

International and local racers speed down slopes during World Cup Telemark competition

Four local skiers were among the more than 80 people from 10 countries to take part in a World Cup Telemark competition on The Big Mountain this week.

This is the first World Cup Telemark race held at The Big Mountain. Last year this was the site of the U.S. National meet.

Three events were held, two giant slalom events and a classic event. The giant slalom is a speed event with a mandatory jumping section. The all-terrain classic race includes giant slalom sections, banked turns, rollers, several skate sprints, and a Nordic distance jump where competitors 'catch air' of up to 75 feet.

Last spring, The Big Mountain hosted the Telemark Nationals.

"Telemark is getting bigger all the time," said Big Mountain spokesman Brian Schott. "They are starting to get some sponsorship and they may get exhibition status in the upcoming olympics." The Telemark turn has been used for over a hundred years, he said. It was developed in Telemark, Norway in the 1800s.

The four local skiers competed well. In the men's competition Reid Sabin finished third in Sunday's Slalom while Glen Gustavsson finished 14th and Taug



Parked next to the course, spectators David Moore and Korey Kangas watch the races.

Boschen finished 21st. Bjarne Rickardsson of Sweden finished first for the men. In the women Cody Thompson finished 4th in the event. First place in the women's event went to Mirjam Rubin of Switzerland.

"I'll let my mom wear it," Sabin said of the bronze medal he won.

According to US team member Neil Persons, the races were going well.

"With the soft snow conditions, the runs are rutting up," he said. "If you are not looking ahead the gates can come up real fast."

Monday Rubin again won the women's slalom event while Thompson finished fifth.

Patrick Leopold of Switzerland was the men's event winner. Reid Sabin finished seventh, Boschen finished 15th and Gustavsson finished 18th.

Tuesday the competitors went at the mountain for the Telemark classic event. Leopold was again the winner and Reid Sabin was the top US finisher at fifth place. Gustavsson finished 10th and Boschen finished 13th.

In the women's event it was Hege Johanson of Norway with the win. Cody Thompson was the top US finisher, coming in fifth.

American Telemark skiers can't really make enough with their sport to live on. But according to Persons it's not the money that keeps these skiers going.

It's something much more precious. "It's the love of the sport," Persons said.

**Story by Paul Overlie
Photos by Chris Tucker**