

Moguls, aerials to be contested in Deer Valley

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

PARK CITY – The Olympic spirit will be ringing through the Wasatch Mountains as the 2010 Visa Freestyle International sets up shop at the 2002 Olympic venue, Deer Valley Resort Jan. 14-16 for aerials and two moguls events.

Athletes will be giving it their all in one of their last chances to make the 2010 Olympic team.

Joining Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT), Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA), Jeret “Speedy” Peterson (Boise, ID) and Lacy Schnoor (Draper, UT), who each already grabbed a ticket to Vancouver at Olympic Trials in December, will be the world’s best freestyle athletes, each looking to add the words 2010 Olympian to their resume as well.

Following the Deer Valley event, athletes will have one last chance in Lake Placid to land a spot on the Olympic team, which will be named back at Deer Valley Resort Jan. 26.

The action gets going with an exciting moguls competition featuring Kearney, Deneen, 2002 Olympic silver medalist Shannon Bahrke (Tahoe City, CA), World Cup podium performer Bryon Wilson (Butte, MT), World Champion Nate Roberts (Park City, UT) and World Cup aces Emiko Torito and Michelle Roark (both Denver).

With two World Cup podiums attributed to Wilson and one to Roberts thus far this season, as well as a slew of top-10 finishes on the women’s part, the Olympic moguls team looks to be one of the most challenging to make.

“Coming out of Olympic Trials and with only two World Cups

left you've got a really motivated group of athletes," U.S. Moguls Head Coach Scott Rawles said. "They know it's going to take a lot to go to the Olympics and I think that everyone is bringing their A game to what we have going on. We're really looking forward to it and we have a lot of great skiers ready to go."

Hometown hero Roberts is geared up to reel in the second World Cup podium of his season, and nothing would make him happier than to do it in front of his home town.

"It's the best event on our whole schedule and it brings in the most, and greatest fans in the world," Roberts said. "It's a skier's course and every run is a challenge."

Then, the aerialists will take the Olympic party to the air as Peterson, World Champion Ryan St. Onge (Winter Park, CO), World Cup winner Emily Cook (Belmont, VT), Dylan Ferguson (Amesbury, VT) and newcomer Ashley Caldwell (Lake Placid, NY) give the crowd some sky high acrobatics as they compete for a place in Vancouver.

"The Deer Valley World Cup is always exciting. It's a premier stop and the best aeriials site on tour," U.S. Aerials Head Coach Matt Christiansen said. "It's also a time where we're trying to peak during the Olympics and we're climbing and grabbing momentum there, and it's exciting."

After an entire summer of training in Park City, Cook, who resides in Park City, is excited to take her tricks to the snow for one of her last World Cup stops prior to the Olympics.

"I'm definitely looking forward to the event. It's so nice to have a home crowd and a perfect site. Everything is perfect for us when we are here in Deer Valley," Cook said. "I've had success here on the site in the past during Olympic Trials in 2006 and of course at the World Cup there last year. I'm super comfortable here and I'm excited to be able to compete."