot of people say why do you want to be in the cold all the time, skiing all the time, having to find your own money and doing things for yourself," said Major.

"But, if it all works out, then it will be really nice and really worth it having put so much into it.

“When we’re in Austria and racing the Austrians, they respect us for what we’re doing because they have it all set up in front of them.

“We’re working twice as much and almost getting to beat them, so it’s quite nice in a way, but obviously I’d love it to be set up for us like that!”

Major would love to hear from anyone interested in becoming his main sponsor to back him on his journey.

Email billy.major@hotmail.fr or visit www.billymajor.com to find out how you can support him.

<p>Like us on Facebook</p> <p>Like 35k </p>	<p>Follow us on Twitter</p> <p>Follow @CambridgeNews </p>	<p>Daily Newsletter</p> <p>Enter email </p>
---	---	---

Sponsored Links by [Taboola](#)

NEWS

SPORT

WHAT'S ON

BUSINESS

FOLLOW US

