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FACER TIME

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR OUR EUROPE-BOUND SKI STAR



JOSH BARNES

A DREAM that snuck up on Geelong-raised teen Emerson Facer is slowly becoming a reality as he prepares to jet off to the slopes of Europe for international competition.

The former Geelong College student (pictured) picked up extra work cleaning an Indian restaurant and his parents have continued to set money aside to help him pick up speed down the slopes as a ski cross racer.

The sport sees a handful of skiers race each other down a

mountain, taking in jumps and turns at high speeds, and Facer is hoping he has what it takes to eventually represent Australia at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy.

Facer, 18, will traverse Europe over four months, visiting seven countries as part of the Europa Tour, which is a step below the gold-standard World Cup.

It is a big leap for someone who says he is not an adrenaline junkie - he has a fear of roller-coasters - but he has always felt at home on the slopes. "I was never out to become the best skier, it just came naturally," he said.

"I attended one race when I was younger, around year 7, and it was a state competition and I came seventh on a pair of second-hand skis and was wearing my dad's jacket, but I just loved the competition.

"There is something about being in control while going down the hill that is awesome, there is so much freedom and free space, and you don't worry about anything else.

"You feel like you are flying." During a season spent in an Austrian high-performance centre, Facer linked up with his coach,

Hannes Grimus, whose brother Anton represented Australia at the 2014 Winter Games.

After Grimus steered Facer through a European season, the rising star realised he was not far off some of the best talents on the planet.

"I was racing people who I didn't realise were in the World Cup and I was fighting against them," he said.

Facer is hoping to add sponsors to his team to help him get across Europe and anybody who is willing to help out can email him at emerson.facer@gmail.com



Pictures: David Smith



Knee injury set to sideline Lara champion for season

TOBY PRIME

LARA batter Andy Hughes is resigned to missing the rest of the GCAI campaign as he comes to grips with a season-threatening knee injury.

Hughes retired hurt on five in Saturday's win over North Geelong after twisting his knee while playing a cover-drive.

The star opener said he would be sidelined indefinitely.

"I had some X-rays on Saturday night and there's some multiple fractures in my knee," Hughes (pictured) said.

"There's a little bit of floating bone in there as well so I've just got to get the MRI on Sunday.

"I've got an orthopaedic appointment (with a surgeon) Friday week to then get some more details."

Hughes is in a knee brace

and on crutches and will know more about the extent of the damage over the weekend.

The gifted right-hander said his knee "collapsed underneath me" as he played a shot early in his innings.

"I've dislocated my patella, which then I think has in turn fractured my knee," he said.

"That's what the doctor thinks has happened.

"I'm not going to know

more until I get the MRI on Sunday."

Hughes said it would be "wishful thinking" that he would be able to play again this season.

"I've got some medial ligament damage so that's normally about six to eight weeks," he said.

"There's some floating bone in my knee so I would think I've probably got to get that

cleaned out before it causes any more damage. When that gets booked in with Covid and stuff, I don't know how booked up they are."

The Cats champion played a straight bat when asked how disappointing the setback was from such an innocuous incident.

"Stiff s---t, I think, in the end," he said. "What can you do about it? It just is what it is."

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