

*Fall-Line*

**WIN! ARC'TERYX GEAR**

Outerwear and pack, worth £1100, could be yours...



# SKIING

The complete skier

## WILD THINGS

THE BACKCOUNTRY ISSUE

**GEAR  
GUIDE  
2017/18  
BACKCOUNTRY  
FOCUS**

### THREE VALLEYS ADVENTURE

Discover the secret side of the piste-lover's paradise

### MEET GB'S OLYMPIC PRODIGY

15 minutes with freeski ripper Madi Rowlands

### ALL HAIL LA GRAVE

We celebrate the French freeride mecca

**Graham Bell on becoming a Guinness World Record-holder**

This winter's best backcountry courses, plus technique and safety tips

**On test: quick-dry baselayers, socks and much more**

Crazy for Kyrgyzstan: yurts, steeps and powder in the Tien Shen range

**Explore Norway's Romsdal Alps on skins, skis and e-bike**



ISSUE 158 JANUARY 2018  
£4.99 WWW.FALL-LINE.CO.UK

58>



15 MINS  
WITH...

# MADI ROWLANDS

At just 17, Madi is the youngest member of Team GB, but already well accustomed to smashing athletes twice her age. She chats to **Gabriella Le Breton** fresh after the Cardrona World Cup about what it's like to balance school work and top level skiing

**Gabriella Le Breton: So, how are things going out in New Zealand?**

**Madi Rowlands:** Yeah, I'm okay with my slopestyle finish [13th] in the World Cup, but less happy with my halfpipe performance [28th]... We're out here for a month and still have some training before we head back home, so there's time to work on stuff.

**GLB: While you're competing with the world's best out in New Zealand, most 17-year-old Brits are going back to school. How do you fit school in around all the travel, competitions and training?**

**MR:** I'm pretty lucky actually – I do most of it by email. My school [Fort Pitt Grammar School for Girls in Kent] offered me a special deal where I only have to do one A-level, PE, which works really well. I was only at home for seven weeks last year, and most of that was during the holidays, so normal school just wouldn't work.

**GLB: Does that ever get lonely? How do you keep up with mates?**

**MR:** I guess most of my mates are the guys on the squad – and they're my family too. My nan and grandad spend the winters travelling around Europe in their campervan, so they try to hook up with me while I'm on the road, which is cool. Grandad still skis aged 74 – I hope I will too!

**GLB: Is your success the result of super pushy parents or were you the pushy kid?**

**MR:** Well, all my family ski and love it. We've got two apartments in Les Deux Alpes, so when I was just a baby my parents would shove me on to a pair of plastic skis and send me off, that's how it all started. I used



PHOTO MATT GEORGES/GB PARK & PIPE

**Madi's grandad still skis at 74 and chases her around Europe all winter in a camper. We like his style. And hers...**

that I got into the team first, but he's just been selected for Team GB too. And he knows that it's much harder for guys to make the team as there are so many more blokes competing for places than girls.

**GLB: You competed at the 2016 Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer, making history by becoming the first ever GB athlete to win a gold medal in the halfpipe competition, as well as taking bronze in slopestyle. That must be a great confidence booster for the PyeongChang Games.**

**MR:** Absolutely, it was a great experience and it really helped me get to know what competing on that kind of scale is like. I was the only athlete to compete in both halfpipe and slopestyle, so it was hard work but worth it. I guess the Olympics will be even more hectic, more busy and with more people... The culture will also be really different. I've never been to South Korea before so I hope I'll have time to look around a bit!

**GLB: How are you preparing for PyeongChang, both physically and mentally?**

**MR:** Here, there and everywhere really. In many ways our

**“I never really expected to get this far, it just kind of escalated... Being the youngest I get teased a lot, but I'm used to that from home!”**

PHOTO MATT GEORGES/GB PARK & PIPE





PHOTO SAM MELLISH/GB PARK & PIPE



PHOTO MATT GEORGES/GB PARK & PIPE

Ahh, the youth of today ➤





**“ My coach always says I'm never nervous: if I am then there's something wrong ”**

training is a self-motivated kind of thing – we drive ourselves forward. But we have two great coaches [Pat Sharples and Jamie Matthew] and we basically all train together every day, about 300 days of the year! Of that time, we're on the road for about seven months, training at high-altitude resorts and competing across the world. When I'm not travelling, I'll be home with my parents in Walderslade, near Chatham in Kent, catching up with my school mates.

**GLB: How do you psyche yourself up to tackle new, bigger jumps and tricks?**

**MR:** You've just got to have the nerve. You always get to see people hitting them first, so you can judge your speed, but yeah, you usually take some knocks. I'm only working on tricks I've already landed for PyeongChang, so I have them 'on lock' [under control] to then build up into bigger tricks. Hopefully it's the right approach! I broke my wrist in the halfpipe last season – three different X-rays said it was fine but I knew it didn't feel right, and finally an MRI showed a clean break. I still skied around, but didn't compete at the Brits; it was a nice mellow end to the season.

**GLB: You look super chilled when you're in the halfpipe – is that the key to your success?**

**MR:** My coach always says I'm never nervous: if I am, then there's something wrong. I don't see competing as having everyone's eyes on me, to me it's just another run. I always think that. I simply tell myself 'each one is just another run'.

**GLB: Dan Hunt, Performance Director at British Ski & Snowboard (BSS), was telling me he thinks Park & Pipe athletes might get more recognition for the acrobatics and gymnastics training that goes into the moves you pull off if they were**

**From Chatham to PyeongChang: this Kent schoolgirl's done rather good**

**called something a bit more serious than 'tricks'. What do you think?**

**MR:** I guess he's got a point... It is a lot like gymnastics and we have to work hard on a lots of different elements to nail new tricks. But 'tricks' is easy to say and I quite like it – it can fool people into thinking they're easier than they actually are. I took one of my friends skiing last summer and she was thinking it would be super easy, but she kind of regretted saying that once we were on the snow...

**GLB: Who do you think will be your greatest medal threats out in PyeongChang?**

**MR:** It really all depends on what happens on the day, there's no way of knowing. Most people will fall at some point because of nerves or the conditions, so it's always pretty open. I guess we'll just have to see how it all goes. *Fall Line*

