

Ricker wins Canada's second gold on home soil

By MATTHEW LITTLE
Epoch Times Staff

CYPRESS MOUNTAIN—Canada grabbed its second gold medal just a short walk from where it claimed its first when Maelle Ricker blasted through her last three races to an easy victory in the women's snowboard cross on Tuesday.

With the win, Ricker becomes the first woman to win gold on home soil after Canada was shut out of the top podium spot in the previous two Olympics it hosted (Calgary 1988 and Montreal 1976).

Ricker, who was born in North Vancouver, was asked if she was worried when she saw rain and fog out her window that morning.

"I'm a west coast girl so I absolutely loved that weather. It is in my blood, so when I woke up this morning and saw the rain and the fog it actually brought a huge smile to my face and I was ready to go."

Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper sent out congratulations to Ricker immediately after the performance.

Alexandre Bilodeau claimed the Canadians' first gold in moguls on Sunday on a track just a short walk from the snowboard cross track.

Neither of the two Americans who made it to the quarterfinals made it to the A-final, though Lindsey Jacobellis came close, winning the B-final to claim



BIG AIR: Lindsey Jacobellis grabs her board over the last jump of the women's snowboard cross B-final on Tuesday, taking fifth places overall.
EVAN NING / THE EPOCH TIMES

fifth place overall.

It was a tough break for Jacobellis who is best known for crashing in Turin after trying to do a trick off the last jump of the race in which she had a huge lead.

Snowboard cross, which is a downhill race with jumps called "features" and turns, does not involve judging and is won by whichever of the four competitors that makes it to the final race crosses the finish line first.

In Turin, Jacobellis's move knocked her down to silver and she became infamous for the maneuver.

"I got a little off balance. When you're not 100 percent it's hard to go over the feature," she said in a press conference following the race.

This time around she left the course with her hands on her helmet in a show of dismay after she lost her balance and clipped one of the flags the boarders must stay between.

The slip cost her the race and her shot in the medal final.

But her lead in the B-final was enough that she felt confident to try a trick called a "truck driver," grabbing a hold of her board as she went over the final jump.

"I figured I'd have some fun, and show them I still have a passion for the sport," she said.

Deborah Anthonioz claimed silver for the French and Olivia Nobs took bronze home to Switzerland.

Cypress has been plagued by weather troubles with training days cut for some sports and competition delays in others. On Tuesday, fog delayed the races by two hours.



FASTEST: Maelle Ricker of Canada stands between Deborah Anthonioz of France (left) and Olivia Nobs of Switzerland (right) on the podium Tuesday.
EVAN NING / THE EPOCH TIMES



MOTHER AND BROTHER: Alexandre Bilodeau's mother Sylvie and brother Frederic saw a dream come true when Bilodeau won gold in moguls.
MATTHEW LITTLE / THE EPOCH TIMES

Bilodeau's gold a family dream

By MATTHEW LITTLE
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CYPRESS MOUNTAIN—Alexandre Bilodeau's historic gold medal in men's moguls was a huge joy and relief for his family and friends who waited anxiously as he completed his run.

"I am completely out of words, I don't know what to say," said his sister Beatrice Bilodeau, 16.

A mogul skier herself, she was a forerunner testing the course before the Olympians went down.

"When I saw him go down and I saw his time I was crying before I even saw the results."

But when she saw the results it really hit home, she said.

"I was like 'Calm down, do not cry right now, there is still another [skier] going down.' And then when I saw [Colas] Guilbaut's run I was like 'Yeah!' I was completely out of words."

She said even though as a racer she understands the pressures involved and what it feels like to stand at the top of the hill herself, she still gets incredibly nervous before her brother's big Olympic runs.

"I learned to control myself, in Torino I was so nervous before his run that I threw up, but this time I didn't, I learned to control myself."

For dad Serge Bilodeau, the night marked the culmination of a long journey.

"It's amazing. It is very difficult to believe, it was a dream for all the family because we always participate in his career," he said.

"He was the World Champion last year and the only trophy missing was at the Olympics. It's quite big, and quite difficult and today it is done and we are very very proud of him. He deserved it, he worked so hard."

Alexandre gave his older brother Frederic a lot of credit for his win

in the press conferences that followed.

He said Frederic, who has cerebral palsy and gets around with the help of a wheelchair, has taught him over the years what it means to be grateful and keep fighting till the end.

"He is a real inspiration for Alex, because in the career of an athlete you have some ups and some downs," said Serge of Frederic.

"He is a happy camper. He never complains, everyday he is happy in this situation."

For his part, Frederic said, "Obviously he won, and I am very happy. I am very proud of him."

Mom, Sylvie Bilodeau, struggled to find the words. Speaking in French with Serge translating, she said, "I am very emotional and that is why the words, even in French, cannot come."

Alexandre might have been busy making history that day, which just happened to be Valentine's Day, but he still managed to give his girlfriend Jany-Eve Saucier flowers.

Carrying the bouquet that Alexandre was given during the flower ceremony that followed his gold medal run, she said it was impossible to describe her feelings at that moment.

"It felt so good, he has been working so hard."

Like Alex's little sister, she also struggles with nerves.

"I faint. I have palpitations and I am so stressed and so anxious because anything can happen. One tiny mistake and you're out. It's pretty exciting."

Sometimes dating an Olympian can be tough though, she said.

"He wasn't there for my birthday and he is gone two weeks on the fourth, so it can be hard, but it is worth it, 100 percent worth it."

"That's my babe up there, I'm proud."

Canada and U.S. hockey rivalry building up

Young and inexperienced Americans have nothing to lose

By KARL YU
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—With the Olympic men's hockey tournament just underway, one can't help looking ahead to Sunday's clash between Canada and the U.S.

The last time the two met in Olympic competition was 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah, in the gold medal game with Canada coming up on the winning end. Quite a rivalry has been building between the two neighbouring nations both at the professional and junior level.

While Sidney Crosby and Russia's Alex Ovechkin are the headliners of this tournament, the U.S. isn't short on talent as young and inexperienced as its roster is.

Jeremy Roenick, Mike Modano, and Doug Weight carried the load for the old guard and players like Patrick Kane, Phil Kessel, and Zach Parise must do the same for the this generation, according to hockey analyst and ex-NHL coach Barry Melrose.

"These guys have to put the puck



STRONG START: Canada blew away hockey minnows Norway on Tuesday. The U.S. will be an altogether different proposition.
BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

in the net. They have to do what Modano did and Roenick did, and Dougie Weight did. They are the future of United States hockey," Melrose told ESPN.com.

"They're all great young players and now we're going to see them on the world stage."

Both Canada and the U.S. can put the puck in the net and have their fair share of physically imposing players. The U.S. roster features the likes of Ryan Malone,

David Backes, and Erik Johnson, all of who stand at least 6'2" and tip the scales at least 220 lbs.

Canada isn't composed of smurfs either with the likes of Joe Thornton, Shea Weber, Ryan Getzlaf, Chris Pronger, and Brent Seabrook fitting similar physical attributes. They're certainly not averse to playing physically either.

Canada has strong goaltending in the form of the 1-2 punch

of Martin Brodeur and Roberto Luongo and the States aren't too shabby with Ryan Miller and Tim Thomas.

The Canadian team is a good mixture of newcomers and veterans with players like Brodeur, Luongo, Jarome Iginla, team captain Scott Niedermayer, Pronger, Dany Heatley, Rick Nash, and Thornton all with previous Olympic experience.

That bodes well for youngsters like Getzlaf, Sidney Crosby, Duncan Keith, Weber, Drew Doughty, Jonathan Toews, and Corey Perry.

The story is different for the U.S. as only New York Ranger Chris Drury, New Jersey Devil Jamie Langenbrunner and Detroit Red Wing Brian Rafalski have any Olympic experience while the rest of the team consists of greenhorns.

There's nothing like a good rivalry in sports, whether it be the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, Washington Redskins and Dallas Cowboys, or Canada and the U.S. in international hockey competition.

This Sunday is truly a dream day for the fan of international hockey. With Canada facing the U.S., Russia facing the Czechs, and Nordic neighbours Sweden and Finland squaring off, it doesn't get much better.

But for NHL fans, Canada and the U.S. is something special.

Manchester United edges AC Milan in Champions League thriller

Beckham faces old club, Rooney scores two

By MARTIN MURPHY
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Manchester United came from behind to beat AC Milan 3-2 at the San Siro as Wayne Rooney scored two headed goals on Tuesday.

The game was the first match in the knockout stages of Champions League and it pitted three-time winners and last year's runners up Manchester United against seven-time champions AC Milan.

Both teams have met four times before in the knockout stages and AC Milan have always gotten the better of the Red Devils. Until Tuesday night, Man United had never scored in the San Siro against AC Milan.

In a pre-match interview with Sky Sports AC Milan midfielder David Beckham said, "As a Manchester United fan, it's probably the first time that I am going to want

Manchester United to lose." Beckham became a world-class soccer player with Manchester United. He left for Real Madrid in 2003.

Beckham started the match with a bang when his free kick was poorly cleared by United defender Patrice Evra to Ronaldinho, whose shot deflected past Edwin van der Sar in the third minute.

United looked shocked for the next 10 minutes and AC Milan, who were by no means content to sit on a one-goal lead, went in for the kill. AC Milan created plenty of chances to go further ahead but failed to capitalize on their good fortunes.

Manchester United eventually regained their composure and began to counterattack AC Milan.

Finally, Paul Scholes leveled the score after 36 minutes when he started a move nicely with a one-two and then finished it with a mis-kicked shot off his shin that reached the far side of the net past the outstretched arm of AC Milan keeper Dida.

ROONEY SHOW
In Wayne Rooney's 50th Champions League appearance, he



BECKS AND ROO: David Beckham (left) and Wayne Rooney put on a show in Milan on Tuesday.
DAMIEN MEYER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

produced one of his best performances. He scored two goals, one after 66 minutes and the other after 74 minutes which ensured Manchester United would have a considerable advantage over AC Milan when the meet for the second leg of the tie on March 10 at Old Trafford.

His first goal was a long looping header to the far side of the net off a cross from substitute

Antonio Valencia. His second one was a straightforward header from the middle of the six-yard box after some loose defending by AC Milan.

"Second half, we stepped up and fully deserved to win the game," said Rooney. About his England teammate Beckham, Rooney added, "You can see the quality he's got, the experience at set pieces."

"We had three really good chances [in the first half]. If we put them away, it would've been a totally different story," said Beckham.

However the game was not over yet, as Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf drew one goal back when he scored with five minutes left to play. Ronaldinho set him up wonderfully with a supremely skillful pass and Seedorf scored cheekily using a back-flick.

United finished with 10 men after Michael Carrick was shown a second yellow card into stoppage time.

But the result is undeniable for Manchester United—a terrific performance by Rooney in an incredibly important and exciting game.

The return leg goes Mar. 10 at Old Trafford.