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## Freeman's Battle With Diabetes Chronicled

By Jeffrey Goodrich  
Beacon staff

The Associated Press wrote a nice article last month about Kris Freeman overcoming an obstacle that would have sidelined most other athletes: Type I diabetes. Although told over five years ago by doctors that his days as a competitive skier were over, Kris wasn't about to let this defeat him.

The article quotes Kris as saying, "I wasn't going to stop, I didn't let it slow me down. I've gone around the country and I've done a fair amount of speaking at diabetic events, and the thing I think is the worst is when you see parents pull their kids out of activities they love because they're concerned about it. You've got to keep the kid living a normal life and don't let them give up."

It goes on to relate how Kris has to constantly monitor his insulin intake, which can change frequently given the fact that he spends much of his time in hotel rooms and in different time zones. This means he must eat five times a day and inject himself with insulin from six to ten times daily. During competitions Kris will eat up to 4,500 calories a day.

When asked about how this affects his ability to compete, Kris, who is 25 years old, is quoted as saying, "[I]t's automatic, it's ingrained. It's something I've got to do." This, however, doesn't mean Kris has no problems managing his condition. Because of Kris' low

body fat, it is difficult for him to find places to inject his insulin medication.

While there are other diabetic athletes, the AP article reports that Kris knows of no other endurance athlete like himself who is also dealing with diabetes. Incredibly, this condition has had little effect on his racing. As he states in the article, "[I]n the years I've been racing with diabetes, I've only had two races affected by diabetes." He does however recall how during one competition he had to wrestle a Russian coach for a sports drink because the person who was to hand one to Kris dropped it.

The article highlights the irony that it was right after stating in an interview that he couldn't think of any hardships he had faced that Kris was diagnosed with diabetes. Within a year he suffered compartment syndrome in his legs, which affects the function of muscles and nerves and ultimately required surgery to each of his shins.

Kris makes his own feeds, which a member of the team brings out to the course for him. His teammate, Luke Bodensteiner, was quoted in the article as saying, "when he (Kris) races, we get as many hands as we can out on the course with bottles of sports drink for him, because at any point he can start getting fuzzy. He is one of those athletes who does everything exactly right, and everything he does is meant to make him faster. It's something to watch, I'll tell you."

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overall US titles. "This is a strong team, even stronger than we had four years ago," said Luke Bodensteiner, Nordic program director for the US ski team.

Justin Freeman is [on the Olympic team for the first time]. He missed the 2002 team by just a couple of placements. He started off this season strong, but didn't have the results he'd hoped for recently, leaving him "on pins and needles" until learning of his selection.

"That's pretty cool," Justin said of going to the Olympics with his brother. "There's definitely a competitive relationship there, but we're probably typical guys, brothers. As much as pushing each other, we remind each other to kind of back off at times. Being a competitor, it's a lot easier to go too hard than easy sometimes."

Justin Freeman competed in his first World Championships in 2003, finishing as high as 42nd in the 30K classical, his stronger technique. He was derailed by recurring illnesses the next season before coming back to claim the 2004 national title in the 10K classical. He came down sick in Europe again last year and came home early to take some time off. "I had one good race at nationals, then started skiing faster and faster and faster. I picked up where I left off in March this November."

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