



The snow king

It sounds incredible that one of the greatest skiers in the world could come from a country like the UK where snow is rare, but it's true. 1) ____ Not only does he come from a place which sees very little snow during the year, but he learnt to ski and did his early training on dry slopes – not a snowflake in sight!

Freestyle skiing is a sport that combines skiing and jumps and tricks. 2) ____ He is a real medal hope for the UK in the next Winter Olympics, but he hasn't been spoiled by his success and still loves to return to his home to hang out with his friends and family. At the moment he can still enjoy a relatively normal teenage lifestyle, but as his friends say, in a year's time he may well be a big celebrity and have to cope with everything that success at the Olympics can bring. James takes nothing for granted and simply wants to make his family, friends and country proud.

So, exactly how did a kid from Sheffield manage to make it as a skier? 3) ____ His sports teacher recalls how good he was at hockey, showing tremendous speed and skill to score amazing goals on the pitch. But it was when his parents took him to the Ski Village in Sheffield for his ninth birthday that he discovered what he really wanted to do. 4) ____ From that moment on, he became addicted to the dry slopes and spent every hour outside school there. James himself admits that it was his second home.

5) ____ Sadly however, it has since closed down. Its heavy gates remain closed, the slopes are overgrown with weeds and grass and the whole place is littered with rubbish. Nowadays, it looks sad and abandoned.

James has succeeded in beating the odds to win against other skiers who were practically born with skis on their feet, but what does the future hold for those British youngsters who would like to compete on snow at a high level? More investment in such sports is badly needed, but whether it will come in time is doubtful. In the meantime, we wish James every success at the Olympic Games.

Read the text and choose which sentence (a–f) fits each gap (1–5). You do not need one of the sentences.

- a Ski Village has also produced other great skiers and for many years it was the home of British skiing.
- b It's a popular sport among youngsters and James has become the very best in the world.
- c How does he think he would cope with the fame such success might bring?
- d Young James Woods is the world number one at Freestyle skiing and was born and brought up in Sheffield, a city in the heart of England.
- e His dad jokes that when he disappeared over the top of the hill on his toboggan – that was the last they saw of him!
- f According to his parents and teachers, James was a talented athlete from an early age and excelled in many sports.