

Tahoe's Bahrke 3rd, Kashima 5th at Olympic Trials

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS – The snow falling on Steamboat's Voo Doo run couldn't hold back World Champion Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA) and World Cup moguls champion Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT) on Wednesday as each won Olympic Trials, securing a nomination to the U.S. Olympic Team in the moguls discipline.

"This is the only golden ticket, and to have it means the world to me," Kearney said. "It felt like a winning run when I crossed the finish line."

Though it was nearly whiteout conditions into the final run of competition, Kearney nailed a back layout and flat helicopter, combined with an extremely clean run for the win.

"It may have been slower than some of the other competitors, but it was clean and I still skied aggressively," Kearney said. "There was no way I was going to lose by skiing too conservatively. I pushed it and I am really pleased."

According to the World Championship bronze medalist, having secured a spot on the Olympic team will enable her to relax, as well as push herself further in the sport to get to where she wants to be in Vancouver – the top of the podium.

"It's going to make the rest of the year less stressful, and to go into the Olympics as un-stressed as possible is going to give me an advantage," Kearney said. "I'm going there to win a gold medal. I'm not going there to 'experience it.' I already did experience it and there's a lot of things I'm going to do differently for a much better result."

Kearney was followed in second by Colorado native Emiko Torito (Denver) who, although disappointed in not winning, was happy with her progress and where she is headed this season.

Like Kearney, Deneen also noted that the weight off his shoulders thanks to the win will be beneficial to him in the coming months.

Right on Deneen's tail was U.S. Ski Team newcomer Jeremy Cota (Carrabassett Valley, ME) who had the crowd on their toes for a darkhorse victory as he sat in the lead until Deneen's final run.

"That's freestyle skiing for you, a lot of close calls. I skied as well as I could and I am definitely happy with that," Cota said. It's a little heartbreaking, but I'll get over it. I was happy to be there. I skied really well and I was obviously in there somewhere and I'm happy with that."

With three of the five Olympic team spots already nominated, two more remain to be given out Thursday when men's and women's aerials take over the action on Voo Doo run.

Steamboat Springs, CO – Dec. 23, Moguls

Men

1. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA, 26.68
2. Jeremy Cota, Cle Elum, WA, 26.11
3. Holt Haga, Boise, ID, 26.06
4. Shane Cordeau, Sun Valley, ID, 25.92
5. Sho Kashima, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 25.90
6. Jimmy Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 25.81
7. Dave DiGravio, Farmington, ME, 25.53

8. Michael Morse, Duxbury, MA, 25.39
9. David Babic, Washington, VT, 24.88
10. Joe Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 24.86

Women

1. Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT, 26.30
2. Emiko Torito, Denver, 25.96
3. Shannon Bahrke, Tahoe City, CA, 25.37
4. Michelle Roark, Denver, 25.34
5. Shelley Robertson, Reno, NV, 24.58
6. Heather McPhie, Park City, UT, 24.09
7. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO, 23.56
8. Heidi Kloser, Vail, CO, 23.28
9. Laurel Shanley, Squaw Valley, CA, 23.15
10. Mikaela Matthews, Frisco, CO, 13.11