

CAROLE MONTILLET

Over time, everything goes. Or everything comes... Carole Montillet had to wait for almost 10 years before reaching the top level of world skiing. Relentless self-criticism and choosing excellence on every level paved her path towards an Olympic downhill medal in 2002, and the super-G Globe this year.

For Carole Montillet, 2000 will remain a key year: the year when things started looking up, there was a decisive turning point in her approach to her sport, and when everything seemed possible. Until then, the skier from Villard-de-Lans had obtained impressive results, but she had never really flirted with victory in a downhill or super-G World Cup competition. In Spring 2003, she was 27 years old. It was time to take stock of the first



part of her career, and above all, answer a nagging question: why wasn't she winning? Carole quickly realised that her problem was mainly psychological. "When I was very young, I arrived on the World Cup circuit and had to pit myself against girls I idolised, whose posters were on my bedroom wall",

she said. "I was overawed, I felt inferior. How could I win a race in this state of mind?"

She was also not slow to realise the extent to which her desire to prove to her parents that their sacrifices had not been in vain was putting her under pressure. "So I stopped forcing myself to succeed" she now says.

THE BIRTH OF A CHAMPION

A new Carole Montillet was born. Psychologically freed, she would be able to reveal her true potential. But to fulfil it, she still had to continue her quest for excellence on all levels: physical and mental training, medical check-ups, equipment. "Well, as it happens, at that time the French Skiing Federation had an LPG Sport S6", she said. "My team mates in the French team and I quickly realised

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A WINNING TURN

the advantage which we would be able to get from it." At the start, to test their reaction, Carole Montillet and her friends had one leg massaged and the other treated with the LPG Technique. No doubt about it, the S6 enabled them to make a much better recovery, with a feeling of lightness which they previously had not felt on the evening of a competition or training session. Carole Montillet's new approach paid off almost immediately. A first super-G victory in 2001 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a gold downhill medal at the Salt Lake City Olympic Games in 2002, the super-G Globe held aloft for victories in Val-d'Isère and Cortina d'Ampezzo in 2003; lastly, another downhill success in Lake Louise.

A DEVOTED LPG FAN

At the finish of a downhill or super-G race, skiers' thigh muscles are often tetanised and their lower backs are painful. "Thanks to the LPG Technique, I now feel less tired at the end of the competitions, particularly during the final races of the season", Carole Montillet said.

For a year, in addition to the S6 which the Federation uses during training courses and competitions, the holder of the super-G World Cup has been able to rely on the appliance placed at her disposal by LPG. Her partner, the athletic trainer Olivier Carles, has learned the LPG

Technique and performs treatment sessions for her at home during physical training and rest periods. This is an undeniable bonus, especially at times of long hours of endurance training (running, cycling) and intensive body-building sessions. "By recovering better, I can benefit from higher quality training, further develop my endurance, power, speed and co-ordination abilities", explained Carole Montillet. "On the other hand, I am not looking to increase my workload, which is already huge."

The LPG Technique promotes muscle viscoelasticity, making movements more fluid, more efficient. The Olympic champion confirmed this when she talked of her progress in body movement, awareness of her body and movement co-ordination. So her appetite for the S6 is unflagging. "On Federation training courses or during competitions, I undergo a daily treatment session", she said. "In terms of a full year, I have an S6 session five times a week, on average."

PUSHING BACK THE LIMITS

Moreover, Carole Montillet pointed out the Technique's benefits for therapeutic purposes. Having undergone a knee operation about 10 years ago, she regularly suffers from a contracture of the vastus externus and tendinitis of the knee. In her opinion, the LPG Technique makes these episodes less

intense than before and helps bring them to a swift conclusion. And when the old muscle and tendon problems don't let up...

"This winter, my knee was extremely painful during the weeks running up to the Lake Louise races", she said. "My physiotherapist doubled the number of LPG sessions. After five or six days, I was as good as new, and I won the downhill."

For Carole Montillet, a second career began in spring 2000. In the past, she was a skier inhibited by the pressure which she put herself under, but now, at the age of 30, she has her sights set on new successes. And to attain this she wants constantly to make further progress - "The good thing is being able to say to yourself: I haven't got there yet, I can still do better." Given this point of view, she says that she is eager to try out the latest product in the LPG range: Huber, a device integrating the concepts of balance, coordination and core muscle work-out. "This is exactly what we as skiers try to work on", she enthused. "We have to learn to know our body better in order to control it better."

Philippe LAMBERT