

THE THIN LINE: Life on the Edge

Skier Biographies

BODE MILLER

Bode Miller burst onto the World Cup scene as an 18-year-old in 1996 and first gained widespread recognition when he won two silver medals at the 2002 Winter Olympics in the Giant Slalom and Combined events. Miller has won a total of four gold medals and one silver medal at the World Championships. In the 2004/2005 Season, Miller won his first overall FIS World Cup title, outlasting Austrian Benjamin Raich. In the 2006/07 Season, Miller finished 4th overall and won the Super G title. In May 2007, Miller announced that he was leaving the U.S. Ski Team to race as an independent.

PICABO STREET

One of the most prolific women's racers to ever grace the U.S. Ski Team, Picabo Street was most definitely a ski racing personality. The native of tiny Triumph, Idaho announced her retirement from competition following the 2002 women's Olympic downhill at Snowbasin, Utah, ending a career that included nine career World Cup victories, the 1995 and 1996 World Cup downhill discipline titles and a trio of World Championships medals to go along with her two Olympic medals, including the Super-G gold at the 1998 Nagano Games. In addition, Street collected a total of four U.S. National titles during her illustrious career, despite being injured and away from ski racing for two years.

DARON RAHLVES

Daron Rahlves is the most decorated American Downhill and Super G skier in history. He has won 12 World Cup races and 28 World Cup podium finishes, seven U.S. National titles, was the 2001 World Champion in Super G and won Silver medal at the 2005 Worlds in Downhill and Bronze medal in Super G. He was the winner of the legendary Hahnenkamm Downhill in 2003 and Super G in 2004 along with seven podium finishes in Kitzbuhel over five years.

FRANZ KLAMMER

In one run of the 1976 Innsbruck Olympic Winter Games, Franz Klammer romanticized the sport of downhill skiing for millions of viewers as he sped to victory from the 15th start position, shocking Switzerland's Bernhard Russi, who thought he had a second consecutive Olympic downhill victory firmly in hand. He accumulated 25 World Cup downhill victories. Following a slump that included failing to make the 1980 Austrian Olympic team to Lake Placid, Klammer came back with a vengeance, winning the 1983 World Cup downhill title, a crown he had previously worn from 1975-78.

STEVEN NYMAN

Steven Nyman is an American alpine skier and 2006 Olympian. Formerly a slalom skier, he is now a speed specialist, competing mainly in Downhill, Super G, and Alpine Combined. He didn't begin competing regularly on the World Cup until the 2005-06 season, during which he notched a pair of top-ten finishes and competed in his first Winter Olympics, finishing 19th in Downhill, 29th in Combined, and 43rd in Super G. On December 1, 2006, Nyman landed on his first World Cup podium, placing third in Downhill at Beaver Creek, Co. Fifteen days later, he won his first World Cup race, a Downhill in Val Gardena, Italy.

PHIL MAHRE

Phil Mahre, with the help of twin brother Steve, put the U.S. squarely on the map of international ski competition in the 1970s and '80s, while redefining ski racing in America at the same time. His 27 World Cup career victories are the most by any American male racer and triple that of the next person on the list—his brother. Mahre collected three consecutive overall World Cup titles in 1981, 82 and 83, by virtue of his gifted slalom and giant slalom talent, along with a willingness to ski downhill, especially in combined events. Ironically, both Phil and Steve made the decision to retire from the World Cup circuit in Vail during the 1984 American Ski Classic. Phil made the decision to come out of competitive ski retirement this winter in an attempt to qualify for the 2008 U.S. National Championships. As a result, he is now competing with athletes that were not born when he retired from the U.S. Ski Team.

PHIL McNICHOL

Phil McNichol grew up in Washington, CT and started his coaching career while a student in the mid-'80s at Northern Arizona University. After splitting the '90s as head coach at Ski Club Vail and the Park City Ski Team, he joined the U.S. Ski Team staff in 1997. He is married to former World Cup skier Beth Madsen.

BERNHARD RUSSI

In 1970, Swiss Alpine skier Bernhard Russi skied a sensational run at the World Championships downhill race to capture the gold. Two years later at the 1972 Olympics in Sapporo he won a gold medal in the downhill. At the 1976 Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria, he took the silver medal behind a legendary run from Austrian Franz Klammer. In addition to his Olympic placings, Russi has designed numerous downhill courses for the Olympic Games and the Birds of Prey course at Beaver Creek, Co.

CHAD FLEISCHER

A 10-year member of the U.S. Ski Team, Fleischer hails from that hotbed of ski racing...Nebraska. However, he was able to escape the clutches of the Husker football program, moving to Vail and taking up downhill. A two-time Olympian, Fleischer captured the 1996 and 1999 U.S. national downhill titles and earned the runner-up position in downhill at the 1999 World Cup Finals. One of his most memorable career highlights came in his own backyard in the form of a sixth place showing in Super-G at the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships on Beaver Creek's Birds of Prey course. Even more memorable was his spectacular crash in 1998 at the Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuhel. He now serves as expert commentator on coverage of World Cup skiing.

KEN READ

Read became the first North American male to ever win a World Cup downhill with a victory in Val d'Isere, France in 1975. A seven-time Canadian National downhill champion, Read picked up a fifth place Olympic downhill result in the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Games. He also represented Canada at the 1978 and 1982 World Championships in Garmisch, Germany and Schladming, Austria. On the 1980 World Cup circuit, Read skied to a second place finish in the season-long downhill rankings. A native of Calgary, Read was instrumental in the design and construction of the men's downhill course used for the 1988 Calgary Olympics.

TODD BROOKER

Todd Brooker carried on the tradition of world-class Canadian downhillers on the World Cup circuit from 1975 to 1987. Brooker recorded a total of four World Cup downhill wins,

one on the famed Hahnenkamm course in Kitzbuehel, Austria, and another on America's Downhill in Aspen. Brooker was a member of the 1984 Canadian Olympic team in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, while competing on a pair of World Championships squads in 1982 in Schladming, Austria and again in 1985 in Bormio, Italy.

FELIX BELCZYK

A seven-year World Cup veteran with the Canadians, Belczyk's top career result came in the form of a third place podium appearance in the 1990 World Cup downhill in Are, Sweden. Other top results have included a fourth place showing on the famed Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuehel, Austria in 1986 and an 18th place result in the 1992 Albertville Olympic downhill.

PATRICK ORTLIEB

Ortlieb carved his name in the Austrian skiing history books when he tamed the extremely technical "new course" in Val d'Isere, France to claim the Olympic downhill gold medal at the 1992 Albertville Games. He followed that performance with a World Championships downhill gold in 1996 in Sierra Nevada, Spain, while just missing the medals at the 1994 Lillehammer Games with a fourth place downhill effort. During the course of his amateur career, he collected a total of four World Cup downhill victories, including wins in Val Gardena, Italy in 1994 and 1996. He also delighted the home country fans in 1994 with a downhill win on the prestigious Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuehel.

KJETIL ANDRE AAMODT

Aamodt is one of the most decorated alpine skiers in history. He is the only alpine skier to win eight Olympic medals, along with five World Championships gold medals, as well as 21 individual World Cup events. An all-around skier, Aamodt participated in all five alpine skiing disciplines and is one of only five male skiers in history to have won a World Cup race in Downhill, Super-G, Giant Slalom, Slalom and Combined. His combined career total of 20 World Championship and Olympic medals is an all-time best. He is the youngest alpine skier to win an Olympic gold medal and is also the oldest alpine skier to win a gold medal. He became the first Alpine skier in the history of the Olympic Games to win four gold medals following his win in Torino in Super-G. Crowned the 1994 overall World Cup champion at the World Cup Finals in Vail, Co., Aamodt also claimed a gold medal in Combined and a bronze in Downhill at the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships.

LASSE KJUS

In February of 1999, Norway's Lasse Kjus pulled off one of the most remarkable feats in the history of alpine skiing when he won medals in all five events at the World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail and Beaver Creek, Co. A two-time overall World Cup champ (1996 & 1999), Kjus owns a total of 16 Olympic and World Championships medals, ranking him second in career medals behind Aamodt. He recorded a total of 18 career World Cup victories, including a Super-G win in Vail, Co. in 1995 and a Giant Slalom victory on Birds of Prey in 2004. He retired from competition following the 2006 season.