

Read All About It!

This is a sampling of where the U.S. bobsled and skeleton team has been seen and heard this season.

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we are quickly approaching the Lake Placid 2009 World Championships. Although we are technically halfway through with the season, in many ways it is just starting. USA III for bobsled will be determined by the National Championships in early January, which is shaping up to be a very competitive race. On the skeleton side, Matt Antione has successfully moved from the Intercontinental Cup tour into the USA II position based on FIBT points, and will be competing on the World Cup circuit in the second half. Great job, Matt.

We have seen some very impressive performances so far and the best is still yet to come. We have not been shy about our focus on World Championships this season, so while we hoped and expected better results in

The first half of the 2008/2009 season has come and gone and some areas, we are pleased with our positioning for Worlds. The second half of the season brings with it our first real look at the Vancouver track with one week of international training followed by the first World Cup event on the 2010 Olympic track. We will also compete in Park City and of course Lake Placid at the World Championships. Our success in Lake Placid will no doubt be a reflection of things to come in Vancouver, so we expect to build some momentum for the Olympic season.

-Darrin

Quote of the month:

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare."

-Japanese Proverb

U.S. TEAM BANKS 81 MEDALS IN FIRST HALF OF 2008-09 SEASON

The U.S. bobsled and skeleton team wrapped up the first half of the 2008-09 season with 81 medals.

Men's Bobsled

Steven Holcomb continues to be a threat in men's bobsled world standings, and will start the second half of the season ranked third in combined two and four-man points. His crew of **Justin Olsen**, **Steve Mesler** and **Curt Tomasevicz** pushed Holcomb onto the podium at each track so far this season. Team USA I came home for the holiday break with two silver and two bronze medals.



Photo: Team USA I

Holcomb was nearly blind last season when he navigated through the World Cup circuit, suffering from a degenerative eye disease

called keratoconus. Holcomb couldn't even read the top line of an eye chart let alone the numbers above each curve. Over the summer Holcomb had a contact embedded behind the iris called Implantable Collamer Lens, making his vision close to perfect.

"It's great to actually see where I'm going, and it's definitely a little different," said Holcomb. "I can see a lot more, but I can't let that effect how I drive. I learned how to drive by feeling, and I need to keep driving that way."

Todd Hays was welcomed back to the international scene this year, and is within peripheral vision of the leaders as he steadily climbs back onto the world ranking list. Hays is joined by **Bill Schuffenhauer**, **Alex Sprague**, **TJ Burns** and **Jacob Miller**, and will start the second half of the season ranked seventh in combined points.

"I feel like I'm getting my rhythm back," said Hays. "It takes a little bit of time to

get back into the mind frame of racing, and to get yourself motivated to put together two heats and be consistent."

Hays retired after the 2006 Olympics, but has returned with a revised plan on a new quest for gold in 2010. Entering the 2008-09 season without an FIBT rank, Hays had to battle to the top as the last sled in the start order. Now that Hays has fought his way into the top ten, his start order will no longer be a speed bump on his path to the finish line.



Photo: Todd Hays

The reigning Olympic and world champion, Andre Lange, holds the lead with 1230 points in combined standings. Aleksandr Zubkov from Russia is second with 1117 points,

with Holcomb on his heels, just one point away in third.

Adding to the U.S. medal count is **Mike Kohn**, who won the 2002 Olympic bronze medal as a push athlete on Brian Shimer's four-man team before moving into the driver's seat. Despite nursing persistent injuries, Kohn is the America's Cup leader with only one series of races remaining in Lake Placid this April.

Kohn also serves the U.S. as a Sergeant in the Virginia Army National Guard and is a member of the National Guard Outstanding Athlete Program. Kohn contributed 10 medals to the overall count after sweeping the two and four-man America's Cup competitions in Calgary, Canada, winning four silver medals in Lake Placid, and a silver and bronze in Park City's four-man races.

Drivers **John Napier**, **Grayson Fertig** and **Ethan Albrecht-Carrie** helped place four U.S. sleds into the top ten America's Cup rankings. Napier claimed all four gold medals in the America's Cup series on his home track in Lake Placid.

The third and final sled to join Holcomb and Hays in the 2009 World Championships will be determined by the top team in U.S. National Championships, which will be held the weekend of January 3rd.

Women's Bobsled

In women's bobsled, drivers **Shauna Rohbock** and **Erin Pac** are inches from the overall title, currently sitting in fourth and fifth, respectively, in World Cup points. Rohbock and Pac have rotated push athletes, working with **Valerie Fleming**, **Elana Meyers** and **Michelle Rzepka** to clock some of the fastest start times in the field.



Photo: Valerie Fleming and Shauna Rohbock

Rohbock, who also serves in the Utah Army National Guard as a member of the National Guard Outstanding Athlete Program, has pocketed a silver and bronze medal this season, and is 16

points away from being ranked third overall. Pac teamed with Meyers to break the start record in Altenberg, Germany, which was set in 2005 by teammates Rohbock and Fleming. Pac continues to assert herself as a force to be reckoned with on the World Cup level, finishing with two fourth place results to date.

"The field is getting better each year," said Rohbock. "I don't think about how tight the race is at the starting line, but I try to focus on being consistent."

Canada's Helen Upperton is ranked first with 642 points after winning two of the three races held so far this season, while the reigning Olympic and world champion from Germany, Sandra Kiriasis, sits closely behind in second with 635 points. Cathleen Martini is third with 594 points, just ahead of Rohbock and Pac.

Bree Schaaf retired her skeleton sled in 2006, deciding to grip her hands around the set of D-rings in the driver's seat of a bobsled instead. Schaaf is the

current America's Cup leader after medaling in every race this season: double bronze in Park City, gold and silver in Calgary, and double bronze in Lake Placid. Lake Placid local **Phoebe Burns** is third in points, despite having missed the series in Calgary. Burns swept gold in the Lake Placid races, and will look to continue her golden streak in U.S. National Championships to earn her spot onto the World Championship team.

Women's Skeleton

Two-time World Cup champion **Katie Uhlaender** is within reach of defending her women's skeleton title, sitting in third with 568 points. Uhlaender suffered two major hiccups in her training over the summer. Not only did she have knee surgery, but Uhlaender's father is also battling cancer. Despite these hardships, Uhlaender is still knocking on the podium, finishing the first half of the season with a fifth and two fourth place finishes, and with a vision of World Championship gold in sight.

“My push is slowly coming back,” said Uhlaender. “I needed more time to shake

off some of the things I battled with over the summer. My main goal is to win World Championships this season on my home track in Lake Placid, and I'm using these races to get back into shape and to get my sliding back to where it was last season.”

Noelle Pikus-Pace has added one more title to her resume: 2005 World Cup champion, 2007 World Champion, sister, wife, daughter... mom. Pikus-Pace took a one-year hiatus from the sport to have her first child, daughter Lacey Lynne, with husband Janson Pace. Pikus-Pace is currently ranked eighth in overall standings, and will be a medal favorite at World Championships in Lake Placid, one of her preferred tracks to compete on.

Courtney Yamada inked her name into the record books after breaking the start record in the Igls, Austria World Cup event by five-hundredths of a second in the first heat with a push time of 5.33 seconds. Yamada finished the first half of the season in 11th position, and will be a threat on the World Championship track in Lake Placid, where

Yamada unofficially obliterated the track record in training before departing for Europe.

Germany's **Kerstin Symkowiak** is in the lead entering the second half of the season with 630 points after winning three silver medals in the three events. German teammate **Anja Huber** is second with 586 points after claiming two gold medals, with **Uhlaender** in a close third with 568 points.



Photo: Katie Uhlaender and Noelle Pikus-Pace

All three U.S. sliders are in the top ten in the women's skeleton Intercontinental Cup circuit. **Keslie Tomlinson** is ranked seventh, and won her first-ever Intercontinental Cup medal in the first race of the season, a silver, in Calgary. **Rebecca Sorensen** is ranked eighth, while **Annie O'Shea** is ranked tenth in Intercontinental Cup

standings. O'Shea is also ranked fourth overall in FIBT standings as a junior athlete.

Kimber Gabryszak and **Cassie Revelli** slid on the European circuit, battling the foreign tracks for the first time. Gabryszak and Revelli are ranked 13th and 14th despite having missed one race, and are within reach of the top ten.

Men's Skeleton

In men's skeleton, 2006 Olympian **Eric Bernotas** leads the U.S. in tenth. **Zach Lund** suffered a mishap at the start in Igls, where he fell at the start, and is currently in 13th. The 2007 World Cup champion is determined to fight back to the podium in the second half of the season, and his top goal is to medal at World Championships.

Martins Dukurs is the current leader with 610 points; Florian Grassl is second with 593; Alexander Tretiakov, the "Russian Rocket," is third with 572.

Currently, the second ranked American in FIBT standings is **Matt Antoine**. Antoine is ranked third on the

Intercontinental Cup circuit after winning gold on his home track in Lake Placid. Teammate **Stokes Aitken** is tenth, and **Caleb Smith** and **Kyle Tress** shared the third spot on both the World Cup and Intercontinental Cup during the first half of the season. Competing in Igls was Tress' World Cup debut, where he finished 19th.



Photo: Zach Lund

Adding four medals from the European Cup tour was **John Daly**, who is making an impression from start to finish on tracks around the world with his powerful push times. Daly is third in European Cup standings, and brought home gold, two silver and a bronze medal. **Luke Schulz** made his debut overseas in only his second season, and has consistently placed in the top ten amongst a competitive field of experienced sliders. Also returning to competition this year is

Kevin Ellis, who suffered a broken back shortly after the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. Ellis has returned in top form, blasting off the starting block with some of the fastest push times in the field, and already claiming two gold medals in the Calgary America's Cup and a gold in the Igls European Cup.

In conclusion, the U.S. has claimed 81 medals in the first half of the season: 67 in the America's Cup, 6 World Cup, 5 European Cup and 3 Intercontinental Cup medals.

The World Cup tour will resume in Koenigssee, Germany from Jan. 4-11. The European Cup circuit will pick up in St. Moritz, Switzerland from Jan. 18-25, while the Intercontinental Cup tour will meet up again in Cesana, Italy from Jan. 26-31. The America's Cup tour will take a long pause, and will resume from March 29-April 5 in Lake Placid, N.Y.

For more information about the U.S. bobsled and skeleton team, please visit <http://bobsled.teamusa.org>.

Do You Remember When...

Dear Athletes,

My name is Alison Casey and I work for the Olympic Regional Development Authority in Lake Placid, New York. In February 2009 the Olympic Sports Complex (OSC) is hosting the Bobsled and Skeleton World Championships (Feb. 20- March 1).

At this time we would like to call on all former bobsledders or family members of deceased bobsledders to join us during competition weekends in February. We are also calling on all former track workers or family members of passed on track workers who have kept their story and history alive. At the OSC we are in the preliminary planning stage of the International Sliding Sports Museum and we would like to record your history, memories, stories and experiences.

Our goal is to tell the stories of athletes such as you, to educate the public and inspire future athletes of the sport. Along with oral histories we are also

accepting artifacts, programs, all images, uniforms, posters, club logos, club trophies etc. By donating, these items to the Olympic Museum, you are not only memorializing your experience but you are contributing to a unique piece of history and will be given a deed of gift to use at tax time.

We are urgently looking for bobsledders that trained and slid on the original 1932 track as we understand that we are under an unfortunate time crunch. But we are also looking for athletes who trained and slid on the track from the 1940's till the late 1990's.

So please save the dates of February 20-22 and Feb. 26-March 1! Below is my contact information. Please e-mail or call so I can schedule a time during World Championships when you can come and record your history with us. Each meeting is up to 30 minutes long. Please come prepared with answers to our questions and your best stories of the track in Lake Placid! Below is the list of questions:



- What country did you slide for?
- How many years did you slide?
- What is your favorite Lake Placid track story?
- What were some of your most significant accomplishments in Lake Placid and also as an athlete?

If you cannot make the trip to Lake Placid please still call, write or e-mail with your stories, memorabilia and artifacts.

With the greatest regards,

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Ferris Mfg. Corp., a company based in Burr Ridge, Illinois, has produced the PolyMem®

QuadraFoam® line of wound dressings for 20 years. The dressings are used on all types of wounds and are available worldwide.


SportsWrap® by PolyMem® is a drug-free pain relief wrap. The non-sterile wraps were created specifically to manage athletic injuries caused by strains, sprains and contusions where the skin is not broken. SportsWrap helps reduce pain, inflammation, swelling and bruising when applied to the injured area. Athletes often report pain relief within 30 minutes of application. Use of SportsWrap can mean quicker return to game-level performance for the injured athlete.

PolyMem wound dressings are also drug-free and are used to manage open wounds. The dressings help relieve pain, inflammation, swelling and bruising while also helping to improve wound healing. The dressing formulation is available in a variety of formats in order to be able to meet the needs of either the athlete or the patient. The dressings are available both with and without antimicrobial silver incorporated into the dressing.



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