

Push is on to make ski halfpipe an Olympic sport

By U.S. Ski Team

A U.S. and French proposal to submit ski halfpipe to the International Olympic Committee for consideration as early as 2014 was approved without dissent as the International Ski Federation concluded its biennial FIS Congress Friday in Antalya, Turkey. The Congress also unanimously passed proposals from the USA and other nations to accept both snowboarding slopestyle and team snowboardcross into the FIS World Snowboard Championships.

A decision on new events for 2014 could be made by the IOC as early as 2011.

"As a member association, we're proud of the reputation that FIS has developed as a progressive and dynamic international sports federation, particularly in terms of the events and sports it provides to the Olympic Games," said U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association Vice President, Luke Bodensteiner in his presentation to the Congress. "By aggressively developing new and dynamic action sports into its program, FIS is leading from a position that is relevant to youth and the worldwide public. That provides value to our stakeholders and our partners."

Ski halfpipe has been included in FIS World Championships since 2005 and is already on the program for the 2012 Youth Olympics in Innsbruck.

"Ski halfpipe is strongly supported by the ski industry as an opportunity to develop additional, relevant connection points for FIS competitions," said Bodensteiner. "And it's an opportunity to derive value from sponsors and television who crave innovative events with strong youth appeal."

There was also unanimous support for snowboarding slopestyle and team snowboardcross with acceptance into the FIS World Championships by a host of proposals from the USA, Canada and New Zealand.

“Snowboard slopestyle is a great opportunity for both the large and many small areas around the world to activate around terrain parks which are prevalent, easy to develop and easily capable of hosting training and competition,” said Bodensteiner.

While Olympic consideration was not a part of the formal proposal, advocates encouraged the FIS to also look forward and consider it as a potential future event. “It’s a great opportunity for the FIS to seize the moment and subsequently recommend this sport for inclusion in the Olympic Winter Games beginning in 2014,” added Bodensteiner in his Congress presentation.

Team snowboardcross is a format that has already been tested successfully on the World Cup and proven to be well received by the public and athletes.

“With successful team events in nordic and now in alpine skiing, there’s tremendous opportunity to add a team event into snowboarding,” said Bodensteiner. “A nation’s event will bring a fantastic new element to the typically individual competitions of snowboarding.”

The FIS is already submitting both an alpine team event and women’s ski jumping again to the IOC for 2014 consideration, both approved in past meetings.