



Baldwin crashes at 70mph – then records two ‘awesome’ results

BRITAIN'S TOP UNDER-18 SKIER, 'TJ' Baldwin, produced two world-class performances in Chile last month which sent him surging up the rankings into 10th in the world for his age. He was competing in two South American Cup Super-G races at Termas de Chillán, racing with several other GB team members against skiers from 13 nations, including 16 World Cup racers. Skiing the best races of his life, Baldwin stormed down the Termas courses and finished 25th and 28th overall – just over one second behind the 2006 Olympic Downhill champion Antoine Dénériaz. He was also placed 2nd Junior (Under 21) in both races, and scored impressive FIS world-ranking points. His Super-G points average is now 48.11, which not only gives him 10th position but also puts him 73rd in the Overall World Junior rankings (Under 21s).

These two results followed a frustrating previous day when he crashed out of both downhill races, suffering severe bruising in the second spill when his ski came off in the fastest part of the course at 70mph. Baldwin's former British Ski Academy coach, Malcolm Erskine said: "These are two absolutely awesome results. To the best of my knowledge we have only had two other GB skiers who have broken into the top 10 in the world for their age in the last 10 years or more. They are now both racing at World Cup level."

In Chile, Baldwin said: "My aim at the start of the season was to break into the top 100 in the World Junior rankings. To do it so early is fantastic, and to be in the top 10 for my age has really shocked me. I had to quickly pick myself up from the disappointment of the downhills. I knew I'd put in two pretty good runs, although I did make a couple of mistakes in each. But when I saw the times and then the FIS points I'd scored I knew I'd been pretty quick. It also means that I have already easily met the selection criteria for the GB team in Super-G."

Shortly before the races, TJ was given the news that he had been put back onto the TASS 2012 (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) funding. He will receive £10,000 from the scheme to help pay for his full-time schedule with the British Land Ski Team through the 2007/8 season. This is a vital boost to his training and racing programme, which costs around £30,000 a year.

TASS 2012 is a Government funded programme set up two years ago to help fund the top 120 young athletes in Great Britain from 47 different Olympic sports "identified as being medal prospects at the 2012 London Olympics and also both the 2010 and 2014 Winter Olympics".



Chasing new trophies: after completing his training in Chile at the end of September with the GB team, Baldwin was due to return to Austria to train before starting his winter race programme in mid-November, when he will compete in some 60 FIS races all over Europe.

Baldwin was originally selected for funding under the scheme in 2005, but lost it in 2006 due to changes in policy and a cut in funding to skiing. He has been put back on the scheme after his selection by the British Team.

He said: "It's fantastic news. The £10,000 makes a huge difference to the finances for my programme with the GB team. It was such a disappointment when I lost the funding last year, especially after winning all three British Junior titles in 2006. I'll now be even more determined to keep my place in the GB team to secure the funding through to the Winter Olympics in 2010 and beyond." Baldwin is currently ranked No 1 in Britain for Under 18s on the FIS points world-ranking list in Downhill, Super-G and Giant Slalom, and No 2 in Slalom.

Following Baldwin's selection by the GB team and his new world rankings, the Ski Club of Great Britain and SkyScanner Flight Search have both pledged continuing sponsorship. Fat Face clothing, which has been sponsoring him for five years, will now also be giving him financial support for his training and racing. Baldwin is also sponsored by two local companies, Sunfold Systems of Wymondham and Chillspeed of Diss.