

Progress report: Ice Climbing World Cups, by Anna Wells

I have recently returned from competing in the three European rounds of the Ice Climbing World Cup, and it has been an incredible experience so far!

My best result was in Saas Fee, which was the largest event with 30 international female competitors. Here I qualified for the semi-final in 14th place, improving this to finish in 11th place, and narrowly missing out on a place in the finals. I was very pleased with this result, and feel that the technical nature of the routes was well suited to the specific training I had been doing.



In the other two competitions I placed 19th and 21st, and learned some valuable lessons. In Italy, I again made it into the semi-final but got pumped very quickly which I think was a consequence of being quite sleep-deprived from travelling back to the UK and working long days in between comps; in future I will organise more time off med school so I can stay out. In France, the qualifier was very easy and so it became a speed-climbing competition as everyone “timed-out” at different positions – in isolation I had not appreciated that this would be the nature of the game and was simply not fast enough, so again this was a valuable lesson. Since returning to the UK I have been focussing specifically on speed training!

In my initial funding application I said that my goal for the world cups was to further my international competition experience and make semi-finals in as many rounds as possible. So far I have made 2/3 semi-finals, even almost making a final, and I have certainly learned a huge amount about the nature and strategy of the competitions. At every event I have attempted to gain as much experience as I can; when other team members have left the venue to chill-out after their climb was over, I have always stayed and watched every single male and female final, so that I can learn as much as possible.

The final round takes place in Russia at the beginning of March. I have been training hard and am feeling fit for the upcoming competition. Although “making a final” was something I had envisaged as a more futuristic goal, I now feel like this is something I might be able to achieve in Russia, and I am very excited to see if I can make it!