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Shering and Hatcher win final outdoor GBR of the season

🕒 11 July 2016 👤 Neil M 📁 Alpine Skiing 💬 0



Nicole Shering of Snowtrax and Avon's David Hatcher won the GBR round five overall female and male races at Pontypool.

Racers from around the UK were ready for the final outdoor GBR of the season. David Eaves set the first course of the day with a four-gate verticalli going onto the ridge. On the steep part of the slope there was a two-matt offset turn, followed by a rhythmical set of turns into a final hairpin before the finish.

Top seeds Jenny Davies and Shering were ready to battle it out again like they have done all season in the female race.

Davies was the first of the two to attempt the course. The Aldershot racer had a clean line over the ridge and smoothly flowed through to the finish line. Her first run time was 19.92 beating Torquay's Eva Pascoe time of 20.29.

Shering was the next racer out the start gate. The U18 skier also nailed the turns over the ridge but

had slightly more attack on the final turns than Davies. She took the lead over Davies with a time of 19.78.

Victoria Gatty of Pendle pushed herself onto the podium before the first run had finished. A solid bottom half of the course got her a time of 20.14. Shering had a gap of 0.14 seconds over Davies with Gatty in third. The race was looking very tight going into the second run.

Robin Kellen set the second course of the day with a few different features to contend with. A banana gate was set on the ridge into a few straight offsets. A hairpin into a reverse hairpin was set just before the last few straight turns of the course.

Pascoe took the lead from Midland's Ellie Jackson with a time of 21.26, which gave her a combined time of 41.55. Gatty was the next skier to attempt the second run. The Pendle skier had a fast top section but went too straight onto the banana. She lost the racing line and as a result she had to hike up to complete the rest of the course. Gatty was now out of contention for a podium.

Davies pushed the whole of the flat top section of the course and took the banana gate with ease. This time the zero point skier had a bit more drive to the finish and got a time of 20.62. She took the lead with a combined time of 40.54.

Shering was the final skier down. She has another good line on the ridge with a smooth bottom section, which looked as fast as Davies' run. Her second run time was 20.70. The Snowtrax skier's combined time was 40.48, which was 0.06 seconds better than Davies with Pascoe in third.

There was a combination of spectacular runs and big mistakes by the male racers over the two runs.

Josef Huppach had a brilliant first run to put him in the lead over his brother Declan with a time of 18.28. The U16 Pendle skier didn't put a foot wrong from top to bottom of the course.

Hatcher smashed that time though with a really impressive run. Massive amounts of push and aggression gave him great momentum going into the final parts of the course. His first run time was 17.41.

Straight after him was U18 skier Craig Speed. The Aldershot racer was filled with confidence after his second place the day before. Full on attack throughout his run was rewarded with great acceleration. He slotted behind Hatcher with a time of 17.78.

Oliver Weeks of Midlands snuck onto the podium briefly with a time of 18.03, until Pendle skier Callum Witts also had a flyer. Much like Speed's run he attacked the whole course without putting a foot wrong. Witts couldn't beat Hatcher though finishing with a time of 17.70.

Hatcher was ahead of Witts by 0.29 seconds with Speed not far behind in third.

A huge second run charge by Essex racer Jonathan Bingham kept him in the lead for the majority of the second run. After a huge mistake on his first run the U18 skier went full out along the flat and skied aggressively through the rest of the course. He got a second run time of 18.78 with a combined time of 38.16.

Aldershot duo Harvey Charlton and Adam Bannister couldn't better Bingham's time. Both Huppach brothers couldn't better the Essex racer's combined time either, with Josef unfortunately having to hike.

It was Weeks who eventually took the lead over Bingham with a solid second run time. He got a second run time of 19.29, which was enough to take the overall lead with a combined time of 37.32.

Speed was up next and he looked visibly very quick through the banana over the ridge. However an error on the entry to the two-hairpin combination saw him ski out the course. The Aldershot skier crossed his skis when he went for an extra push, which threw him off balance.

Witts was the penultimate skier down the course. He took the banana pretty much on his inside edge and couldn't adjust for the next pattern of gates. Unfortunately he had to hike to complete the rest of the course. This put him way out of contention for the overall.

That then left Hatcher with a huge time gap to play with before his second run attempt. This didn't stop him from pulling off another fast run though; when he produced another brilliantly executed run. His unique style was vital on the flat section to build up speed. He then used smooth carved turns on the steep offsets and then cut a tight line to the finish. He finished with a time of 18.68 giving him a combined time of 36.09.

Hatcher had won by 1.23 seconds ahead of Weeks with Bingham in third.

There were some testing courses throughout the weekend, which brought out some fantastic skiing by a lot of the racers. It'll be interesting to see how both the female and male racers do at the Welsh and British events in Pontypool in September.

By Peter Davies

Picture – David Hatcher in the Welsh Open 2015

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