

# Tahoe snowboarders in contention in Mammoth

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN – No, it's not déjà vu. Olympic gold medalists Kelly Clark (Mt. Snow, VT) and Shaun White (Carlsbad, CA) are just so consistent that for the second Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix in a row, they have qualified first and will lead Wednesday's finals.

Under the sunny California sky, Clark was once again the queen of the halfpipe, landing frontside air, back 5, front 7 tail, cab 7, indie front 5, indie backside air, for her top of the pack status.

Backing Clark up in the standings was fellow gold medalist Hannah Teter (South Lake Tahoe, CA). Teter noted her overall excitement to get qualifications out of the way after crashing in qualis at the Copper Grand Prix and not competing. And rounding things out for the dream team of women's halfpipe was Gretchen Bleiler (Aspen, CO).

According to Clark, landing a qualifying run sets her up perfectly for finals.

"It's always encouraging being able to make it to the finals having done so well. Being able to be consistent in the qualifiers is a great way to head in to the finals," Clark said. "I'm looking for some consistent results, and it should set me up for a fun week."

Clark was also stoked to be at Mammoth Mountain, where her friends are able to see her competing.

"It's great being at Mammoth. A lot of my friends are able to come up and support me and I have a high value for that, so I

really enjoy it," said Clark.

In the ultra-competitive men's halfpipe field, athletes again double corked their way to the tops of heats, led by none other than the great White whose second run of the day, a frontside air, backside 540, frontside double cork 10, cab double cork 10, frontside 7, cab 10, was the top of the charts for the men.

But the innovative trick didn't stop with White's board as Greg Bretz (Mammoth Lakes, CA) showed some love for the home crowd, finishing first in his heat and second overall for the day with an air, back 9, front 10, cab 10, front double cork 10.

For Bretz, the run was a step forward in what he hopes will be a level of consistency for him.

"It feels good. I'm trying to work on my consistency. Louie [Vito, Sandy, UT] and Shaun are two of the most consistent guys in our sport and I can't watch them win anymore," Bretz said. "I'm just going to try to come from behind and blind them. I'm stoked to be at home shredding. I'm just doing my thing and having fun."

Canada's Jeff Bachelor followed Bretz in third and Vito finished fourth.

The Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix continues Wednesday with men's and women's halfpipe finals at noon, the second of five Olympic qualifiers. While the Olympic Team will not be named until after the final event Jan. 23, White and Clark will virtually assured themselves a spot if they pick up a second win.

## **Mammoth Mountain, Jan. 5, Halfpipe Qualifiers**

### **Men**

1. Shaun White, Carlsbad, CA, 47.10

2. Greg Bretz, Mammoth Lakes, CA, 45.90
3. Jeff Batchelor, Canada, 43.80
4. Louie Vito, Sandy, UT, 43.40
5. Danny Davis, Detroit, MI, 43.30
6. Elijah Teter, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 43.00
7. Broc Waring, Edwards, CO, 42.20
8. Justin Lameroux, Canada, 41.30
9. JJ Thomas, Golden, CO, 41.20
10. Jack Mitrani, Mammoth, CA, 40.70
11. Steve Fisher, Breckenridge, CO, 39.70
12. Matt Ladley, Steamboat Springs, CO, 39.70
13. Scotty Lago, Seabrook, NH, 39.60
14. Brennen Swanson, Stillwater, MN, 39.00
15. Andy Finch, Truckee, CA, 39.00
16. Mathieu Crepel, France, 38.90

## **Women**

1. Kelly Clark, Mt. Snow, VT, 46.50
2. Hannah Teter, Belmont, VT, 43.90
3. Gretchen Bleiler, Aspen, CO, 43.10
4. Ellery Hollingsworth, Stratton, VT, 42.40
5. Maddy Schaffrick, Steamboat Springs, CO, 41.90
6. Elena Hight, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 40.50

7. Clair Bidez, Minturn, CO, 39.90

8. Holly Crawford, Australia, 39.00