



Photo courtesy Pete Sabin

Reid Sabin is considered one of the top ski racers in the United States and the world.

Sabin listed among top skiers nationwide

BY TOM LYNCH
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Of all the birthplaces you could think of for one of the top skiers in the country, Gig Harbor would probably rank near the bottom of the list.

But, as implausible as it may seem, that's where two-time Telemark World Cup Champion Reid Sabin is from.

The 30-year-old Sabin — dubbed the "world's most dominant ski racer" in the January 2002 issue of Outside magazine and "one of North America's top 25 skiers" by Skiing magazine — has etched out a prominent place in the ski racing community.

In the 1999-2000 season he became the first American to capture the Telemark World Cup, the world championship of telemark racing. He repeated that feat in the 2000-2001 season.

The Telemark World Cup is a racing circuit that consists of 15 races in three different disciplines — the Giant Slalom, the Classic and the Sprint Classic. Telemark racers from around the world compete in the events.

Sabin's best race, the Classic, consists of three main stages — a downhill slalom section, a Nordic distance jump and an uphill skating section.

A ski.mountainzone.com article called the Classic, "the true test of Nordic and alpine ability."

So how did a Gig Harbor native become so adept in this challenging arena of skiing?

For one, Reid's parents are avid

skier's themselves. His father Pete has been a ski instructor at Crystal Mountain for the past 40 years and Sabin used to ski at the mountain nearly every weekend.

The other reason, Sabin said, is his love of the sport.

"I guess its just been a passion for me," he said, "something I've enjoyed all my life."

After pursuing alpine skiing while living in Washington, Sabin picked up telemark when he went to college at the University of Montana in Missoula in 1993.

By 1998, he was the national champion in the sport.

"It was a pretty big adjustment," said Sabin of the switch to telemark. "It's quite a bit different than alpine skiing, you rely more on balance than equipment."

Now as a member of the national telemark team, he lives in Whitefish, Mont. with seven of his teammates.

This year, Sabin is sitting out of World Cup competition, mainly because he has a baby due in late February.

"I do miss it," said Sabin of the racing competition. "The rest of the team is in Europe right now and I keep up on the Internet."

"But I'm happy with what I'm doing now. I wouldn't miss child birth for anything."

Sabin's said he will come back next season to compete, but added he probably has only a couple more years left in his racing career.

After that, he plans to stay in Whitefish where he hopes to start a junior telemark program.