

Jitloff second in GS national title race

By USSA

SUGARLOAF, Maine – In the final race of the U.S. Alpine Championships Tuesday in Sugarloaf, Hig Roberts (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) edged out seven-time national champion Tim Jitloff (Reno – U.S. Ski Team) for the giant slalom national title.

Roberts, a former U.S. Ski Team and Middlebury College athlete, showed courage and strength in rugged conditions – powering through the thick fog to his first national title. Jitloff was second, just 0.14 seconds off the pace and 2016 national giant slalom champion Kieffer Christianson (Anchorage) finished third, 0.29 seconds out. Tanguy Nef, who hails from Switzerland and competes for Dartmouth, was the top junior of the day, grabbing eighth.

Ryan Cochran-Siegle (Starksboro, Vt. – U.S. Ski Team) who grabbed the national title in this year's super G, posted the fastest time in a rainy, challenging first run, but did not finish his second run. Roberts was well-aware that Cochran-Siegle and Jitloff would be charging second run and “sent it for Murph” – his brother, who passed away last August – to come out on top. Though he was ecstatic to win, he wished Murphy were there to cheer him on.

“These days are awesome ... but It's very tough,” said Roberts. “I believe that I'm doing this for a reason, and I'm doing well right now because I'm keeping him close to my heart and I'm not letting that special bond and push he always had for me go away.”

“I do have an affection for the hill,” Jitloff reflected. “I've obviously had some great results here. National titles

aren't that easy to get. I have seven of them, and each one of those was hard work to get – it wasn't an easy thing to do." But he gave credit where credit is due, congratulating Roberts on his victory. "I think Hig can be pretty proud of himself today. He skied great in very challenging, difficult conditions."

Christianson – who, like Roberts, skis independently – was happy to share the podium with Roberts after a challenging season. "We both skied independently this year," Christianson said, "and had to do our own logistics and find our own training – so to share the podium here at U.S. nationals is just awesome."