



u.s. olympic sports scene

Media and Public Relations Division

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Olympic Sports Scene is a weekly e-mail newsletter with results and previews highlighting U.S. Olympic sporting news from around the world. Tune-in every Monday for a quick overview of America's elite athletes in action. For more information on Olympic sports, please check out www.usocpressbox.org.

Olympic Sports Scene for Jan. 11

Biathlon

Tim Burke (Paul Smiths, N.Y.) continued to make biathlon history Sunday finishing in second place in the Mass Start World Cup event in Oberhof - the first ever Mass Start medal for a U.S. athlete - and resuming the top spot as Overall Leader in IBU World Cup standings.

Burke finished the race at 40:00.2, 1:02.9 behind biathlon king Ole Einar Bjoerndalen's (NOR) winning time of 38:57.3. Strong winds and dense fog set the stage for another challenging race, especially at the shooting range, but Burke remained steady and ranked among the three best shooting results in the men's race.

In other news, The International Competition Committee of the U.S. Biathlon Association nominated nine athletes Sunday for inclusion on the 2010 U.S. Olympic Team. They include:

Men's Olympic Team Nominations:

- 1) Tim Burke, Paul Smith's, N.Y.
- 2) Jay Hakkinen, Kasilof, Alaska
- 3) Jeremy Teela, Heber City, Utah
- 4) Lowell Bailey, Lake Placid, N.Y.
- 5) Wynn Roberts, Battle Lake, Minn.

Women's Olympic Team Nominations:

- 1) Haley Johnson, Lake Placid, N.Y.
- 2) Sara Studebaker, Boise, Idaho
- 3) Lanny Barnes, Durango, Colo.
- 4) Laura Spector, Lennox, Mass.



Bobsled

The U.S. team claimed silver and bronze, missing gold by only 0.03 seconds in Königssee, Germany's four-man bobsled competition Sunday. The Night Train crew piloted by **Steven Holcomb** (Park City, Utah) pocketed silver, their fifth medal of the season, while junior athlete **John Napier** (Lake Placid, N.Y.) added bronze to his rapidly growing list of sliding achievements.

The Night Train sits atop four-man World Cup standings with a comfortable 133-point lead after weekend competition. Holcomb and his World Championship team include **Justin Olsen** (San Antonio, Texas), **Steve Mesler** (Buffalo, N.Y.) and **Curt Tomasevicz** (Shelby, Neb.).

All three U.S. women's sleds entered into World Cup competition in Königssee finished in the top ten results. Pilot **Erin Pac** (Farmington, Conn.) led the U.S. squad in fifth, allowing her to maintain her fifth place ranking in world standings.

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Curling

Pro Bowl tight end Vernon Davis of the San Francisco 49ers football team has been named the honorary captain of the 2010 U.S. Olympic Team for Men's Curling.

Davis, who is playing in his first Pro Bowl Jan. 31 in Miami and was named a starter for the National Football Conference, took up the sport just a few weeks ago but like so many others who get caught up in the ancient Scottish sport, Davis became an instant fan of the sport.

"I'm excited for the opportunity. It's quite an honor," Davis said. "I look forward to going to the Olympics and being an honorary captain. And, I look forward to learning more and meeting those guys and finding out what their practice is like."

As honorary captain, Davis will be in Vancouver at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games next month to support the team's quest for gold. Men's team members **John Shuster** (Duluth, Minn.), **Jason Smith** (Cape Coral, Fla.), **Jeff Isaacson** (Gilbert, Minn.), **John Benton** (St. Michael, Minn.) and **Chris Plys** (Duluth, Minn.) are all big NFL fans and are excited about the opportunity to bridge the Olympic sport of curling with the NFL.

Luge

American luge racer **Erin Hamlin**, 2009 World Champion, broke up the German juggernaut Sunday with a bronze medal performance in a women's World Cup race in Winterberg, Germany.

Hamlin, with her second bronze of the season and second World Cup medal of her career, lead a resurgent United States effort that also saw Julia Clukey, battling through a neck injury suffered last month in physical training, place 10th. Megan Sweeney slid into 11th place marking her best- ever World Cup result. The threesome comprise the U.S. women's lineup that will hit the ice at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

The placings by the U.S. trio continued evidence that the U.S. squad is building momentum in advance of the Olympic events next month at the Whistler Sliding Center. The American women's efforts came one day after Olympic silver and bronze medalists Mark Grimmette and Brian Martin posted their top doubles result of the winter when they took fourth place. After the singles competition, the U.S. grabbed a bronze in the Team Relay.

Skiing

Adaptive: The U.S. Alpine Adaptive Ski Team had a strong day on Friday in Rinn, Austria. **Chris Devlin-Young** (Campton, N.H.; sit-ski) and **Stephani Victor** (Park City, Utah; sit-ski) found themselves on the podium for their respective classifications. Devlin-Young (CDY) proved he still can point it downhill, racing to second place. He was the top men's finisher in all classifications, including his own, sit-ski. Victor laid down two solid runs, to take the final spot on the podium in the women's sit-ski category.

Alpine: **Lindsey Vonn** (Vail, Colo.) ascended to an even higher place within the U.S. ski team record books Sunday, as she followed two consecutive downhill wins with a triumph in the super G on Sunday in Haus Im Ennstal, Austria, besting the field by more than a half second.

Vonn becomes the first American – man or woman – ever to win on three straight days. The last time an international woman accomplished the feat was Dec. 4-6, 1997, when German Katja Seizinger won a speed trio in Lake Louise, AB.

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The victory also moved the two-time defending overall champion to second all time for Americans with her 28th win, passing Phil Mahre (Bode Miller has 31).

She now leads the overall World Cup by 192 points over Maria Riesch of Germany, the downhill by 164 over Riesch, the super G by 95 over Swiss Nadia Styger, and the super combined by 20 points – also over Riesch.

Cross Country: **Kikkan Randall** (Anchorage, Alaska) notched her fourth win in as many events at the 2010 Conoco Phillips U.S. Cross Country Championships. Randall took her 14th overall title winning the classic sprint while **Tyler Kornfield** (Fairbanks, Alaska) won his first championship on the men's side as top American. The Championships were the final opportunity for earning USSA National Ranking List points, one of the criteria for the 2010 U.S. Olympic Team. The team will be formally nominated on January 19.

Freestyle: Aerials -- The U.S. Freestyle Ski Team battled weather Sunday as it wrapped up three days of competition in Calgary Sunday with **Emily Cook** (Belmont, Vt.) finishing sixth and Dylan Ferguson (Amesbury, Mass.) seventh in World Cup aerials. The performance of 15-year-old **Ashley Caldwell** (Lake Placid, N.Y.) in her first World Cup brightened things on a difficult weather day.

Caldwell is the first skier to come out of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association's Elite Air Program designed to take gymnastically-talented athletes and teach them how to become aerialists. Caldwell came out of the Lake Placid-based program ahead of schedule, after only two years working with Coach Dmitriy Kavunov.

Moguls -- The U.S. Freestyle Ski Team's women's moguls squad gave Calgary a Saturday-night encore with three skiers in the top six, led by Park City's **Heather McPhie**, who grabbed another all-important top 5 with her second consecutive fourth-place finish. A day earlier, the women's team also scored four top-10 results as well.

Ski Cross -- Daron Rahlves knifed the injected ski cross course, landing on the podium in second place in Tuesday's World Cup in St. Johann, Austria.

A turn away from the first World Cup win of his career, **Casey Puckett** (Aspen, Colo.) had to settle for fourth when he crashed Sunday morning in Les Contamines, France.

Puckett led in his second final group of the 2010 ski cross season – originally scheduled for Saturday but delayed due to heavy fog – from the outset, and appeared to be home free when he lost control squatting into a turn and suffered the fluky fall.

Nordic Combined: It was history in the making in Italy Sunday as World Champions **Billy Demong** (Vermontville, N.Y.) and **Todd Lodwick** (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) took first and second, marking the first time two U.S. athletes have made the FIS Nordic Combined World Cup podium together.



Billy Demong and Todd Lodwick celebrate their historic 1-2 finish.
(Getty Images/AFP-Alberto Pizzoli)

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Snowboarding

Halfpipe: Olympic gold medalist **Shaun White** (Carlsbad, Calif.) can book a ticket to Vancouver now as he won his second Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix competition Saturday to lock down his team spot for the Games. White was joined in the winners circle by Olympic silver medalist **Gretchen Bleiler** (Aspen, Colo.) whose win, along with a second place in Copper, brought her a step closer to reaching her Olympic dreams.

White was followed in second by **Louie Vito** (Sandy, Utah) and **JJ Thomas** (Golden, Colo.) in third. Following Bleiler up in the second spot was 2006 Olympian **Elena Hight** (South Lake Tahoe, CA) with **Hannah Teter** (Belmont, Vt.) coming in third.

There couldn't be a more exciting and poignant story told in Grand Prix history than the one that unraveled at Mammoth Mountain (Calif.) on Wednesday. **Danny Davis** (Detroit, Mich.) put down an historic run in the name of friendship, and **Kelly Clark** (Mt. Snow, Vt.) laid it all on the line for her third Olympic team berth to each win the Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix.

Looking down on a crowd full of signs supporting Pearce and his recovery, Davis stood atop the 22-footer and channeled his friend, who remains hospitalized in Salt Lake City, before landing a monumental second run that included a landmark three double corks.

PGS: **Tyler Jewell** (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) and **Chris Klug** (Aspen, Colo.) were on point Wednesday as they finished fourth and fifth, respectively, during a World Cup parallel giant slalom in Austria. The event was the third of five Olympic qualification events for the U.S. athletes.

Snowboardcross: It wasn't a question of if, as much as when **Nate Holland** (Squaw Valley, Calif.) and **Lindsey Jacobellis** (Stratton, Vt.) were going to shred their way to a podium. That question was answered Sunday as both won the snowboardcross World Cup in Austria.

While the spotlight was on Holland and Jacobellis, two other Americans cracked the top 10. **Nick Baumgartner** (Iron River, Mich.) was eighth in the men's, as was Ski and Snowboard Club Vail rider **Faye Gulini** (Salt Lake City).

Taekwondo

The 20-member U.S. Junior World Team was finalized on Sunday with the qualification of the last seven athletes during the Junior World Team Trials at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

Qualifying on Sunday were female finweight **Giuliana Gil** (Pasadena, Calif.), female bantamweight **Haley Kong** (Hillsborough, Calif.), female featherweight **Deireanne Morales** (Lynwood, Calif.), female lightweight **Paige Biviano** (Cazenovia, N.Y.), male welterweight **Juanito Cajimat** (Ewa Beach, Hawaii), male light middleweight **Ryan Arcaina** (Brentwood, Calif.) and male light heavyweight **Gene Yang** (Perry Hall, Md.).

The Junior World Team will compete at the 2010 Junior World Taekwondo Championships in Tijuana, Mexico, March 6-9.

Weekly Preview

Biathlon: Next stop for Tim Burke and his U.S. teammates is the Ruhpolding (Germany) World Cup, where he will arrive wearing yellow leader's bib again.

Bobsled & Skeleton: World Cup action continues in St. Moritz, Switzerland this coming weekend, and nation quotas for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games will be granted Jan. 17. The U.S. will announce its Olympic roster no later than Jan. 20.

Figure Skating: The U.S. Figure Skating Championships will take place Jan. 14-24 at the Spokane Arena and be televised live on NBC and webcast on icenetwork.com. Over the course of 10 days, the event will crown 12 national champions in ladies, men's, pairs and ice dancing on the senior, junior and novice levels. The championships are the final event before the selection of the figure skating team that will compete for the United States at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Luge: The World Cup tour moves on to Oberhof, Germany with a full slate of races Jan. 16-17.

Rugby: The USA Rugby Women's National Team (WNT) will kick off the New Year with a two-match Atlantic Cup series versus cross-border rivals Canada on Jan. 12 and 16 at Tigertown athletic complex in Lakeland, Fla. The USA Under-20 Women will also face off in a curtain raiser match against the Canada U-20s on Jan. 16.

Skiing: Cross Country -- Freestyle: The Team will be in front of the hometown crowd with a long track record of success with the Visa Freestyle International at Deer Valley Resort, Jan. 14-16, with night finals Friday Jan. 15 and a two-year win streak from Peterson and St. Onge. **Men's Alpine:** The speed team will head to Switzerland for a super combined Friday, a downhill Saturday, and a slalom Sunday. **Women's Alpine:** Next up for the U.S. women is a slalom in Flachau, Austria on Tuesday, and then it's on to Wengen, Switzerland for a downhill, slalom and super combined. **Nordic Combined:** The men will travel to Chaux-Neuve, France, for two competitions next weekend. **Ski Cross:** The U.S. squad has one more event – in Alpe d'Huez, France, on Wednesday – before a return to North America for races in Blue Mountain, Ontario, and Lake Placid, N.Y.

Snowboarding: Halfpipe: The Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix continues with the final two events at Park City Mountain Resort Jan. 22 and 23. **Snowboardcross:** The World Cup heads to Switzerland Friday with a final event in Canada Jan. 21 before the team is named Jan. 25.

The Tweet Spot **Tweets from Olympic & Paralympic Athletes & Hopefuls**

Jordan Malone - Short Track Speedskating. [J2K111](#) Painters paint, writers write, and teachers teach, but I'm an athlete. So I inspire by example.

Sanya Richards - Track & Field. [AaronandSanya](#) This is going to be a great year!!! Jump on board now or get out the way....this train is on the move!!! First thing OUR BIG DAY!!!

Natasha Watley - Softball. [t29](#) So great to be reunited with my usa teammates this past week!!! great try out..happy to be home and getting ready for RBI camp this weekend!

Steve Holcomb - Bobsled. [pcbobsledder](#) 2nd place by 0.03 seconds, not bad for The Night Train on a German track. Almost had it. Next week is St. Moritz, one of our best tracks!

Julia Mancuso - Alpine Skiing. [JuliaMancuso](#) top 10! yay. good to punch in there, and ready to ski faster!!

