

Berkley Brown expects 2021 to be quite different

Aurora native and Country Day School alumni Berkley Brown says next year will be her first attempt to crack the Olympic roster.

"I was on the Canadian team during the last Olympics but I was only [in] competition in the Canadian World Cups, but now I have a spot in the International World Cup tour," Brown said, prior to her competition last week at Idre, in Alvdalen Municipality, Dalarna County, Sweden.

Amazed by the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Brown garnered a love for moguls and pursued it professionally.

Her goal is to make finals and super-finals that will earn her a ticket to representing the nation.

Learning more of Brown's story, her road to successfully competing in international competitions would have not been possible if it wasn't for a recovery, she says, that went smoothly.

She required a full-reconstruction of her right ACL.

"Being back in the gate knowing my body is 100 per cent, I think that's the biggest thing for me."

Her indomitable confidence never left and at the beginning of this calendar year she was competing in domestic and international competitions.

In January, Brown finished 16 in Tremblant in January and 19 in Calgary in February. At the end of February, in her favourite place, Tazawako in Lake Tazawa, Japan, she finished 20.

Upon her return back to Canada, in Val-St-Come ski resort in Quebec for the Nor-Am Cup Brown podiumed in second place and subsequently again at Killington Resort south of the border.

Then, COVID hit and plans went from the drawing board to the discard pile in the blink of an eye.

"From May until October, we usually travel overseas to Australia and France. Unfortunately, we couldn't do that this year. Thankfully we had our water-ramp site in Whistler as well as Quebec, that we trained at the whole summer. In October, we got the okay to start training in Zermatt (Switzerland). That was our first time on snow since March," Brown explained.

Since Zermatt, Finland was set in her sights. An early course at Apex Mountain Resort in British Columbia provided the preparations she needed for Finland.

But, with COVID, came other complications outside of the sport she needed to adjust to. Individual room bubbles were created, daily surveys needed to be filled and testing was done on a regular basis.

Brown developed her own home workout routine to be active. If that was the only thing she missed, it was a consistent routine in the gym.

Aside from one complication, Brown was excited to have the fortune of competing at a time where a lot of other things were shut down outright.

She finished in 24 in Ruka, Finland on December 12. She wasn't too happy with her performance and going into Idre, Sweden for the first time her goal was quite simple.

?Just kind of hoping to leave Sweden knowing I did the best I did. Definitely in Ruka, I could have skied a bit better,? Brown said last Tuesday.

In Sweden, Brown missed out on the mogul's finals by one place last Saturday and made it to the dual moguls finals on Sunday finishing 15. Overall, she was particularly happy with her results, heading into her third quarantine of the year and into a slight Christmas break.

She is looking forward to a brand-new year and a year where the Olympic team is set in her sights.

The 20-year-old also looks to continue to give back to the community, having provided pointers at Devil's Glen ski resort in the past.

By Robert Belardi