

Tahoe City's Bahrke retires from skiing

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

Known for her dyed pink hair, glittery eyelids and bright smile, Shannon Bahrke of Tahoe City announced her retirement from the U.S. Ski Team. Bahrke was a member of the freestyle moguls team for 12 years earning Olympic and World Championships medals, World Cup titles and wins and U.S. Championship titles during her tenure with the team.

"I'm going to miss everything, freestyle is such a way life. It's just so much fun and I'm really going to miss that," said Bahrke. "I'm going to miss the people, the competition and I think I'm certainly going to miss waking up every day and having a purpose to kick somebody's butt. There are so many things I'm going to miss, the people here, my teammates, but I'm ready for what comes next in life."



Shannon Bahrke

Bahrke first clicked into skis at the age of three, ripping the mountain with her mom. Her career began as an alpine ski racer before making the switch to freestyle, eventually settling on moguls. Her first big splash came in 2002, when she won the Gold Cup at Deer Valley Resort in Park City, solidifying her spot on the 2002 Olympic Team.

"That night I was there with my whole family, right before

they [aerials] competed they played the National Anthem and raised the flag. I looked over and my dad was just balling. I've never seen my dad cry like that," remembered Bahrke. "So I said, 'dad what's wrong?' He said, 'my baby's going to the Olympics.' That really kind of solidified everything I've done and everything that they've put on hold for me. That was a really cool moment."

Bahrke, competing on home snow, won the silver medal at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, after earning her spot six weeks prior. Following 2002, she went on to become the 2003 World Cup champion and World Championships dual moguls silver medalist. In 2007, Bahrke added another World Championship medal, taking home bronze in dual moguls.

Her remarkable career was filled with wins and medals. Over the course of her 12 year tenure, she competed on five World Championships teams, winning two medals, and three Olympic Teams, also winning two medals including bronze at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

"I believe things are better experienced when they're shared. You can tell someone how awesome closing and opening ceremonies are. But when you get to walk into the closing ceremony holding your brother's [Scotty Bahrke of Tahoe City] hand – it is really a special moment," said Bahrke, looking back on memorable moments from her career. "I'm now passing the torch to him. I've done everything I wanted to do and now it comes to him."

Bahrke has no plans of slowing down, now that she is "retired." She will marry her fiancé Matt Happe in October at a destination wedding in Hawaii with family and friends. On top of getting married, she plans on devoting more time to their business, Silver Bean Coffee. Bahrke also has hopes of one day being on ABC's hit show "Dancing with the Stars" or hosting NBC's "The Today Show".

“I’m really happy in life. I’m excited about my career and how it ended, whole thing. I’m just going to try and go with it, whatever happens. Maybe that’s hosting the ‘Today Show’, hint hint or be on Dancing with the Stars, hint hint,” said Bahrke. “I really can’t get past the fact that I’m really happy. I think that will get a little bit harder as next season rolls around, but right now it’s just good, I’m enjoying the sunshine.”