

Olympic hopefuls resume World Cup action Jan. 6

By Tom Kelly, USSA

ZAGREB, Croatia -â€ Following a short holiday break, the men's Audi FIS Alpine World Cup resumes Wednesday with a night slalom in Zagreb. The race will air live on www.UniversalSports.com with first run action at 6:15am followed by the finals at 9:30am.

Zagreb features one of the highest prize money for a technical race with the winner taking home 50,000 euros or roughly \$72,000 and awards prize money to the top 30 finalists. Only the men's downhill and slalom in Kitzbuehel, Austria, pays out more to the top 30 racers.

The U.S. Ski Team will be represented by Olympic gold medalist Ted Ligety (Park City, UT), Tim Jitloff (Reno, NV), Jimmy Cochran (Keene, NH), David Chodounsky (Crested Butte, CO) and Paul McDonald (Bellevue, WA). Two-time World Cup overall champion Bode Miller (Franconia, NH) will miss the race to continue focusing on his conditioning and further rest a sore ankle. He is scheduled to rejoin the World Cup in Adelboden, Switzerland, this weekend.

"Our guys are totally rested after a good holiday break at home, where they've all been working hard on personalized conditioning programs," said Head Coach Sasha Rearick. "Iâ€™m looking for this slalom group to come into this race strong and rested. January is a big month with four slalom races prior to naming the Olympic team."

The 2010 Olympic qualification period ends with a Jan. 24 slalom in Kitzbuehel and the U.S. Olympic Committee will name the U.S. Olympic Alpine Team by Jan. 26.

Hight ready to reach new heights



Elena Hight finished sixth in the halfpipe at the 2006 Olympic Games. At 20, she hopes to improve upon that accomplishment in Vancouver next month.

Home resort: Northstar-at-Tahoe

Why did you choose this resort?: Northstar always is so much fun to ride. They always make great park and pipe and no matter what are maintaining it.

How often are you in Lake Tahoe?: I spend about a total of 3 months of the year at home between all my travels.

When you aren't training and competing where can we find you and what would you be doing? I spend most of my time relaxing in my house. I love to cook so I am typically in the kitchen during anytime I have off.

After you win gold in Vancouver, what is your next goal? Wow ... well, right now think I am just focusing on one thing at a time. I will tackle something new when the time comes.

How long have you been participating in your sport? I have been snowboarding since I was 6 years old and I have been competing professionally since I was 14.

Who inspires you most and why? My mom is my biggest inspiration because she is always there for me and somehow always has the right answers.

Your life is devoted to an event that is over in minutes, how do you prepare for that thrill of victory or agony of defeat? The Olympics would be an amazing goal to achieve but no matter what the outcome, I still snowboard because I love it. No matter what I will still continue to push myself and look for the next challenge within snowboarding.

Publisher's note: *Read about slopestyle specialist Jamie Anderson on Jan. 7.*

Snowkitters take to the air

By Tim Hauserman, Reno Gazette-Journal

After 25 years of downhill skiing, Dave Polivy doesn't go to the ski areas anymore.

"Now, I wait and look for the wind to come up, because snowkiting has become my new true passion," said Polivy, from Tahoe Mountain Sports. "I can go fast, I can get great air. There is no other feeling like launching on your snow kite and floating through the air for 20 to 30 feet and then coming down and softly landing in a pillow of snow."

Snowkiting combines either skiing or snowboarding with the waterborne sport of kite boarding. Snowkitters put on a harness and their skis or snowboards then let the wind swiftly pull them over the snow. If it's really windy, snowkitters can get major air, even fly for brief periods.

Read the whole story

Northstar opens superpipe

Northstar-at-Tahoe's 420-foot superpipe with its 18-foot walls is open.

The Ultimate Boarder Championship will be at the Truckee resort March 12-14, with the superpipe part of the competition.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Jan. 4



It's a blue birdday in Lake Tahoe. Bring the sunscreen. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Expedition:Kirkwood enters 10th season

Expedition:Kirkwood, now in its 10th season, offers an educational adventure program for people who desire to develop skills beyond personal and resort boundaries.

Expedition:Kirkwood offers a collection of clinics, camps and programs including free monthly beacon training clinics, women's clinics for novices to experts, and avalanche

awareness and certification courses.

For more information about any of the programs, go to www.kirkwood.com or call (209) 258.7360.

Tahoe Wildlife Forum

Tahoe Wildlife Forum on Jan. 28 from 6-9pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences, 291 County Club Drive, Incline Village.

A film about coyotes and one on bears will be shown before the discussion begins.

Panelists includes: Madonna Dunbar, IVGID resource conservationist; Rebecca Sawyer Williams, IVGID resource conservation technician; Ann Bryant, director of BEAR League; and Cheryl Millham, director of Lake Tahoe Wildlife Center, with with additional anticipated representation by the Nevada Department of Wildlife, Washoe County Sheriff's Department and Washoe County Community Outreach.

For information, contact Jill Falman at (775) 881.7566.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Jan. 3



With it being get-away day for so many tourists visiting Lake Tahoe, the slopes are likely to not be crowded today. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Finch eager for second chance at Olympics

Andy Finch, 28, hopes to make Vancouver his second consecutive Winter Olympics in the snowboard halfpipe competition.

Home resort: Northstar-at-Tahoe

Why did you choose this resort?: I can look out my window and see how good it is at Northstar. Also, it's the best park and pipe.



Andy
Finch

How often are you in Lake Tahoe?: Unfortunately, not enough. But probably about 4 to 8 days a month during the winter.

When you aren't training and competing where can we find you and what would you be doing? On the Central Coast drowning in some waves or somewhere warm and tropical.

After you win gold in Vancouver, what is your next goal? Honestly, my life is in the hands of God and I will go where he directs me.

How long have you been participating in your sport? I have been competing in snowboarding for 12 years.

Who inspires you most and why? Travis Rice because how big he goes and the flair he adds on his tricks.

Your life is devoted to an event that is over in minutes, how do you prepare for that thrill of victory or agony of defeat? At different moments you will perform better, so I make sure I get my state of mind right so I can perform as well as I can and just have fun. The rest is up to the judges.

Anything else you would like to add? The Olympics was a great experience 4 years ago and it would be a blast to go again. I enjoyed representing our country in a way not many get to.

Publisher's note: *Read about the history of the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics on Jan. 4.*

Truckee's Kistler 14th in slalom

By Elizabeth Karam, USSA

VAL ST. COME, QE -â€ Megan McJames (Park City, UT) started 2010 with a win in Saturday's NorAm Cup slalom race at Val St. Come. McJames was joined by Canadian's Erin Mielzynski and Eve Roucher on the podium.

McJames put together two solid runs to have the fastest time of the day with Mielzynski and Roucher trailing in second and third place.

Katie Hitchcock (Sacramento, CA) just missed the podium by two-tenths, landing in fourth. Five other Americans joined McJames and Hitchcock in the top 15 with three out the five finishing in the top 10.

Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, OR), Devin Delaney (North Conway, NH), and Erika Ghent (Edwards, CO) finished seventh,

ninth, and 10th. Lindsay Cone (Killington, VT) and Lizzie Kistler (Truckee, CA) respectively finished in 12th and 14th.

The women will be in the starting gate again on Sunday for the second slalom race at Val St. Come.

NorAm Cup, Val St. Come, QE Women's Slalom

1. Megan McJames, Park City, UT, 1:34.59
2. Erin Mielzynski, Canada, 1:34.61
3. Eve Roucher, Canada, 1:34.95
4. Katie Hitchcock, Sacramento, CA, 1:35.18
5. Malin Hemmingsson, Sweden, 1:35.66
-
7. Laurene Ross, Klamath Falls, OR, 1:35.95
9. Devin Delaney, North Conway, NH, 1:36.48
10. Erika Ghent, Edwards, CO, 1:36.51
12. Lindsay Cone, Killington, VT, 1:36.80
14. Lizzie Kistler, Truckee, CA, 1:37.32

DNF: Felicia Byers, Sandy, UT, Vanessa Berther, Bellevue, WA,
Julia Ford, Plymouth, NH