

February 08

Jan-Michael Kochalski

British Alpine Ski Team



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Pöyry Energy backs Olympic hopeful.

OIL and gas specialists Pöyry Energy (Aberdeen) Ltd are backing a talented skier's bid to represent Great Britain at the Olympic Games.

Jan Michael Kochalski, a member of the British Europa Cup squad, returned to North-east Scotland from his training base in Austria to meet representatives from Pöyry who presented him with new equipment and the first instalment of a funding package. The 22-year-old is training hard ahead of the British Land Ski Championships which begin in Meribel in the French Alps on March 30.

Jan, whose family live in the Royal Deeside village of Torphins, was greeted by Pöyry Marketing Director Neil Knowles at the firm's city offices.

Pöyry is a multinational energy firm that specialises in management consulting, hydropower, renewables, and oil and gas. The group employs 7,300 people in 42 countries.

Neil Knowles said the company was delighted to be supporting Jan.

"We have been impressed with Jan's dedication and commitment to his sport. To compete for Great Britain at the Olympics is one of the greatest achievements for any athlete and something they can be proud of their entire life," commented Neil Knowles.

"Winter sports - and skiing in particular - are hugely popular in Scandinavia where our head office is based, but in the UK skiing is a minority sport. Athletes have to rely on sponsorship to help fund their ambitions," he added.

Neil Knowles said: "Pöyry's key asset is its people and we value personal development and that is why we have chosen to assist Jan. It takes a high level of commitment, but with the right backing and support he can achieve his goals."

Jan said: "I am extremely grateful to Pöyry. Their support takes a lot of the day-to-day pressure off me and means I am able to concentrate 100% on training, competition and improving my performances.

"We receive a lot of backing from SnowsportGB [the body which represents competitive racing and snowboarding at an international level] when it comes to taking part in competition but it can be tough finding funding to help with travelling expenses and living costs," added Jan.

Jan's preparation for the British championships has been hindered slightly due to a torn hip flexor muscle earlier in the season following a crash in a Giant Slalom race in Chile. However he recovered to get some excellent results prior to Christmas only to suffer another injury in the first downhill of the season at Altenmark with a crash on the multiple jumps, this bruised his shins so badly that the next morning he could not get his boots on! He is now fully fit and starting to compete again.

Jan began his skiing career in the North-east of Scotland where he trained with Gordon Skiers at Alford Dry Ski Slope and at the Lecht Ski Centre. 2008 is Jan's seventh year skiing and training full-time in Europe.

Speaking about what Pöyry would like to see Jan achieve over the next couple of years, Neil Knowles said:

"Ultimately we want to see Jan launch out of the start gate in the Olympic Games in 2010. We know Jan will do his absolute best to get there."

"Jan has a bright future ahead of him as a world class Alpine skier. If he succeeds, we succeed. Pöyry's business philosophy is to generate success for our clients by pursuing excellence and we can see in Jan the same determination to be the best."



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