

World Junior and Under 23 Championships Update

Skate Interval Start Day

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Today was the last day of racing for the under 23 athletes and the last day of individual racing for the junior athletes before they raced the relay the next day. All the women raced a 10km individual start skate and all the men raced a 15km individual start skate. The original race plan was to be racing our skiathlon races today but with the lack of snow this got changed to a skate mass start race and with continual warm temperatures and melting of the snow this got changed again to individual start races. I was disappointed that we could not race a longer mass start race at these championships but it was a good decision on the part of the organizers to do this because the trails were not wide enough to handle 100 racers starting at once and it would have been a big disadvantage for the skiers skiing at the back of the pack. With these constantly changing plans it was important for the team and the staff to just roll with the changes which I think everyone did a really good job of.

On the morning of the race it began to feel more like winter with below zero temperatures and a dusting of new snow which has been the only natural snow we have seen since we have been in Romania.



The farm fields beside the race courses

After the junior racers getting the short end of the stick for the past two races with having to race in the afternoons in almost tropical conditions they finally got to race early in the morning on some hard and fast snow. The under 23 racers got to enjoy the fast snow as well though and despite racing in the afternoon the temperature stayed just below zero and snow on the 2.5km loop held up well. With only a 2.5km race loop with snow this meant warming up for the races sometimes presented a challenge. Most days we were able to ski on the course for a short period of time before our race but we inevitably had to do part of our warm up either rollerskiing or running which was a change for a lot of us. Every team was in the same boat though and I think we handled it well and had fun rolling with the punches. As with every race our Canadian team had some positive results on the day and results that were not up to our standards but I feel like we all took a lot of lessons learned away from these championships and will apply them to years to come.



The 2.5km strip of snow called the race course

After the skate races were over a few of the athletes in our group had to pack up all our stuff and catch a three hour shuttle ride back to Bucharest about an hour after we had finished racing. It was a hectic turn around but good practice for what it can be like racing and travelling on the World Cup. Part of the group was leaving Romania a few days early to get back to Canada sooner to prepare for the Skitour Canada. Sometimes after important races like a World Championships athletes can tend to relax a bit more and maybe not pay as close attention to recovery habits but for the skiers that would be competing in the Skitour Canada it was especially important to stay rested and healthy over the next few days.