

US Cross Country Championships
January 1-7, 2007
Michigan Tech Nordic Training Center
Houghton MI

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For immediate release
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FREEMAN, WEIER WIN CLASSIC COMPETITION

HOUGHTON MI – The U.S. Ski Team dominated the opening day of the 2007 U.S. Cross Country Championships in Houghton, Michigan. U.S. team members took five of the six podium spots in the men's 10 kilometer and women's 5 kilometer races.

Kris Freeman from Andover, New Hampshire, took the top spot in the men's race, and Lindsay Weier of Mahtomedi, Minnesota, took the women's title. Both are members of the US Ski Team and competed in the 2002 and 2006 Olympics. Weier will also compete with her college team at Northern Michigan University this year.

Racers faced record high temperatures at the Michigan Tech Nordic Training Center, with the mercury soaring to 41. Skiers report that the trails held up well despite the "heat." Groomers will be working late into the night getting the track ready for the freestyle race on Thursday.

Andy Newell of the U.S. Ski Team finished second in the men's race, with Chris Cook taking the third spot. For the women, Kikkan Randall finished second and Laura Valaas was third. Valaas, who skis for the Central Cross Country Ski Team, was the only non-US team member on the podium.

Freeman took first place by 42 seconds, while Weier's margin of victory was 9 seconds. Only 1 second separated the second and third place finishers in the women's race.

In addition to the national title races, the races represent part of the \$130,000 Cross Country SuperTour, with double points awarded. Freeman, who won four straight races after returning from snowless Europe earlier this month, and Caitlin Compton from the Central Division's fledgling CXC squad, are the overall leaders coming into Houghton

"The community has really come together for these championships and it's great to see that kind of support. They've put in a lot of work," said Pete Vordenberg, head coach for the U.S. Ski Team.

The races also include the U.S. disabled championships, as they have every year since 1986 when USSA became the first federation to roll the disabled cross-country championships into the able-bodied nationals.

Chris Klebl won the men's sit-ski competition, while Monica Bascio won the women's title. Sit skiers traverse the course on a skiing equivalent to a wheelchair, using their poles and arm strength to propel themselves through the entire race. The men sit skiers went 12 kilometers, while the women skied 9 kilometers.

Women racers had the advantage today, starting in the morning with cooler temperatures and a nice hard track to ski on. The temperature climbed during the afternoon men's race, making for soft and slippery conditions toward the end of the race.

The U.S. Cross Country Championships will continue on Thursday with the freestyle race: 10 kilometers for the women and 15 kilometers for the men. The temperature is expected to be even warmer, with the National Weather Service predicting a high of 44.

"Despite these warm temperatures, our base is holding up fine," said organizing committee chair Mike Abbott. "We trucked in 200 truckloads of snow last weekend to make a solid base in the stadium and on our 5 kilometer course."

After Thursday's freestyle race, competitors will have a training day on Friday, then the individual sprints on Saturday and team sprints on Sunday.

A complete list of results and the schedule for the remaining three races are at www.seniornationals.org.