



Steamboat to host freestyle Olympic trials

PARK CITY, Utah - The U.S. Ski Team and the U.S. Olympic Committee have named Steamboat, CO, as the site of the 2006 U.S. Olympic Team Trials for freestyle skiing. The trials will take place Dec. 30-31.

The Olympic Team Trials will select wild-card spots for the U.S. Olympic Freestyle Ski Team and will be televised same-day on NBC.

"We're going to Torino to be best in the world," said Bill Marolt, president and CEO of the U.S. Ski Team, regarding the first Olympic Team Trials partnership for the U.S. Ski Team and USOC.

"This is the first step for athletes on what could be one of our strongest teams ever at the Olympics in February."

The U.S. Olympic Team Trials will feature all of the top U.S. freestyle ski athletes



Jeremy Bloom

vying for wild-card spots on the 2006 Olympic Team.

The winners of the men's and women's moguls and aerials competitions will earn spots on the 2006 Olympic Team.

The full team will be named Jan. 25 for the Winter Games, which will be held Feb. 10-26 in Torino, Italy.

"The USOC is very excited to partner with the U.S. Ski Team on what will be a terrific competition for the athletes and fans," said USOC Chief Executive Officer Jim Scherr.

"The U.S. Ski Team is coming off a great season, during which its athletes achieved extraordinary success in World Cup competitions. These Olympic Trials will continue the positive momentum created over the past year and will serve as a preview of what to expect from Team USA in Torino. We're particularly pleased this event will be televised to millions of Olympic fans through our broadcast partner NBC."

The Olympic Trials will open under the lights Dec. 30 with aerials competition at historic Howelsen Hill in downtown Steamboat Springs.

Action shifts to the Steamboat Ski Area on Dec. 31 for moguls competition on Steamboat's Voo Doo trail.

"The U.S. Olympic Team Trials will be a tremendous showcase for our Team with same-day national TV coverage from Steamboat on NBC," said Ted Morris, vice president of marketing and sales for the U.S. Ski Team.

"Freestyle skiing is always one of our strongest spectator events and highest rated on

"Freestyle is clearly one of the hottest sports in all of skiing, consistently generating some of the highest television viewership ratings in the sport," said Andy Wirth, vice president of marketing & sales for Steamboat.

"Freestyle skiing has always been and remains a huge part of Steamboat's claim to Ski Town USA, and we are excited to be hosting the U.S. Ski Team Olympic Trials.

The Steamboat Springs community has a strong skiing spirit and established Olympic heritage," added Marolt, a 1964 Olympic alpine skier. "It allows us to give back to a community that has supported the Team for so long and to provide some exciting ski competition for athletes vying for the 2006 Olympic Team."

The remaining spots on the 14-person 2006 U.S. Olympic Freestyle Ski Team will be selected primarily from World Cup events, including events Jan. 13-14 in Deer Valley, UT, and Jan. 20-22 in Lake Placid, NY. The final full team will be named Jan. 25.

Team selection in all other ski sports will be named primarily from World Cup competitions.

The U.S. Olympic Snowboard Team will be named from a combination of World Cup events and the three-stop Chevrolet U.S. Snowboard Grand Prix.

Experience key for Nordic Team

PARK CITY, Utah - Six-time World Cup winner Todd Lodwick (Steamboat Springs, CO) and former sprint world champion Johnny Spillane (also Steamboat Springs) headline an eight-member U.S. Nordic Combined Ski Team for the 2006 Olympic season.

Luke Bodensteiner, U.S. Nordic Director, also said that Olympians Alan Alborn (24; Anchorage, AK; 2002 Olympics) and Clint Jones (20;

Steamboat Springs, CO; 2002 Olympics) would form the 2006 U.S. Ski Jumping Team.

The nordic combined team includes five Olympians.

Lodwick is aiming for his

he extended to eight his own record for U.S. combined titles and tied a 77-year-old mark with his seventh U.S. jumping championship.

Spillane had one podium before being hobbled at the World Championships in February with a back injury, which ended his season a month early.

He had no opportunity to defend his sprint title.

The 2006 nordic combined team (age, hometown, Olympic experience): Brett Camerota (20, Park City, UT), Eric Camerota (20; Park City, UT), Bill Demong (25; Vermontville, NY; 1998, 2002 Olympics), Alex Glueck (22; Steamboat Springs, CO), Jed Hinkley (23; Andover, NH; 2002 Olympics), Todd Lodwick (28; Steamboat Springs, CO; 1994, 1998, 2002 Olympics), Johnny Spillane (24; Steamboat Springs, CO; 2002 Olympics) and Carl Van Loan (24; Webster, NH; 2002 Olympics).

"Todd and Johnny have shown they can be podium contenders in every event," Bodensteiner said, "and Billy made major improvement in getting back to where he was in 2002 before his injury (preseason fractured skull), including his first top-10 in three years.

"He can be every bit as competitive as Todd and Johnny this season.

"Our primary focus is the team event, where we were fifth at this year's World Championships," he said.

"And if we're prepared to challenge in the team event, we can also do the same in each of the individual events. Carl had a great World Championships last year and will elevate the team. Eric had a strong debut on the World Cup last season. Brett is young and improving quickly, and Jed and Alex can't be overlooked either."

In jumping, Jones had three top-30 World Cup results this past season while Alborn returned after a year away but a midseason knee injury, sustained on an off day, ended his season abruptly.

"Clint and Alan are two young talents. We sometimes forget how young they are and yet how much they've packed into their careers," Bodensteiner said.

"Motivation is no problem for either of them, especially in an Olympic season. These two are totally focused on the top-level, important results."

Hall of Fame inductees set for 2005-06

ISHPEMING, Mich. - Three-time Olympian and former world champion Hilary Lindh heads a distinguished group of four soon to enter the U.S. National Ski Hall of Fame. The Class of 2005 also includes David D. R. (Darcy) Brown, long-serving President of Aspen Resorts Corporation in Colorado; Walter Foeger, credited with developing Vermont's Jay Peak Ski Resort; and Erich Sailer, one of American's top coaches training Olympians from Buck Hill, Minn.

See HALL, Page 14



Hannah Kearney

television. We're happy to partner with the U.S. Olympic Committee, NBC and Steamboat on what will be an incredible event."

Members of the U.S. Freestyle Ski Team are consistently ranked as the top competitors in the world. Last season, moguls skier Jeremy Bloom (Loveland, CO) collected two World Cup globes for his performance as the top-ranked moguls skier and overall freestyle skier on the World Cup circuit.

Meanwhile, U.S. teammate Jeret "Speedy" Peterson (Boise, ID) captured his own globe for winning the World Cup aerials title. Also last season, five U.S. men's moguls skiers finished in the top seven in last year's FIS World Cup standings.

Among the top competitors scheduled to appear at Steamboat are Bloom and Peterson, along with 2005 World champions Nate Roberts (Park City, UT; moguls), Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT; moguls) and Toby Dawson (Vail, CO; dual moguls).

While this is the first official Olympic Team Trials event for the U.S. Ski Team, a similar wild-card format has been used in the past for the Team's Gold Cup.

In 2002, that process launched Steamboat's own dark horse Travis Mayer onto the Team and on his way to an Olympic silver medal in moguls.

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