

Hight, Teter place 3-4 in X Games' first night

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

ASPEN – In classic form, Olympic gold medalists Kelly Clark (Mt. Snow, VT) and Shaun White (Carlsbad, CA) topped the superpipe qualifications Thursday night during Winter X Games 14 in Aspen.

Both White and Clark went four for five in the U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix tour to qualify first for the 2010 Olympic Team, and the X Games are their last competition stop before heading to Vancouver.

“This is all part of the plan and it’s all about the momentum and confidence that the riders are building as we head to Vancouver,” U.S. Snowboarding Halfpipe Head Coach Mike Jankowski said. “It’s all working out and there’s more great things to come.”

Plans of greatness for the Games aside, the lights at Buttermilk Mountain shone bright for the U.S. women heading for Vancouver as the fabulous four of the Olympic Halfpipe Team swept the top four qualification spots.

Coming in just behind Clark was Aspen’s favorite girl-next-door Gretchen Bleiler (Aspen, CO) who threw down for the home crowd. In third, Elena Hight (South Lake Tahoe, CA) delt her trademark nines, and was followed in fourth by Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe, CA).

Over in the man cave, no one was a match for White, with Switzerland’s Iouri Podladtchikov falling nearly 10 points behind White to make the second position. Olympic newcomer Greg Bretz (Mammoth Lakes, CA) put the field on notice with his runs, finishing in the third spot to round things out.

The action-sports fiesta continues Friday, starting with men's and women's snowboardcross eliminations at 9:30 a.m. MT and gets back into halfpipe for men's night finals at 7:30 p.m. MT.

Winter X Games 14, Aspen, Jan. 28, Halfpipe Qualifications

Men

1. Shaun White, Carlsbad, CA, 97.66
2. Iouri Podladtchikov, Switzerland, 88.33
3. Greg Bretz, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 87.66
4. Kazuhiro Kokubo, Japan, 84.00
5. JJ Thomas, Breckenridge, CO, 80.00
6. Luke Mitrani , Mammoth Lakes, CA, 79.66
7. Louie Vito, Sandy, UT, 77.66
8. Steve Fisher, Breckenridge, CO, 77.00
9. Antti Autti, Finland, 76.66

Women

1. Kelly Clark , Mt. Snow, VT, 96.00
2. Gretchen Bleiler, Aspen, CO, 95.66
3. Elena Hight, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 89.00
4. Hannah Teter, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 84.33
5. Ellery Hollingsworth, Stratton, VT, 80.66
6. Soko Yamaoka, Japan, 76.00
7. Queralt Castellet, Spain, 75.33

8. Kaitlyn Farrington, Sun Valley, ID, 74.66

9. Clair Bidez, Minturn, CO, 68.00