

Natalie Berry

Competition Climbing Bursary 2009

Report



2009 was yet another action-packed year for the competition scene for me - a World Youth Championships in France and European Youth Series rounds in Munich, Edinburgh and Kranj, Slovenia. Unfortunately I was unable to compete in the first European in Imst, Austria due to exams and also the round in Kaliningrad, Russia due to travel difficulties.

My grant kindly awarded by the MCoFS enabled me to travel to and from the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena three to four times per week in order to train for my upcoming competitions. Without my funding it would have been difficult to access this world-class facility on such a regular basis, which I believe greatly aided my training for the events in which I competed.

After winning the Senior Female Title in the British Lead Climbing Championships at EICA Ratho I felt ready to take on the international circuit.

My first international event was the World Youth Championships in Valence, France in August. After months of hard work (including a hard battle after a 6 week break and recovery period after a hernia operation in late April) I managed a respectable 12th place in the event, which involved young climbers from over 40 countries around the World. I was very close to making finals (top 8) and considering my limited training time after the operation I was very pleased with my result.

The next mission was the European Youth Series event in Munich, Germany. I was devastated when my hernia returned during my first qualifier route and didn't perform as well as I'd have liked in the qualifiers, finishing 12th overall. Despite this setback I was determined to keep training for the most exciting event in the calendar for me - the next European Youth Series round at the Edinburgh International Climbing Arena in Ratho, my home training facility after Glasgow!



I was so thrilled to be able to compete in front of a home crowd and alongside an expanded GB Team. After qualifying for the final I finished in 4th place, my best result of the year and just a hold away from 3rd position (I was tied for 3rd but lost on count-back). The sound of a home crowd going completely insane as I walked out and climbed is something I'll never forget!

My final event for 2009 was the EYS round in Kranj, Slovenia. This was the venue where I had previously won a Gold and Silver medal in previous years, so I had high hopes for doing well, and my training was looking promising. Unfortunately I fell ill with a cold in the week before the competition and was therefore not feeling my best during the competition and finished 13th. I was disappointed with my result, especially as training had been going so well up until then.

2010 and Goals:

In all 2009 was not my most successful year, primarily due to hindrances with my health, but I am determined to make 2010 my most successful year yet. I take every competition experience away with me - no matter what happens - and attempt to learn from it.

Without my funding from MCofS I would not have been able to attend these events from which I gain so many positive experiences and new friendships, as well as learning valuable life skills such as team work and self-confidence. Events in Europe can cost up to £400, which adds up to around £1500-£2000 per year in expenses. I am extremely grateful for the support that the MCofS has given me and believe that without their assistance I would not have been able to benefit as much from training and competing as I have over the last year.

I am thoroughly looking forward to competing in a full competition series this year (after yet another hernia operation!) and in particular the World Youth Championships which are to be held at the EICA Ratho in September, which I aim to win.

Natalie Berry
2010