

SSCV Nordic team wins Colorado Cup

Eleven going to Junior Nationals

Daily staff report
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It's been an exciting couple weeks for the Nordic team at Ski & Snowboard Club Vail, as its athletes have been preparing for and competing in the Rocky Mountain Junior National Qualifier Series.

That hard work paid off as they clinched the Colorado Cup title, taking first place out of 11 teams more than 1,300 points ahead of second-place Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club. Fifty-two SSCV Nordic competitors were on hand at the final qualifier event that earned them the Cup.

"I am thrilled for the depth of our team with athletes anywhere from 7 years old to 19 years old getting great results throughout the season to enable Ski & Snowboard Club Vail to capture the coveted Colorado Cup by competing against teams from throughout Colorado," Dan Weiland, SSCV Nordic program director, said.

"Our SSCV coaches have worked unbelievably hard to help us achieve our goals both on and off snow during the entire season," Hannah Hardenbergh, SSCV post-graduate Nordic athlete, said. "All they have asked from us in return is to race fast and push ourselves to our limits. I think the Colorado Cup win is a great representation of how hard we are

willing to work for our coaches and for the sport. I also think it is our special way of saying thanks for all of the hard work they have put in."

NORDIC JUNIOR NATIONALS

Approximately 300 of the top Nordic athletes from across the country in the U16, U18 and U20 age classes will gather in Truckee, California, in the second week of March for Nordic Junior Nationals based on their qualifier points from their region's Junior Qualifier Series. SSCV will be well-represented with Hardenbergh, Cameron Bobb, Cameron Moore, Anna Martin, Maddie Donovan, Christian Wilson, Nolan Herzog, Lyle Shipp, Emma Blakslee, Gracie Shanley and Madi Schriefer.

"Junior Nationals is a great way for young and upcoming athletes to ski at a higher level and be exposed to different venues and snow conditions, something very beneficial for junior skiers like us," Hardenbergh said. "It is also a really nice way to connect with other skiers your age from around the U.S. who share the same passion for the sport. It is a really nice gateway experience to the higher level of the sport."

"My goal for the season was to qualify for and compete in Junior Nationals," said Shanley, a freshman at Vail Christian. "The support of my team, my family and my coaches really helped me accomplish my goal. I am really lucky to have the people around me along with the support of the



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Ski & Snowboard Club Vail Nordic athletes celebrate their Colorado Cup title win after the last event of the Rocky Mountain Junior National Nordic Qualifier Series.

Club to get me to where I am, and am really happy to have gotten there."

HISTORY

Nordic Junior Nationals can serve as a stepping off point for its competitors to U.S. Cross-Country team-sponsored camps, and for U18 competitors, the Scando Cup, a U.S. Cross-Country team

cup. It is also a great way for these athletes to showcase themselves to colleges.

SSCV athletes head out March 5 to the Junior Nationals in Truckee, California. The recent performances of U.S. Cross-Country team athletes across the globe in the World Championships have certainly been a source of excitement and inspiration to SSCV's 91 Nordic

athletes, including its 42 Future Stars led by Sylvan Ellefson, SSCV Nordic alumnus, former World Cup competitor and 2014 U.S. Nationals 10K winner.

"I am excited for what is in store for the SSCV Nordic Team in the coming years," Weiland said. "These young Future Stars athletes are truly the future of the Club."

Five local races named to Junior Worlds team

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PARK CITY, Utah — Five local racers are on their way to the 2015 FIS Alpine Junior World Ski Championships next month in Hafjell, Norway, the U.S. Ski Team announced on Friday.

Paula Moltzan, Katharine Irwin, Nina O'Brien, Alex Leever and Florian Szwebel will all be on hand for the Junior Championships in Norway taking place March 6-13.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The annual FIS Alpine World Junior Championships provide a unique opportunity for the best 16-20 year-olds of the skiing world to compete together. The event is also designed to serve as a test event for the 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer.

Moltzan, originally from Minnesota, but now training with Ski & Snowboard Club Vail, is one of the headliners, grabbing a pair of top-10 finishes at World Junior Championships a year ago and is currently ranked sixth in the overall Nor-Am Cup standings. She also finished 20th at the FIS

Alpine World Ski Championships in women's slalom at Beaver Creek.

"This is a strong and diverse Junior Worlds Team with athletes from some of the best club programs around the country," said Patrick Riml, the U.S. Ski Team's alpine director. "We look forward to being competitive in Norway and using the Championships as a platform for the future."

Notably absent from the roster is Junior World alumna Mikaela Shiffrin, who will remain in Europe to focus on the World Cup where she is leading the Audi FIS World Cup slalom standings and is third in the overall standings.

Irwin, a SSCV product, has six top-10 finishes in speed on the Nor-Am Cup this year and also has shone in FIS races in Europe. This is Irwin's third trip to Junior Worlds.

O'Brien calls Edwards home, but has been training at the Burke Academy in Vermont, a the same route taken by Shiffrin. Leever, 19, is a SSCV racer as is Szwebel, who has two junior race wins in Italy this winter to his credit.

The team, 16 in all, including the local contingent will have a full slate, starting with women's giant slalom on March 7 and



TOWNSEND BESSANT | DAILY FILE PHOTO

Paula Moltzan, of Ski & Snowboard Club Vail, is one of five locals named on Friday by the U.S. Ski Team to the team going to the FIS Alpine Junior World Ski Championships.

men's GS on the eighth. March 9 is slalom for both men and women. March 10 is super-G day with the downhills on March 13.

The same weekend, the Audi FIS Ski World Cup downhill and super G will be held in nearby Kvitfjell.