



IMGA Spring Newsletter 2005

From the Editor

Felicity Hotston-Jones



I hope you all had a very enjoyable Christmas and New Year and that winter has been kind to both you and your ponies!

I have recently come back from competing at the Gothenburg Horseshow in Sweden, which as always was an inspiring experience!

I must add a massive congratulations to Nisse and his Swedish team for a fantastic win and thank him for giving me the chance to ride at this wonderful event no less than five times!

On this subject I would like to encourage all international reps to make sure that they have made contact with all the major equestrian shows in their area regarding the games becoming a feature in the 2005/2006 seasons.

The games has been involved with the Gothenburg horseshow for many years but has only recently began its relationship with the Oslo Horseshow held in the beautiful spectrum arena in the heart of Norway's capital!



OSLO HORSESHOW 2004

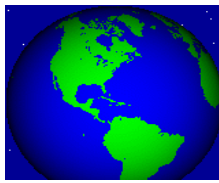
This indicates that we are progressing and that there is fresh interest from the major shows, many of which come under new management and are looking for different schedules to previous years!

If anyone would like any help with how to approach the major shows, or would like a Promotional DVD etc. then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

These high profile events are a fantastic way to raise awareness of our wonderful sport and to make sure we never have to answer that question again.... "Mounted Games, what's that?"

So all that is left to say is Good luck and go get them!!

Fliss x



Reports from around the Globe, four questions, seven Nations!

Q1) What has been happening in your countries association since Christmas?

(Germany) The German MGA is still growing. More and more riders and riding clubs are interested in our sport.

Our new team of national coaches, Gaby Makowski und Judith Moormann, undertook several trials in order to create the strongest possible National Team.

(Norway) Since Christmas the board of IMGAN (International Mounted Games Association of Norway) have been extremely busy making preparations for the 2005 season. Each year it seems to become increasingly difficult to fit all the competitions into the limited number of week-ends available during the season and this year has been no exception.

At a national level we will be running our national team championships across four separate week-ends throughout the season. In addition there will be the usual Pairs and Individual championships plus three friendly competitions (one each for individuals, pairs and team). The international team will once again be participating in the Northern European Championships with four competitions during the year, one each in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. There will also be Norwegian representation at the German Pairs Championships in April and the Agria Cup in Sweden in June. The highlight will naturally be the summer tour of England and Wales where we will be attending the World Championships as well as the pairs competition to be held in Wales after the Worlds, hopefully we will be able to compete at the Royal Welsh as well and then the tour will be rounded off with the World Individuals in Newark. There will be a return to Newark for the World Pairs later in the year and the season will be rounded off with the Oslo Horse Show in October.

One competition has already taken place in Norway already this year which was the Arctic Pairs in February which attracted riders from both Sweden and Northern Ireland as well as the home riders and was won by defending Norwegian Pairs Champions, Kaja Lande and Lene Graver.

(England) We have a new secretary- Lynda Hobbs who has been with the Association since April 1994 left at Christmas to take up a new full time job . After applications were received and interviews had taken place ,the new Secretary for the whole of MGAGB, Rosie Thornton, started work on 7th March 2005.

All the showgrounds have been booked for the shows that will take place in 2005. Entry forms for the Individual and Pairs competitions have gone out and we are receiving many entries for all our 2005 events.

(N.Ireland) On Tuesday the 4th of January I found myself standing in an indoor school training two of my older riders on new ponies to play games. It was a truly surreal moment for all of us and I think the dawn of a new era. What was especially strange about it was that prior to 2005 we as MGANI had never had a practice until late March! The trend continued with practices and selection for the first All Ireland team in MGA for Scandinavium as well as NI and Co Down practices its been madness.

Scandinavium was amazing! I have rarely enjoyed a trip so the camaraderie and fun off the

field was something I know Norman would have been syked with and a competition so fast and ferocious it will never be forgotten congratulations and many thanks to all involved for a fortnight I will never forget!

The link between The two Irish associations is now firmly established and I think it will move MGA from strength to strength on the Island of Ireland. If the Olympics comes of Ireland will be ready!

(Sweden) So far we have managed to arrange a referee course. We "graduated" 47 new line judges. The thought is that there will be a step 2 to this referee course where we graduate main judges. Besides that the association is planning for the oncoming season and of course to put peaces in place for Göteborg Horse Show which just took place.

(Wales) In Wales the closed season has been very busy organising this years World Team Championships .A enthusiastic committee have been beavering away and every thing was going well until we came across a major crisis with the venue. With all the planning an preparation in place it look at one stage that we might have to go back to square one. Luckily every thing was resolved and things are back on schedule .We knew it was going to be a big task but dint realise how big

(Scotland) A slow start in Scotland due to sever wet weather, however we did have a team competing at Gothenburg Show. They finished in 2nd place on both days 1 and 2 and 4th on day 3. This was a very young team, trained by Pat Brown, and I would like to congratulate them on holding their own against some excellent and very experienced riders. Our thanks also to our Swedish hosts for their generous hospitality. We also had a very successful annual ball which was attended by members and friends from Norway, Luxembourg and Northern Ireland, as well as from all over Britain.

(Belgium) Nothing very important , we started the season by an international competition in pairs on the 26th and 27 of March in Buisseret. The calendar is ready for the Belgian Challenge 2005.

Q2) How are your plans going for the World Teams?

(Germany) Have yet to select the national team but will keep you updated!

(Norway) Plans are now in full swing for the World Championships and the Norwegian team has already been selected which sees only one change from last year.

The team will be:

Kaja Lande (aka Killer), now Norway's most experienced international rider. She will in fact miss a large part of this years international calendar due to the fact that she will be spending the season riding for Sussex in MGAGB but she will rejoin the team for the World Championships riding her Pony "Flying Lily".

Nina Gran (aka Smiley), also retains her place on the team and will no doubt be pushing on to repeat some of the outstanding displays from last season together with super fast pony "First" who she is borrowing from Kaja.

Lene Graver (aka Lenny), by far Norway's most successful national rider with a total of 8 national titles to her name and voted best individual rider in last years "web awards". Together with pony "Karinka" she will be looking to both add and justify those statistics during the coming year.

Malin Martinsson (aka Molly), another of last years debutants to have retained her place on the team. Armed now with a new pony called "Vimto" she will be looking to cement her place

in the heart of the team.

Maren Lande (Currently in need of a nickname), represents the only change from last years team as she replaces the irrepressible Kristine "Chicken" Gyberg who currently finds herself pony less. Maren is Kaja's big sister and already rode for the team at the 2003 World Championships in Kentucky. Having sat last season out in order to concentrate on her studies, she is now back and together with her pony "Soquili Sonela" she will be a force to be reckoned with.

(England)The England team has not yet been selected

(N.Ireland) Gothenburg has held up plans for the worlds slightly but we have our selection on 23&24 of April and hopefully with maybe ten to choose from we will have a good team. However only time will tell.

(Wales) We held our team trials on Saturday 2nd April and the team Selected was Joanna Dale a veteran of 3 World Championships, Katie Davies, Natasha Hopkins, Katie Hopkins, Huw Whitney, reserve Gemma Thomas, Trainer Alun Whitney

(Scotland) As yet we do not have a team selected for the World Championships but our trial is scheduled for May 15th

(Belgium) We just had a meeting concerning it, we just decided the way of selecting the riders but we do not know their names yet...

Q3) What do you think the highlights will be for your Association in 2005?

(Germany) It's of course the German Team Championship. And, hopefully, the Worlds. We will have a strong team this year.

(Norway) At a national level we will be looking to build on the ever increasing interest that is being shown in the sport from all over the country. Generating that interest is one thing but keeping it will provide an entirely different challenge. We are hopeful however, to build on the success of the national team championships from last year and extend it to include more and more teams.

For the international team this season represents a very real chance to consolidate on some of the very encouraging results from last year. By and large 2004 team has been kept together and we will be hoping to repeat and improve upon our good results in the Northern European and World Championships from last season.

(England)One of the highlights is bound to be the defence the World Team Championship title.

(N.Ireland) We have a much more adventurous schedule than ever before and I just want to live thru it but Scandanavium the Worlds (team) and for the first time 3 all Ire titles Ind, Pairs and team to fight for. I also hope we are hosting three teams from the mainland for a competition @ the end of the month two from Scotland and one from the principality of Sussex! That will be an honour and a great opportunity for the Irish public to see games played as they should be.

(Sweden) The highlights for the association this year is on the national level is to continue spreading the sport in Sweden and to make sure that the teams we have plenty of competitions to go to. We also try to get it on some of the bigger shows in Sweden. We also need to redo our own rulebook as it's not up to date.

On the international level the World Championships is always the main goal but this year the national team also has the NEC (Northern European Championships) to look forward too.

(Wales) Olympic approval if it happens??????//

(Scotland) We look forward in 2005 to a good competition in Wales at the world Championships and hope to take teams to Northern Ireland very soon and to the Sojasun Cup in France in September.

(Belgium) We try to put forward more international competitions even the small ones: eg: Bruille, Matsaing, French Pairs, etc...

Q4) Do you have a message for your World Teams Rivals for 2005?

(Germany) Take care!

(Norway) Beware of our secret weapon! Last year the Norwegian Mounted Games Association unleashed a "quiet and reserved" young rider by the name of Chicken on an unsuspecting worldwide Mounted Games fraternity. This year she may not be on the team but don't let that lull you into a false sense of security. Chicken will still be acting as reserve rider for the national team so beware!!

**(England) England will be trying their utmost to defend their title.
We wish all teams competing at the 2005 Worlds the best of success**

(N.Ireland) No more Jack Daniels!!!!!!

(Wales) Unless you're coming to Wales for a good time don't bother coming!

(Scotland) Good luck to all countries competing and we look forward to meeting lots of friends, both old and new!

(Belgium) Well, we reached the second step of the podium last year so we are looking for the highest one!!!!

Thanks go out to, Younes Ahlbom, Colin Carson, Mary Worth, Jens Martin, Alun Whitney, Julie Marsille, Jacky Skelly and Bohn Burkhard for their replies!!

From Our Chairman
Keith Martin



The schedule of international events on the IMGA website (<http://www.mounted-games.org/imga/events/2005/index.html>) currently has over 40 entries, and I'm sure there are others for which the dates aren't yet fixed but which will be added to the schedule later in the year.

That's a lot of competitions, and it looks like being a bumper year for International Mounted Games.

There seems to be a trend towards "multiple competitions". The Northern European Championship is decided over four different competitions in four different countries, and the Peter Dale Challenge is similarly organised. The same is happening locally, with championships being decided over a series of events. This year we even find that our top event, the World Team Championship, is linking up with an international friendly competition at the Royal Welsh Show.

Which brings me nicely to my next point. Not only is the number of competitions growing, but public exposure is increasing too. At the Royal Welsh Show an audience of up to 250.000 will be able to see Mounted Games, many of them for the first time, and they are the people who will eventually ensure that our sport gains the popularity and acceptance already enjoyed by other equestrian sports.

I get very frustrated when I see "sports" such as lawnmower racing, bog snorkelling, and underwater rugby, all getting news media coverage and television time on specialised sports channels, while many Mounted Games Competitions still take place with an audience of only friends and family and those already directly involved.

There are exceptions, of course, and for many years there have been high-profile events which have drawn the crowds. Scandinavium is the obvious long-running example of this, and it's now been joined by the Oslo Horse Show, which was reported on the national Norwegian TV channel NRK1 in a prime time viewing slot, with the Mounted Games part of the show taking up about 20 minutes of the coverage.

We can't all organise events of this stature, and we must not forget the more low-key local events which are the foundation of our activities. But even these can attract visitors and spread the word if they're advertised in the local press, on TV and radio, and "what's on" websites. So next time you're organising an event, whatever its size or stature, don't forget to tell everyone about it and encourage the largest possible audience to attend.

Keith Martin
Chairman IMGA



Welsh Team Selections and World Team Preparations 2005

Everything is now going well with preparations .We need to know as soon as possible what arrangements we need to make for different countries. Are they using hotels or camping , What packages they are booking T1 or T2 and how many supporters they are bringing and do they want to book on to S1 or S2 packages .

We are hoping to have live update on our web site (wales2005.com) of the competition so you will be able to track the score where ever in the world you are.

We would like to do a feature on several World Championships veterans or caricatures on the web site as a build up to the Worlds so if anyone wishes to forward me some information it will make the site more interesting a.whitney3@ntlworld.com

Joanna Dale will be in control updating the Website in the near future but I can forward information on to her.

Alun Whitney

World Teams 2005 information

Hi!!!! To all international representatives!!!!

Just to updated you all on the Worlds 2005 everything is going to plan and we are looking so forward to you all coming to Wales in July.

I think by now most countries have selected there "Teams" we want to put as much information as we can on the Web/site maybe each country can organise someone to send us an update to add on for them, but firstly can I have the name of the riders selected & team trainer & a photo of the team? .

Riders information.

- Passed experience background (competitions entered & maybe won)
- Personal photographs
- About their pony
- Their job
- Hobbies

Anything about them just so we can all get to know each other a little better especially all the new riders & trainers we all may be meeting for the first time.

It is very important that any teams requiring Hotel accommodation book "now" some teams have already had problems with hotels being full.

The closest to the show field;

They are basic but clean & comfortable no food or bar here, is the Travel lodge, all of you have a look on the web/site <http://www.wales2005.com/>

Click on Venue & select hotel we can give you more information on hotels if need be.

Also all teams can come to Builth Wells (Royal Welsh Show) and take part in the parade, But only the top 8 will compete in the main ring.

We are concerned that you wont get hotel accommodation at Builth Wells, as most will already be booked up you may have to travel to close by venues Brecon, Talgarth, Abergavenny. Ideally we would love every one to camp there, this may be a possibility? there is no problem with us camping.

We will only have stables for 8 teams at Builth Wells, but any others ponies (and we have done this for pony club before) we can arrange corralling very close by with a local farmer. Please we will need to know your intentions on going to Builth Wells.

<http://www.builth.co.uk/> This link has some uesfull information for accommodation at Builth Wells

“”” Please if you are coming and require accommodation book now *for both venues* don't leave it you wont get anywhere”””

We are starting to get some good entries for the Pairs competition, to be held on the second

week after the worlds, we have had a lot of interest in the Clinics (training) that we are happy to organise for anyone that wants to do this.

I also need to mention that the Southern Championships are being held on Sat 16th & Sun 17th July this competition is only about 45 minutes from Bridgend, camping at the famous David Brooms West Wales show venue.the person to contact is;

C/o Lu Hughes
Forelock Farm
Moyles Court
Ringwood Hants
BH24 3NF
Home 01425 47360
Mobile 07778 650572

If you need hotels in this area please ask Lu Hughes or look at Chepstow on the internet.
<http://www.chepstow.co.uk/tourism-index.htm>

Teams Entered ;

Australia,Belgium,Denmark,England,Germany,New Zeland,Northen Irland,Norway,Southen Irland,Scotland,Sweden,USA,Wales.

Both Canada & France have not confirmed!!!! (but both want to come) having a few problems!!! We all hope can be sorted out soon.

The committee are happy to give them both some extra time, We can only do this up until the final time we have to say the total number of stables required, which doesn't give any of you much time.

Well I hope all the above information was informative and useful for you all I will be waiting eagerly for the Teams selected details coming through to me.

I will mail you all again very soon with an update.

All the best to you all ..Kayrene



[France MGA Invitation](#)

Dear Representative,

We have the pleasure to invite one of your team to take part to an international competition, the Sojasun's Cup, which will take place at Noyal-sur-Vilaine (10 km away from Rennes,

Brittany), September 3rd and 4th.

The aim of the Sojasun's Cup is to thank our sponsor, the Sojasun factory, by organising a sporting, friendly and spectacular event.

Our sponsor will offer the entry fees and all the meals during the week-end (including the rider's party).

The teams will stay next to the arena (tents and corrals) but the riders can choice to rent an hotel room (not include in the entry fees).

Internationals and a few nationals teams will join together for this competition.

Unfortunately, we can not invite more than 8 teams, so if you want to participate, please answer as soon as possible and before may 31st.

We are at your disposition for any further informations.

CONTACT :

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[International Team Trials / 2nd Arctic Pairs Championship](#)
[19th – 22nd February - Sneis gård / Sørkedalen - Norway](#)

2005 is already well underway now though and the various MGA seasons are starting to kick into gear. It is already proving to be another action packed and very hectic season for Norwegian teams. Originally we had planned to travel back to New Zealand to defend the South Pacific Challenge cup we won in 2004 however the extensive traveling that took place during 2004 rather took its toll and another lengthy and costly tour to the other side of the world that early in the season simply wasn't a viable project. It's a shame but we may well give it another bash in 2006.

The Norwegian international team will however be contesting the Northern European Championship (NEC) series of competitions once more that were so successful in 2004 as well as the Agria cup in Sweden, the Oslo Horse show at the Spektrum stadium in Oslo and of course the World Team Championships in Wales. We will also be sending riders to contest the German Pairs championships as well as the World Individual and Pairs Championships.

The shows that are on the national calendar in Norway are the Team Championship series that will once again be contested over four different legs across the season, as well as the Individual and pairs championships. In addition there will be friendly "non championship" competitions, one each in team, pairs and individuals.

The 2005 season was kicked off however with the Arctic pairs championships. This was a competition that was run for the first time as a low-key friendly show at the beginning of the 2004 season. What made it different was that rather than being run on grass or sand arena's this took place on snow. This concept captured the imagination of so many that there was a great demand to run the show again in 2005.

So, late last year the search began for a suitable venue for the competition and through the resourcefulness of the Lande family, it wasn't long before the perfect setting was found, namely in Holmenkollen. For those that do not know, Holmenkollen is quite a wealthy neighbourhood of Oslo, perched on the side of the hills surrounding the city. Holmenkollen is dominated however by the huge winter sports complex which itself is dominated by Oslo's most recognisable landmark, the massive ski jump. It was at this fabulous setting that on the 22nd February there was to be a world cup race for dog sledging, not exactly a sport that is contested in most European countries but quite popular this far north. A few well placed phone calls later and we had secured a playing pitch within the same show. The invitations were sent out and before too long all the places had been snapped up by amongst others the Schelander sisters from Sweden and Andy Jordan who was flown in from Northern Ireland to partner Kristine Gyberg. All we had to do then was hope there would be sufficient snow. We'll come back to all of that though...

The arctic pairs were due to take place rather oddly on a Tuesday so taking advantage of the fact that all the top Norwegian riders were congregating on Oslo anyway, we decided to stage the international team trials for 2005 on the week-end before.

So, on the Friday, I resurrected the well drilled routine of packing all the woolly jumpers, gloves and hats and embarked on the well trodden path to Oslo from Luxembourg via Amsterdam airport. A trip that in fact I have done so often over the past 12 months that I am now the proud owner of a KLM platinum card which doesn't actually appear to guarantee me anything more than an additional bread role on the flight (if I'm lucky)!

Saturday morning it was down to work and in those temperatures it's probably just as well that I was kept busy with 8 hours of straight training sessions on both Saturday and Sunday. The actual trials only formed part of the week-end with other less experienced groups also taking the opportunity to try and shake off the ring rust that had built up over the (bitterly cold) winter.

One rather unfortunate hallmark of Norway's 2004 season was the quite unsettling regularity with which we visited hospitals all over the world. With the exception of Kristine Gyberg better known as chicken, every single member of the international first team squad (including the trainer) had to be admitted to hospital at some point during the season. Surely the jinx would not strike again this year would it??

... of course it would. By the end of the first day of the first training of the season we already had to call out the ambulance after Thea Østby was kicked right in the leg during pony pairs by a rather cranky pony. Luckily though nothing was broken and a few days later she was back in the saddle and able to compete in the arctic pairs.

By Sunday night two days of intense training had been completed in sub zero temperatures and I was well and truly cream crackered. Now in recent months there have in fact been a number of discussions regarding how a selection should be run and who should have input into which individuals are selected. I have seen that in Wales for example there is an extremely complex system implemented to decide who will and will not ride for the country. Personally I don't like systems like that, if you are appointed as a national trainer, I believe you should have full and complete power to select the team that you believe will yield the best results. I don't know how it works in many other sports but I can imagine for example that Sven Goran Eriksson would not be too thrilled if Arsene Wenger was choosing the England football team. I have never really understood how a similar system can be sustainable in English cricket either. But I digress....

In Norway, whilst others can give input, the ultimate decision on who is and is not on the team is mine. As such I also bear ultimate responsibility if the team does not deliver as expected. With that in mind, I have this year opted for continuity. Over the past years we have experienced a number of enforced team changes from one year to the next. On this occasion however, the only doubt surrounded Kristine Gyberg who, having recently sold her pony, is for the moment without a mount for the 2005 season. This does however coincide quite nicely with the return of Maren Lande who opted not to sit on the team last year due to university commitments. 2005 therefore represents a straightforward switch with Maren taking Kristine's place on the team. The other four members namely Kaja Lande, Lene Graver, Malin Martinsson and Nina Gran retain their place. Kristine meanwhile takes up the position of reserve rider for the year.

Nothing is ever quite as straightforward as it seems however as there will almost certainly have to be changes made to that line up during the year due to the fact that Kaja will in fact not be defending her Norwegian Team championship title with Søndre Ski this season. Instead she has signed to ride for Sussex for the 2005 season and will move to England probably in April. She retains her place on the international team however as signing for the worlds most successful team over the past 5 or 6 years can hardly be deemed as bad thing. Inevitably she will miss some competitions though and she will be sorely missed. It will however open up an opportunity for somebody else. As for who that will be? Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

So with all the training and selecting out of the way the riders had one days rest before the eagerly anticipated arctic pairs. Now many have questioned whether indeed you can play mounted games on snow. Some seem to believe that it is not at all possible, other think that you would have to ride so slowly that it would kill the sport as a spectacle. Not so, you can certainly play games at full speed in snow just as you would on a dry pitch. The only thing is that you need to right kind of snow and you need the right amount of it and herein lay the problem...

Judging by the text messages that I was getting from back home, as soon as I left Luxembourg the snow began to fall and it simply had not stopped ever since and Luxembourg was seeing its heaviest snowfall in years which was ironic really because the arctic Norwegian conditions were refusing to yield anything worth more than a slight dusting. Already on Saturday there were some worried faces around the camp and they got steadily worse as Tuesday came ever nearer and the heavens continued to refuse any decent snowfall.

Your basic MGA organiser always has two distinct qualities however, the first is optimism and the second is resourcefulness.

The Optimism meant that come Tuesday morning, all ponies were wrapped up in nice warm blanket and bundled into trailers whilst riders were bundled up in even warmer blankets and despatched into a convoy of vehicles that slowly made their way towards the towering heights of Holmenkollen. Upon arrival however, it did not take long before it became clear that the optimism was misplaced. The playing pitch, whilst being of perfect size and nice flat, was covered in no more than a couple of inches of snow below which there was solid ice. In other words conditions that were far too dangerous for Mounted Games. When you think that most competition organisers pray for good weather, we prayed for bad and still didn't get our way.

This however is where the resourcefulness comes into its own. You're standing around with a

truck full of MGA equipment, plenty of helpers, 24 mounted games riders and ponies all raring to go and even the IMGA chairman who has flown in to witness this much touted event (and on his birthday as well), what do you do?

Well, what you do is, you mobilise plan B!! Now plan B had in fact been hatched a couple of nights earlier during the consumption of a welcoming and toe warming bottle of cognac and it involved moving the entire show lock, stock and slightly icy barrels to a nearby riding school with a hall large enough to be able to accommodate the show. So, that's exactly what we did, everybody was loaded back onto the convoy and off we sped at a great rate of knots in the direction of Sørkedalen.

Once we arrived people sped off in all directions to try and organise everything. Ring masters extraordinaire Øystein Vigerust and Gunnar Martinsson scratched their heads and tried to figure out how to get the poles into a rock solid surface. Various mothers were despatched to ensure there was a steady supply of food and hot drinks. I sat down and desperately tried to figure out how to change three heats of four into four heats of three and still make it balanced (surprisingly difficult in fact). Whilst all this was going on the IMGA chairman was despatched on a one horse open sleigh ride so that he couldn't witness the organised chaos that was underway behind him. And as if all that was not enough, out of nowhere a bus load of Sussex MGA Jones family members appeared (97 of them I think there were!!). They were just on their winter holidays and thought they'd "pop" in!!

Seriously though, it didn't take long before we were underway for real and slightly belated but still in good time the flag (that I was waving) dropped to signal the start of the first race.

The whole competition was to be concluded within one day so there were just two qualifying sessions with six games and four heats with three pairs in each heat. That would be followed by simply an A and a B final.

With only three pairs making it into the final it was going to be a very tight contest and the sort of competition where if you have any ambitions of A final qualification you count the points that you drop rather than the ones that you score. Something defending Norwegian pairs champions Lene Graver and Kaja Lande will have had little problems doing. Even the most mathematically challenged of us will know that if you win every single race and post two maximum scores in the qualifiers, chances are you made the final.

It wouldn't have taken much for them to come unstuck though as both of the other A final qualifiers only dropped 2 points each themselves. They were Frida and Elin Schelander from Sweden and international pairing of Andrew Jordan and Kristine Gyberg. The unluckiest pairing of the day were international team mates Malin Martinsson and Nina Gran who dropped just three points and still ended up in the B final.

They did win that B final with a score of 21 but they didn't have everything their own way as the Nesodden pairing of Karen Houge and Camilla Lunde gave them a very good run for their money finishing on 19. Third place went to Christina Ødeskaug and Inga Lina Hausdal who on the face of it you might think would have been disappointed with their score of 8 points from 8 races but their joy at actually qualifying for the B final in the first place had already surpassed all their expectations and they were clearly more than happy with their days work.

The A final saw the head to head of the top three pairs that had been kept apart during the heats and it was due to be a pretty good battle. There was a shock straight away in the first race when a particularly well attached sword lancers ring (had it frozen to the pole?) resulted

in Lene and Kaja dropping their first points of the day and meant they were playing catch up from the outset. In fact the early pace was set by Chicken and Andy who won the first two races and then proceeded to trade blows with Lene and Kaja who were hot on their heels. Behind them the wheels appears to have fallen off to a certain degree for Swedish pairing. With only two races to go there was only one point in it but then disaster struck for the Northern Iwegian connection as their hula hoop began to roll and came to rest well beyond the pole. A big fat zero meant that the win had gone and Lene and Kaja maintained their air of invincibility. Second place to Andy and Chicken represented a good result and a worthwhile trip for Andy though. Full of smiles the Schelander sisters also seemed very happy with this early season run out.

So that was it, the first competition of the year had been successfully completed, there had been no accidents (thank god!) and everybody seemed happy. I could now return to Luxembourg and investigate the possibilities to set-up a snow export business before next years competition!!

Jens Martin, Trainer Norway MGA