

## Nina O'Brien of Edwards wins nationals in GS

Five of top-10 athletes have local connections

Daily staff report  
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Edwards resident Nina O'Brien, 17, stunned the crowd at the Nature Valley U.S. Alpine Championships on Thursday by winning the giant slalom.

O'Brien, who attends Burke Mountain Academy in Vermont and skis with the U.S. Ski Team's National Training Group, led the field after the first run and was able to hang on during the second run to take top honors on the day.

"I just tried to stay relaxed and have fun," she said after the race.

A fun day it was with beautiful weather and none other than Lindsey Vonn forerunning the race.

"I'm really just here for the kids — for all the junior racers," Vonn said Thursday. "It's not about the competition, but more about the next generation."

### 'RISING QUICKLY'

USSA CEO Tiger Shaw was present at the race and was thrilled for O'Brien.

"I think today is a great example of an up-and-comer rising quickly," he said. "Nina has had a great season. For her to win the

### GS TOP-10 FINISHERS WITH LOCAL CONNECTIONS

- 1) Nina O'Brien, of Edwards
- 2) Paula Moltzan, SSCV athlete
- 6) Abby Ghent, of Eagle
- 8) Rachael DesRochers, of Edwards and SSCV
- 10) Libby Gibson, SSCV athlete

nationals just caps it off perfectly," Shaw said. "It is a testament to women's team development and our staff, our team, her parents, Burke, Squaw and everybody that made it all happen."

O'Brien's National Training Group is a group set up by the U.S. Ski Team and based out of the Center of Excellence in Park City with its primary goal to support the development of top regional athletes. Through the National Training Group, those athletes are able to come together to train and compete as a team, with full use of the athletic and rehabilitative facilities available to National Team athletes. In addition to O'Brien's win, National Training Group athletes placed in seventh, eighth and ninth at Thursday's GS.

'I DIDN'T EXPECT THIS AT ALL'  
"I know there are so many fast



AP PHOTO

Nina O'Brien of Edwards celebrates her victory in the women's giant slalom at the U.S. Alpine Championships on Thursday at Sugarloaf Mountain Resort in Carrabassett Valley, Maine. O'Brien led the field after the first run and was able to hang on during the second run to take top honors.

girls, so I was going to have to ski fast if I wanted to stay in first," O'Brien said of her performance on Thursday. "I haven't been in that position in a big race like this ... I didn't expect this at all; I'm super excited."

Ski & Snowboard Club Vail's Paula Moltzan finished second. "I was kind of hoping for the win, but it's OK," Moltzan said after the race. "I'm happy for my teammate Nina, it's awesome. ... She's such a cute little girl. Well

she's not so little anymore! She's fast. I'm pretty excited for her." Eagle resident Abby Ghent was sixth on the day, and Rachael DesRochers, of Edwards, was eighth. Ski & Snowboard Club Vail's Libby Gibson was 10th.

## Hurry up! Nationals, Cubs, Red Sox on the clock

'The road to the World Series begins today'

By Ben Walker  
AP Baseball Writer

Even before Max Scherzer, Bryce Harper and the rest of the ramped-up Washington Nationals hit the field for their first full-squad workout at spring training, they got the message.

There it was, printed across the top of a practice schedule posted in the clubhouse at Space Coast Stadium. Simple and direct, from manager Matt Williams.

"The road to the World Series begins today."

A challenge? A prediction? A statement?

### 'IT'S LIKE A VERY MEATY NOVEL'

Or, perhaps, a rally cry from Wrigley Field to Fenway Park. Because as Major League Baseball launches speed-up rules this season to cut the length of games, a lot of teams are on the clock.

Throw in the return of Alex Rodriguez from a drug suspension, the possible reinstatement of Pete



AP PHOTO

Bryce Harper and the Washington Nationals have high expectations this season. When Harper heard the Nats had added pitcher Max Scherzer to their robust rotation, he said he thought, "Where's my ring?"

Rose — imagine the roar he'd get at the All-Star Game in Cincinnati — and fresh ideas pitched by new Commissioner Rob Manfred, and it's a full plate going into opening day.

"There are so many plotlines unfolding, especially at the start of the year. It's like a very meaty novel — people want to see how it's going to turn out," Toronto Blue Jays sage R.A. Dickey said.

### CHICAGO HOPE

Chicago Cubs newcomer Jon Lester will throw the first pitch of the season, a Sunday night special on April 5 against St. Louis.

Hope springs eternal all over, and now there's a special kind of Chicago Hope. Credit that to a key free agent — wily, ol' manager Joe Maddon.

The Cubs haven't won the crown since 1908, before Wrigley



AP PHOTO

San Francisco Giants' Madison Bumgarner works against the Los Angeles Angels during a spring training game Sunday in Scottsdale, Arizona. Bumgarner threw 270 innings last season while becoming the World Series MVP and leading San Francisco to its third title in five years.

was built. As the fabled ballpark gets a renovation that includes a giant, bright video board, fans are thrilled their franchise is being refurbished, too.

"I always feel good vibes in baseball," Maddon said. The feeling is mutual across the big leagues. From Cuba to Canada, from the Bay Area to the snow-besieged Northeast, great expectations abound.

Pablo Sandoval, Hanley Ramirez and the remade Boston Red Sox; Nelson Cruz with the run-starved Seattle Mariners; Jimmy Rollins and the just-keep-missing Los Angeles Dodgers.

### EMULATE SUCCESS

Hey, if Kansas City can come so close in the World Series