

Crawford and Thomas take the Titles

Changing conditions lead to another factor for the racers to consider in the Super

After the snow came the clouds and then the sun made its glorious entrance on the Championships. While the ladies had to deal with flat light for their race, the sun soon came out and the men then had to deal with the soft snow. Despite the changing conditions the racing was fast and furious yet a lot of racers failed to make the finish for one reason or another.

The women's race was run in the harsh conditions that flat light causes. Number one, Benedetta Guastavino from Italy crashed out severely enough to need taking off the hill, yet it was later announced she was just badly bruised. With Alcott running three, this was the racer that all the girls wanted to see how she dealt with the rolling course.

"Running down to the start I was feeling tired and watching Louise carve some sweet turns, I knew that I was going to have to lay a good time down," explained Alcott after the race. It has been a long season for 27 year old from Twickenham. The racing as well as the financial issues that are affecting the sport have hit her hard, yet now that some of the younger racers are starting to reach her level, this is good for the sport as a whole.

For Thomas, this was a welcome break though after a hard season. Thomas took the decision at the beginning of the season to change her skis and this has paid off for her. Thomas was quick to thank Snow & Rock who assisted in helping her get her Rossignol skis.

While Thomas and Alcott were the class of the field, Harriet Steggle was a little shocked yet delighted to make the podium half a second ahead of Niki Sole in fourth and then comfortably ahead of two rising Scottish team racers, Sarah Norton and Alex Tilley. Also in the top ten overall was first year FIS racer Imogen Taylor in eighth place.

Mike Pilarski, recently one of the GB Team coaches and now helping out with the Kandahar race team know both British Team racers, Louise Thomas and Dougie Crawford well: This was a great way to finish the Super G season for Dougie and Louise., he said afterwards. For Dougie he continued by saying: "It was a

good run for the conditions. Had something to prove--attacking!"

Had the race been run on the Sunday, then the start list would have included many of the French World Cup speed team. Sadly with the delay they withdrew as they had other events to head to. With no French Team and no Ed Drake, Crawford was the man to beat yet he also had a point to prove after the disappointment of not being selected for the Olympics.

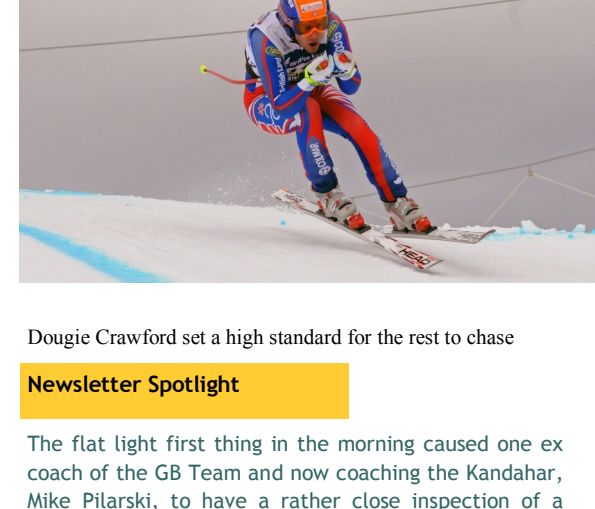
Crawford is a class act and his complete demeanour and ruthlessness in executing his run, was testament to this. The run was not smooth but he worked hard and got his reward: Victory by 1.37 seconds from rising star TJ Baldwin. Crawford had it all to lose but he worked his skin and used his head to take a well deserved win.

For Baldwin, definitely a rising star, this was his second podium at the British. Having been to the World Junior Championships earlier in the winter, this was a chance to have a crack at the Overall Title. While his run was good enough to take the lead when he came into the finish, Crawford took it off him one racer later.

Taking third overall was Tim Caf  from New Zealand yet it was Noel Baxter who took third in the race for the British racers in finishing eighth overall. Noel is looking at concentrating on the Slalom and with "two or three British titles, I am not sure how many, I am looking to get it back!" explained Baxter when asked how much he was looking forward to the slalom in the morning.

He may have retired four seasons ago but Roger Cruickshank, now an RAF pilot, placed fourth out of the British racers with Peter Whelan in fifth, Jai Geyer sixth and James Foster in 7th (just outside the top 20 overall).

With the weather set to cause havoc over the next few days with the racing programme, it will be anyone's guess how the programme pans out. The Organising Committee are doing their best but they are in the lap of the Gods...



Dougie Crawford set a high standard for the rest to chase

Newsletter Spotlight

The flat light first thing in the morning caused one ex coach of the GB Team and now coaching the Kandahar, Mike Pilarski, to have a rather close inspection of a snow bank on his way down to the start! Pilarski was totally oblivious to the snow bank and snacked into it in front of the New Zealand coach, Nils Coberger, much to the latter's hilarity: Coberger explained afterwards that "it was pretty pathetic really, he was talking to me and then he just went down like a sack of potatoes!" So you see even seasoned professionals can have trouble skiing down in the morning in flat light!

The joy of the weather affecting the races

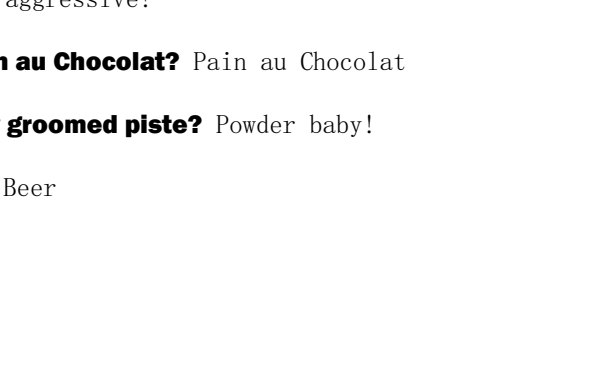
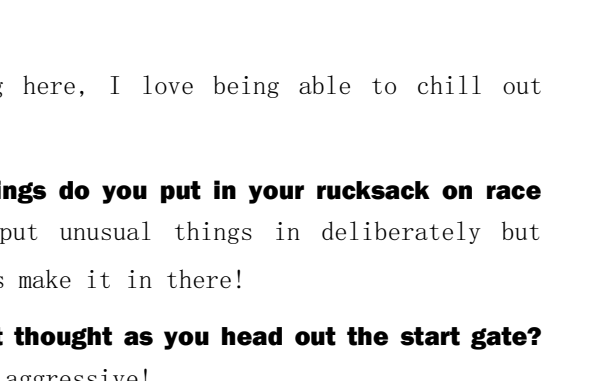
"The change was made purely on the basis of the weather forecast for the next few days. Tomorrow especially the weather is not very promising: No freeze overnight and 8 degrees in the morning. We were lucky to get a speed event off today and if we programmed one for tomorrow it is extremely likely we would lose a day which we could ill afford in such a full programme," explained the Chief of Race for the Downhill, Paul Trayner.

It is never easy to alter the programme and with many racers and their families having arranged to travel out depending on their own itineraries, this was not a decision that was taken lightly by the organising committee. In effect it was the only decision that was realistically possible for the races as a whole.

As a result, Tuesday will now see the girls race in a Giant Slalom and the guys in Slalom. Unlike in previous years the races will not run at the same time but girls will race first and then the guys will race.



Top to bottom: Harriet Steggle, 3rd place and best non team racer in the Super G; Ashley Hill, best under 18 in the men's race; Alex Tilley, best under 18 in the Women's race.

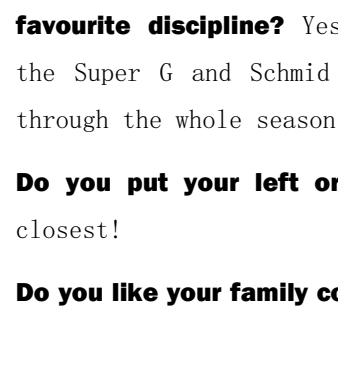
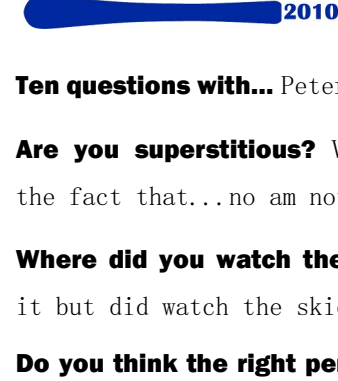
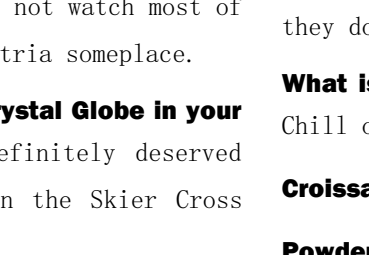


If you would like to get all the latest on the campaign to keep Hillend open then click on the link to the left.

The plan to get Wycombe Summit open again has also had positive news recently yet there are, however, 17 conditions within the approval which need to be followed and met in some cases before building can start, such as travel plans, materials for site being approved before it's built, waste disposal plans approved, foot path and cycle routes and linkages approved, drainage system approved, no flood lighting etc.

The Save the Ciste website that is campaigning for the Ciste at Cairngorm to be reinstated is also now up and running. To go and see the reasons why it should be click on www.savetheciste.com.

All three petitioning bodies have groups on Facebook if you want to get involved.



Ten questions with... Peter Whelan

Are you superstitious? Very! I am very superstitious in the fact that...no am not superstitious!

Where did you watch the Olympics? Did not watch most of it but did watch the skier cross in Austria someplace.

Do you think the right person won the Crystal Globe in your favourite discipline? Yes! Erik Guay definitely deserved the Super G and Schmid was bang on in the Skier Cross through the whole season!

Do you put your left or right ski on first? Whichever is closest!

Do you like your family coming to watch you race? Yes. I do

enjoy them being here, I love being able to chill out with them!

What unusual things do you put in your rucksack on race day? I do not put unusual things in deliberately but they do sometimes make it in there!

What is your last thought as you head out the start gate? Chill out and be aggressive!

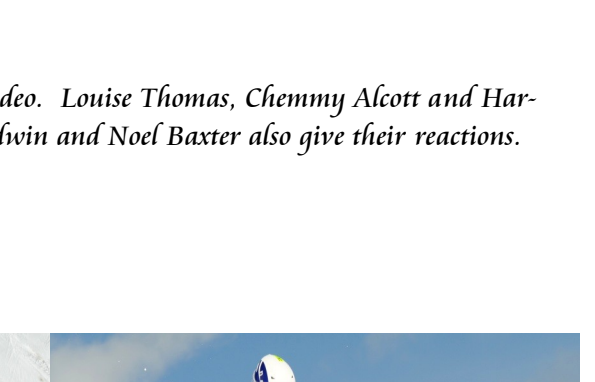
Croissants or Pain au Chocolat? Pain au Chocolat

Powder or freshly groomed piste? Powder baby!

Beer or wine? ... Beer

What's the programme for the racing in Meribel? [Click here](#)

What are the results from the races so far? [Click here](#)



Above: Peter Whelan is the focus of the Ten questions in today's newsletter. Peter has raced both Alpine events as well as Skier Cross this season.

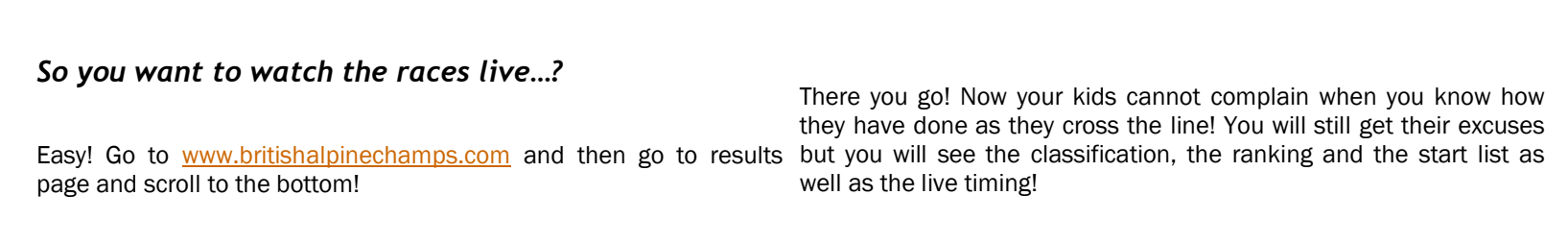
Watch the videos...

Catch up with all the racers as they give their own responses to their performances on video. Louise Thomas, Chemmy Alcott and Harriet Steggle all talk exclusively to Racer Ready after the race. Dougie Crawford, TJ Baldwin and Noel Baxter also give their reactions.

To watch [click here](#)



Chemmy Alcott taking a tight line on her way to second, the women's podium and Max Slinger getting it a little wrong!



Chemmy looks out at the start before her race; The Men's British Podium and rising English racer Tom White on his way down

So you want to watch the races live...?

Easy! Go to www.britishalpinechamps.com and then go to results page and scroll to the bottom!

There you go! Now your kids cannot complain when you know how they have done as they cross the line! You will still get their excuses but you will see the classification, the ranking and the start list as well as the live timing!