

'Bad day' dashes Olympic dream

Olympics by Pat Scott and Chris Saunderson

HOPES that cross-country skier Andrew Musgrave would win Great Britain's first Olympic medal in cross-country skiing last Friday slipped away almost as soon as the race got under way.

Optimism remained that with Andrew Young, the duo might progress in the team sprint but despite finishing sixth in semifinal one, their time was not good enough for them to progress to the final.

Musgrave finished 28th in the 15 kilometre race where he

had been tipped to be on the podium.

The skier who still trains in Huntly during the summer, although based in Norway started the race gently but it soon became clear that he was not on form.

Musgrave said: "I was really disappointed after the 15km. It had been the big goal for me the last few years.

"I ended up just having a really bad day when it counted. I don't think there was anything we did in the training prior to the games or after the skiathlon that was wrong. It was just a bad day.

"I don't think I let the nerves get to me either. I was much more nervous before the skiathlon as it was the first race and I was really unsure of my form after not racing for well over a month. I still don't know what happened.

"Overall I'm not particularly happy with the games. The skiathlon was good, but the 15km was the big goal for me, and I really messed up.

"Wednesday's team sprint with Andrew Young was decent enough though. It was nice to come 12th with a lad I've trained with since I was 11 years old. I've still got the 50km to go as

well, so hopefully I'll manage to pull out another good race there."

Musgrave admitted he started off the 15km conservatively but felt heavy the whole way round and never got going.

"This was the race that I've been targeting. I knew on a good day I could be here fighting for a medal but I never thought I'd go as slow as that.

Andrew Young, also from Huntly, finished 57th in the 15km.

Young said of his performance: "I had better legs in my head than I did in reality and I was always chasing the pace. My results have not been great this season and I don't know what is going on. These results do not show my full potential. I'll do the team sprint then I'll go home and focus on the World Cup team sprints at the end of the season."

Callum Smith, from Inverurie, who also trains at the Nordic Ski Centre, finished 75th and had a good first lap but said: "I just went backwards and I didn't have the same energy that I did in the skiathlon and that was really heavy going."

After the team sprint Young said: "We skied okay, we had a good race, it's just a shame to be half-a-minute back. I think we didn't quite ski to 100 per cent. At an Olympics if you don't come out all guns firing, you get punished for that."

Musgrave has a final opportunity to impress and will race again in the men's 50km mass start classic tomorrow at 5am UK time.



Andrew Musgrave was disappointed with his performance last Friday.

Picture: Frank Musgrave