

Truckee junior helps U.S. to third in Nordic worlds

By USSA

SOLDIER HOLLOW, Utah – The 2017 USANA FIS Nordic Junior World Championships came to a close on the Olympic venue of Soldier Hollow with hotly contested relays under bright skies and warm temperatures. Sunday morning the Russian team took gold over France, with the U.S. women taking their first medal ever with bronze.

In the afternoon, Norway and Russia battled right down to the wire before Norway picked up gold. France took bronze.

In the men's relay under soft track conditions, Germany and France took the early lead on the first classic leg building a 10-second margin back to Russia and Norway. On the second classic leg, Norway and Russia setup their battle that would remain through the finish. A big gap built between Russia-Norway and the chasing French team, which skied alone the remainder of the two freestyle legs.

Coming into the stadium, it was a tight battle between Norway's Thomas Helland Larsen and Russia's Vladislav Vechkanov. Larsen found himself on the outside of the 180-degree turn into the final 100 meters. But he had strong momentum and made the pass to setup a finish spring. Larsen kept pace and made his move at the finish line to take the gold by four-tenths of a second.

In the women's relay, Germany took a first leg lead with classic skiing of Antonia Froebel to hold a 17 second lead over Russia. That evaporated in the second classic leg as a race developed between Italy and Russia for the lead with Germany dropping well off the pace.

Moving into the skating legs, the lead group remained Italy-Russia with France, Sweden and the U.S. battling for third. On the final climb coming out of Cabin Hollow, America's Hannah Halvorsen (Truckee) of the Sugar Bowl Ski Team put on a quick charge to move the U.S. into third. She gave back the spot coming into the stadium fourth, handing off to teammate Katharine Ogden (Landgrave, Vt.) of Stratton Mountain School, bronze medalist two days earlier in the skiathlon.

While Russia and Italy battled for gold, Ogden made a move on France to take the lead, adding to her time to build a large gap coming into the stadium. Russia did the same over Italy, taking gold by 20 seconds over Italy with USA winning bronze just 26 seconds behind Russia.