

# 13<sup>th</sup> Masters' International MASTER CUP in Berlin and 1<sup>st</sup> Masters International SPRINT GAMES in Inzell

## I left behind a sunny 36 degree Perth summer day to venture to Berlin and Inzell .....

After skating my first ever long track event in January 2007 in Davos, Switzerland, I had vowed to return for the next northern winter and compete in some more masters events.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2009, with flights and accommodation booked, I left behind a sunny 36 degree Perth summer day to venture to Berlin and Inzell to compete in the 13<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Speed Skating Masters Cup and the 1<sup>st</sup> Masters International Sprint Games.

My first stop was Singapore where I had a 1½ hour stopover – so I had a quick look in some shops then spent the rest of my time in the One World lounge. Very soon, I was onto the next leg to London and after 12.5 hours of flying, we landed in London as the first flakes of the heaviest snow in 20 years started to fall.

Flights had already begun to be cancelled but my outgoing flight to Berlin was still scheduled to leave an 2 hours later. Unfortunately, my flight was the last flight cancelled and I had to stay the night in London. After lining up for 6 hours to have my flight re-scheduled, I was offered a free room and meals because I opted to stay until the next night and be accommodated on a late flight the following day. This turned out to be a wise move as no flights were able to leave London until after 4pm the next day! So the rude people who demanded early flights had to line up again; sometimes it just pays to accept the inconvenience – British Airways didn't make it snow!

Anyway, I arrived in Berlin at 11:30pm the next night and was walking the suburban streets to hotel at 1am. I must say that I slept so well that I recovered from jetlag very quickly and the next afternoon I went to train at the Berlin oval.



I had bought some clap blades whilst still in Australia and now it was time to set them up and try and lose 25 years of short track technique, which was no easy task.

The next day, I met with Dr. Serini who was very excited about having an Australian compete and believe me, I was excited also. I had been working on building the Australian Masters scene over the previous couple of years and I had been writing a Masters ST Blog ([www.worldmastersshorttrack.com](http://www.worldmastersshorttrack.com)) of which Dr. Serini was aware of. In the end, Dr. Serini offered me the opportunity to take over the writing of the IMSTC website which I have recently commenced ([www.imstc.org](http://www.imstc.org)).

The Friday night draw of the pairings was exciting, especially to see my name next the Australian flag in 35-year-old category (there was only two competitors). Even more interesting was talking to a few Norwegian skaters who enlightened me about the way of life that is skating in Scandinavian countries, such as skating and skiing to school, definitely not an option in Australia.

**Lars Eskeland – at 77, the oldest competitor at Berlin**

Also very nice was being able to talk with Lars Eskeland, the oldest competitor in Berlin at 77 years. He became one of my cheer squad members and I was over the moon to hear him cheering me on during my racing. I took some great photos of Lars and I hope I am still as active when I am in my 70's.

Racing started on the Saturday morning with the 500m, my favourite event on the short track, but on the long track with claps, I wasn't so sure. I skated a 44.08 which was marginally better than my one and only previous attempt at the distance the year before. The next distance was 3000m in a time of 4:54.04 which sliced 40 secs off my previous best, which I was very happy with.

Sunday saw me skate the 1500m in another personal best of 2:15.96, taking 24 seconds from my PB. I have never considered myself a distance skater but the 5000m saw me post a pleasing time of 8:29.90, just under my goal of 8:30!

It had been an enjoyable competition but unfortunately there was no official presentation dinner or the like and the following day, I unceremoniously left Berlin for Inzell.

I caught the tram to Berlin Hauptbahnhof and caught a 5 hour train ride to Munich, then another 1½ train ride to Traunstein, then another 1 hour bus ride to Inzell.



I checked into Haus Stephanie and was very grateful for a great room with warm heating. I walked across to Planet Ice for dinner and after a couple of steins, walked back to my room for a great sleep.

The next morning, I ventured across to the

oval for a mid morning training session and it was then I realised the difference between training on a covered oval and one exposed to the elements – the memory of my Australian summer was still very fresh in my mind and the 40 degree difference was very noticeable!

I had met a Dutch couple in Berlin in Maureen and Jim and I met up with them again in Inzell. They had become my unofficial Australian cheer squad with Maureen being my coach during her own races. It was nice to have her holding up my lap times each lap. I appreciated the assistance as I was a team of one. I gave them an Australian hat and they are now honorary Australians and advise me that they have been following the progress of our LT speed skater in the Netherlands.

**Jim and Maureen, with Maureen wearing her Aussie cap proudly**

Racing commenced on the Saturday morning but the snow fell pretty consistently all morning and most of the afternoon which led to a slower than expected times however I posted a 1:30.38, 1000m for my first ever attempt.

The Sunday saw me post two personal bests with a 43.77, 500m and a 1:28.21, 1000m. Not fast by overall standards but pleasing for me. Many of the Dutch and Norwegian skaters found my warm-up routine on leaning on an oil heater rather amusing!



**Proudly displaying the Aussie flag**

The presentation on Sunday night saw me end up in 3<sup>rd</sup> position overall, which I was over the moon about. That little cup was worth every cent, time and travel that I had invested in the trip. I handed out Australian caps to all the skaters in my division, which they were all appreciative of.

That night saw the hundred odd skaters and friends attend the local Inzell community hall for the closing dinner. I sat on the Italian table, and with the lone Spanish skater, Marcello Bresin which was really nice, especially with all the chianti and grappa that was being passed around. The Russians soon smelt the grappa and were over in a flash and it started to turn into a cheerful night.

However, there was no music and the night was over far too early. I think the committee should look at providing entertainment at these functions as many a skater was ready to party, and they had nowhere to go. I personally would pay more to cover the cost of this as there was nowhere in Inzell to party on.

Anyway, afterwards I ended up finishing the night in one of the Russian skater's rooms at Planet Ice drinking vodka til the small hours. It was new for me to drink straight vodka and I'm still not sure my liver has recovered, but it was nice to make some great new friends.

The next morning, I had to catch the bus back to Traunstein and I met Dr. Serini and his wife on the bus and explained that I had had a great time but was feeling a little worse for wear.

I spent the next few nights in Munich enjoying the sights and doing one or two beer tours, which I didn't get the opportunity to do the year before. Then it was time to commence the 14000 odd kilometre trip back to Australia, this time there without any delays.

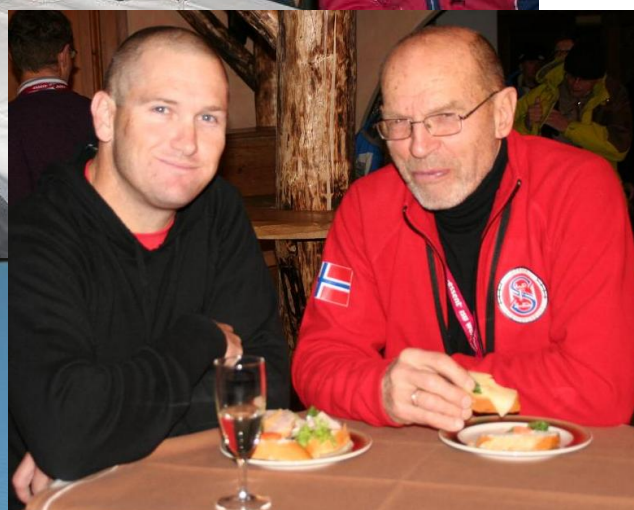
I arrived back in Australia 24 hours later and was met with a pleasant 32 degree summer day, and although I was glad to be home, it was with thoughts of my next trip away. I don't know if I'll be back this coming season but I will be back sometime soon.

My next thought is of trying to get some world masters ST off the ground to the same scale that the speed skating has. Let's hope! The Australian ST Championships starts on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October and I will be sure to report on those.

Good luck to all the masters for the coming season and I hope to catch up again real soon.

*Frank Anderson*

## Further Impressions at the 1<sup>st</sup> Masters' Speed Skating SPRINT GAMES in Inzell/Germany



1st Masters International Speed Skating Sprint Games  
2009  
1000m Men AK 40

3		165 KAMMINGA Han	NED
○		164 BOSSE Pieter	NED
4		171 MOGA Octavian	ROU
○		169 TELLIER Stephan	
5		160 KROLL Jens-P.	
○		159 HAUEISEN Stephan	
6		162 SCHMIDT Ronald	
○		167 SCHEERDER Richard	
7		172 ANTONOVSKIY Anton	
○		158 FEHRMANN Dietmar	
8			





