



OLYMPIC PREVIEW

# Liam Killeen

Having recorded his best ever finish at this year's Mountain Bike World Championships (4th), Britain's Liam Killeen is hoping for an equally impressive performance in Beijing. Kitch caught up with him in Val di Sole...

Wig World

JK — What do you know about the Laoshan course?

LK — I went over there last September to watch the test event and rode a few laps. It seemed to suit my style, a bit like the Worlds course in Italy — very up and down, not much recovery time. I liked the course, it was hot and humid and that often seems to go in my favour.

JK — Didn't that test event prove a bit farcical with riders DNF'ing by the dozen?

LK — Well it's hard having such an event at the end of a season when people aren't particularly motivated. A few riders didn't leave themselves enough time to settle from the long-haul flight either.

JK — So what's your plan between the Worlds and the Olympics?

LK — I'll be taking a week's break before getting in a couple of further weeks' harder training. Then the Canadian World Cups will be my last races before Beijing.

JK — How far in advance will you be arriving in Beijing?

LK — Hopefully at least two weeks before the race, to allow me to acclimatise to the local conditions.

JK — People keep talking about the pollution but it seems that the heat and humidity — and riders' ability to adapt — are likely to be equally, if not more, crucial...

LK — I feel it's a combination



Killeen was fourth in the XC at Val di Sole

**"They're very tough conditions to exercise your threshold in. There's only so much you can do and, to be honest, you've just got to suffer it for a couple of hours"**

of all three really; they're very tough conditions to exercise your threshold in.

JK — What can you do to prepare for that?

LK — There's only so much you can do and, to be honest, you've just got to suffer it for a couple of hours. I've never had any asthmatic problems so I'm not stressing too much about it. I just want to ensure I arrive in the best possible shape.

JK — At a recent BOA media briefing, they told us that each athlete in every discipline would be receiving 92 separate items of Adidas kit — received yours yet?

LK — I remember they gave us a massive kitbag for Athens, so I'm not complaining. I guess the family will be getting a few souvenir t-shirts!

JK — What do you realistically think the chances are for you and

your fellow Brits in Beijing?

LK — I'm definitely looking to improve my place from Athens. And Oli [Beckingsale] has had a great couple of seasons — he rode strongly at Fort William and again at the Worlds, so things look good for the national team. Obviously with the strength in depth in the track and road teams, they'll be hoping for medals. Generally I do feel we're really improving as a competitive cycling nation.

**DON'T MISS!**



The Olympic XC events are on August 22-23. You can catch all the latest gossip and reports at [www.mbr.co.uk](http://www.mbr.co.uk). TV coverage on BBC Sport.



As we went to press Liam had just finished 9th at the Mont St-Anne World Cup, with the Bromont round still to come on August 2-3