

Rahlves second in Austria skiercross competition

By Elizabeth Karam, USSA

ST. JOHANN, Austria -â€“ Daron Rahlves knifed the injected ski cross course, landing on the podium in second place in Tuesday's World Cup in St. Johann. The German young gun Simon Stickl won the race with Canada's David Duncan in third.

Conditions were tough in St. Johann with the course totally injected for the ski cross, creating an ice rink like surface. Although the course posed an added challenge to the athletes, the field of competitors pulled out of the starting gate launching their bodies down the hill.

“It was a really exciting ski cross race to say the least. The course itself was fully injected so, it was just an ice rink,” explained Ski Cross Head Coach Tyler Shepherd. “It made for difficult conditions all around.”

Stickl skied exceptionally well to take the coveted win, pushing Rahlves into second. Trailing Rahlves was Duncan to close out the podium.

Rahlves slayed it the entire way down the course, making an essential pass to qualify for the final. He also showed particular strength in his starts, out pulling most of his competitors.

“For the first time since I've been working with him, his starts today were extremely good,” said Shepherd. “The first two heats he got the whole shot and never looked back. In the semi final he actually barged a bit but he did a really good job, kept his head cool and made the pass necessary to get into second and move on to the final.”

Once in the final, Rahlves showed no mercy passing his way to second place to take his spot on the podium. Proving to be a true competitor, he fought to make aggressive moves the entire way down.

“The final was just an all out fight for every guy in the heat,” explained Shepherd. “He made a phenomenal pass to get into third and then another pass on the bottom to get into second, so he had to work for it.”

In the women’s race, France’s Ophelie David charged down the course to take the win, beating out fellow countryman Meryll Boulangeat. Grabbing the last spot on the podium was Canadian Julie Murray.

Caitlin Ciccone (Littleton, NH) had a breakthrough day fighting her way into 31st place. Ciccone looked strong, skiing fast and aggressive trying to make passes the whole way down the course.

“She came down the hill charging and tried to do the moves we discussed in terms of making passes,” said Shepherd. “The girls that were in front of her closed the door on her, but she kept fighting the whole way down.”

World Cup, Jan. 5, skiercross

Men

1. Simon Stickl, Germany
2. Daron Rahlves, Sugar Bowl, CA
3. David Duncan, Canada
4. Michael Schmid, Switzerland
5. Florent Astier, France

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13. Casey Puckett, Aspen, CO
31. Justin Johnson, Park City, UT
37. John Teller, Mammoth Lakes, CA
45. Jean Christophe Rudigoz, Sun Valley, ID
53. Patrick Duran, Fayston, VT
71. Scott Horn, Truckee, CA

Women

1. Ophelie David, France
2. Meryll Boulangeat, France
3. Julia Murray, Canada
4. Anna Woerner, Germany
5. Andrea Limbacher, Austria
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31. Cailtin Ciccone, Littleton, NH
44. Langely McNeal, Ketchum, ID