



1991: The first Hoppet. After the storm ... a perfect day for the delayed race

Kangaroo Hoppet

Even though my summer skiing experience at Falls Creek is now almost 15 years old, I still think of those two weeks as one of my most memorable experiences as a Cross-Country skier.

Travelling to Australia and Falls Creek to ski during the normal Norwegian-American summer season was a totally new and exciting experience. Growing up in Norway and skiing on glaciers in the Norwegian mountains as well as in the Alps, the experience of skiing on “normal” (not slushy) good snow in July and August was very rewarding. Skiing among green leaved gum trees on the early morning crust in a “new” environment created energy and enjoyment, although the training hours were very high. It resulted in my best World Cup and Olympic season ever as an international skier 4 – 6 months later.

During the two-week visit we stayed down in the valley at Mount Beauty, and also experienced the phenomenal (to a foreigner) nature of Australia, with the smell of Eucalyptus trees, the sounds of birds you only normally hear in a Zoo, and the sights of kangaroos you meet when running on the forest tracks in the valley.

The Australian people were also special; they welcomed us strangers in their farm homes for their famous barbecue, and showed us their famous and good looking Akubra (cowboy) hats and Blundstone boots – even a modest and scrappy skier can look great in those.

The Hoppet race in 1991 was the first time it was included in the Worldloppet circuit; so I often use this fact when needing to boost my image as a skier – “once a Worldloppet winner, always a Worldloppet winner”. The competition was mainly from my US Ski Team mates, but we had a fierce and good battle at the end of the 42 km race. I remember mostly the beautiful sunny day, and the big smiles on everyone’s faces.

Whenever I think back on Falls Creek, Mount Beauty and the Kangaroo Hoppet today, it also brings happy thoughts and an emerging smile.

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1992 and 1994 Olympic Games, USSA
2002 Olympic Games, Chief of Competition, Cross-Country
2006 Nordic World Ski Championship, Technical Delegate
2010 Olympic Games, Director Nordic Sports