



the megan report 2007



m e g a n i m r i e

january 19, 2007



Forni Avoltri, Italy. January 19th. First race since Christmas. I've been visualizing my perfect sprint for a few days now. Each day brings a more intense butterfly-in-the-belly sensation. I am nervous the instant my eyes snap open at my alarm. Good. I need nerves to keep me on my toes, to race my best. A big breakfast of yogurt and muesli and I'm off on my morning run. A chance to test the weather (light rain), and stretch my muscles (light pain). Lunch rolls around far too early. I do my best to finish a plate of noodles, then I dart back to my room to dryfire.

Dryfiring is when I go through the exact motions of shooting without the bullets. I visualize how I will feel in the race, dealing with distractions and practicing my breathing pattern. When I dryfire I don't miss. Today is no different.

The van snakes down the switchbacks to the hole in the mountain that is Forni Avoltri. The atmosphere is typical race-time busy, and I jump right in. I have an agenda. I have skis to test, rifle to zero, warmup to do and equipment check to attend. I have a race. Get outta my way!

I toe the startline with nothing to lose but the flock of butterflies in my gut. My legs are warm, rifle is on, skis feel slick...beep, beep, beep, BEEP...I hit the starting wand and I'm gone.

"Light on your feet, light on your feet, through the tunnel, quick tempo up the hill, I can do this, over the bridge, low tuck, ready for the corner, on my feet, stay on my feet, push out of the corner, there's my coach, says I look strong, keep the tempo quick, up the hill, let's go, pick up your feet, left corner, short hill, range is coming, into a tuck. Breathe. Breathe. Lane four is open. Good. Same one I zeroed in."

My heart is pounding and my breathing is hard but steady. Contrary to popular belief, biathletes don't try to slow their heart rate to shoot, but rather learn to shoot with a high heart rate.

I take three quick breaths once I'm in prone position. I hold in the middle of the fourth breath. Bang. Hit. Repeat. Five shots- five hits. Sweet! I'm back on my skis and I bypass the penalty loop, always a thrilling feeling. The range arrives a second time. Standing. Lane 22 looks nice. I think of trigger pull. I think of my right arm.

During training I have been working on a tactic called 'quiet eye' that has been my secret weapon this season. They are studying this at the University of Calgary, and my coach Matthias has helped me to learn it. If I stare at the target when I arrive on the range, right until I take the shot, my focus is narrow and distractions (other competitors) stay out of my head. To get into this zone, I think of a technical aspect-the trigger pull, and keeping my right arm parallel to the ground. Today it worked wonders.

First shot- I am conscious only of my trigger finger and a vague black dot I know is the target. Hit! Four more hits follow. BOO YA!

I don't think I have ever shot clean (10/10 or 20/20) in a race situation before. So you can imagine how I felt when I shot 10 in Forni Avoltri, less than a week before World Junior Championships. I wanted to scream! So I skied. The last loop was soft and slushy, and tough going at best of times. But I finished with an empty tank, and completely satisfied with the race I'd done.

I ended up in 13th position out of 58 racers. So far, so good. Now I am in Martell, Italy giving my legs a chance to rest and priming them for the big races coming up. My first race is on Thursday. I know I am ready. Bring it on.

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megan's european tour 2007



European Cup # 4 Forni Avoltri, Italy Jan. 19 Sprint
www.biathlonworld.com

World Junior Champ's Martell, Italy Jan. 25 Individual
www.biathlon-martell.com Jan. 27 Sprint
Jan. 28 Pursuit
Jan. 30 Relay

European Cup #5 Jablonec, Czech R. Feb. 10 Sprint
www.biathlonworld.com Feb. 11 Pursuit

European Cup #6 Nove Mesto, Czech R. Feb. 14 Sprint
www.biathlonworld.com Feb. 15 Pursuit

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