

Snow on Cypress for Greig



Vancouver, 23 February 2010: New Zealand free skier Mitchey Greig qualified 30th for the ski-cross on Cypress Mountain at the Vancouver Olympics but failed to progress beyond the heats.

35 athletes started the day with three eliminated in the qualifying run. Greig struggled to break through the two minor half-pipes at the start before settling into a steady opening run.



In one of the Games' ironies, snow fell heavily across the same courses where it had been trucked and helicoptered in, earlier in the month.

That meant the course slowed up and competitors couldn't take the same risks or get the same fluent run as they would on a carefully groomed course. Some of the patrol staff even had to manually pat the fresh snow down with their skis between each round on the finishing hill.

Greig again started sluggishly in her heat:

"I didn't have the timing right and it shook me up on both runs. It probably wasn't the quickest gate to come from but I don't want to use it as an excuse. *C'est la vie.*"

"I had a couple of bail outs this morning on the first practice run. I was charging at that stage. Then I had a few crashes and wasn't really sure what speed I should be doing. I constantly had to check myself. They weren't good performances at all."

She could also appreciate the irony as everything and everyone on the slope was quickly covered in a white blanket of flakes. "Can you believe it? It's snowing; there is actually snow in this country after all. By the final [won by Canadian Ashleigh McIvor] the girls were slowing down as the extra snow came in."

"It made a huge difference. The number one in the world [France's Ophelie David] was out two rounds earlier than she usually is; anything can happen. When we got here this morning the snow was crisp, the sun was shining and we were overshooting all the landings."

Talk before the event centred on the preferential treatment of Canadian athletes. Many argued it was unfair they had enjoyed extra access to the course; particularly the starts. Greig was quick to put it in perspective, despite the local, McIvor, taking the gold medal.

"Yes the Canadians dominated, they raced smoothly and flowed well. It didn't pay off for all of them but Ashleigh definitely charged."

Greig is determined to stick with the sport following her transition from alpine skiing after missing out in Torino.

"I've definitely made the right choice. Even though it was a bad day, I can move on." To prove the point, Greig next competes in World Cup events in Switzerland