

Bahrke 6th at Park City

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

PARK CITY -â€ The first leg of Heather McPhieâ€™s (Park City, UT) Olympic dreams were achieved Saturday night as she finished second at the Visa Freestyle International to lock her spot on the 2010 Olympic Team. McPhie was joined on the podium by teammate Michelle Roark (Denver) who threw her name in the Olympic running, finishing third.

The clear winter night belonged to McPhie who, only two days earlier, had her first World Cup victory. There was electricity in the air for the Park City resident as she took in the feeling of World Cup success, and more importantly, a future as an Olympian.

“Amazing. My season just keeps building. It’s been really, really awesome. Working with the coaches and the support staff has been awesome and I’ve been able to lay it down,” McPhie said. “My biggest goal for this event was to find that next gear. I didn’t know how to quite turn the dial and I did it two days in a row.”

McPhie and Roark led the way for the U.S. to take four of the top five spots with Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT) finishing fourth and Shannon Bahrke (Tahoe City, CA) fifth.

While her spot on the 2010 Olympic Team is assured, McPhie isn’t planning on slowing down any time soon as she competes her hardest day to day.

Also nearing another Winter Games is Roark, who with her third place finish is happy to have the momentum back in her skiing. And it came on the same venue where a win four years ago sent her to Torino.

And Roark’s skiing was elevated thanks to some help from

some special friends – Olympic medalists Toby Dawson and Jonny Moseley, as well as Jeremy Bloom.

“I went back this summer and interviewed a bunch of athletes that had been successful – Johnny Moseley, Toby Dawson Jeremy Bloom – and they all gave me some advice,” Roark said. “I went back and read the rule book and realized a good turn is a nice carved turn, not a sliding turn. So I was like, ‘alright what do I have to do to change my turns,’ because I was a good slider.”

In only his second appearance in a World Cup competition, Jeremy Cota (Steamboat Springs, CO) led the way for the U.S. men, finishing seventh. Guilbaut Colas of France won, followed by Australia’s Dale Begg-Smith in second and Alexandre Bilodeau of Canada in third.

While his 14th place finish wasn’t a big deal for him, with two second places on the World Cup this season, Wilson also essentially locked in his ticket to Vancouver with one competition left to go in the season.

With the Visa Freestyle International wrapped up, the freestyle world moves along to Lake Placid for the final World Cup competitions prior to the 2010 Games Jan. 21-24.

Olympic moguls spots are still up for grabs in Lake Placid. On the men’s side, Deneen has a spot from Olympic Trials, while Wilson has virtually locked his spot on the basis of a pair of seconds last month. Nate Roberts (Park City, UT), who crashed in qualifications both days at Deer Valley, is the only other man with a podium. The USA will name up to four men.

In women’s moguls, Kearney has the Olympic Trials spot with McPhie clinching her berth. Both Roark and Bahrke have third place finishes.

The Nature Valley Freestyle Cup at Lake Placid opens with moguls Thursday afternoon.

Park City, Jan. 16, 2010, Moguls

Men

1. Guilbaut Colas, France, 26.80
2. Dale Begg-Smith, Australia, 26.21
3. Alexandre Bilodeau, Canada, 25.95
4. Mazime Gingras, Canada, 25.20
5. Nobuyuki Nishi, Japan, 25.19
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7. Jeremy Cota, Steamboat Springs, CO, 24.90
9. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA, 24.77
11. Jimmy Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 24.72
14. Bryon Wilson, Butte, MT, 17.41
- (16 make finals)
17. Michael Morse, Duxbury, MA, 23.30
23. Shane Cordeau, Sun Valley, ID, 22.74
24. David Babic, Washington, VT, 22.51
30. Joe Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 21.33
48. Dave DiGravio, Farmington, ME, 11.20
58. Nate Roberts, Park City, UT, 0.00

Women

1. Jennifer Heil, Canada, 25.59
2. Heather McPhie, Park City, UT, 24.93

3. Michelle Roark, Denver, 24.91
4. Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT, 24.89
5. Shannon Bahrke, Tahoe City CA, 24.88
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12. Shelly Roertson, Reno, NV, 22.52
13. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO, 22.05
16. Laurel Shanley, Squaw Valley, CA, 4.23
- (16 make finals)
36. Heidi Kloser, Vail, CO, 13.20
45. Emiko Torito, Denver, 0.00