

Holland takes bronze in X Games snowboardcross

By Lindsey Sine, U.S. Snowboarding

ASPEN -- Nick Baumgartner of Iron River, Mich., held nothing back Saturday as he put the pain of a broken collar bone on the back burner to take his first Winter X Games gold medal. Reigning X Games snowboardcross champ Nate Holland's of Squaw Valley five-year winning streak came to an end as he finished in third to take bronze.

Baumgartner was a powerhouse in each of his heats throughout the day. In spite of his injury, he was still able to manage fast pull starts and keep his lead out on the course.

"Fifteen screws and a plate, but nothing was holding me back today," Baumgartner said.

The day was a special one for Baumgartner, whose son Landon made it out to watch his dad compete in person for the first time. According to Baumgartner, that was a huge motivation for him throughout the day.

"Knowing that my boy was at the bottom was so phenomenal," Baumgartner said as he held Landon in celebration of his victory. "It got me down here every time just coming around the corner knowing that he would be watching. To win is unreal. I am so happy to do this in front of my boy."

Holland's reign as the master of the SBX course would come to an end at some point, and that was today for the two-time Olympian who held an X Games record for the most consecutive wins in any sport winning his fifth X Games gold medal in 2010. This year, he'll be adding bronze to the collection and says he is just fine with that.

“It is kind of bittersweet, but I can’t complain.” Holland said. “I had an amazing streak there – five-in-a-row – and I am on the podium today. I gave it my all and that is all I can ask of myself.”

Holland’s day started out in classic form for the X champ as he took the first spot in heat one. But out of the gate in heat two, he sat in fourth position the entire run before a wobble threw third-place Graham Watanabe of Sun Valley, Idaho, off course and allowed Holland to move to the big final.

In that final heat, Holland sat in fifth about half way through the course before throwing it into another gear and making up two spots for the third-place finish.

Following Holland in fourth was two-time Olympic champ Seth Wescott of Sugarloaf, Maine, and completing the stack of U.S. men in the big final was Jonathan Cheever of Saugus, Mass. According to Wescott, his plans to take in a first X Games gold medal were thrown off by a board switch-up.

“We tried running a new board for the last run and it just did not move. It was an all or nothing choice, and it ended up being nothing. I couldn’t even pull up on them in the draft,” Wescott said. “It’s time to ride powder and just enjoy snowboarding because it’s fun.”

Official results, 2011 Winter X Games, Aspen, Jan. 29, 2011

1. Nick Baumgartner, Iron River, MI
2. Kevin Hill, Canada
3. Nate Holland, Squaw Valley, CA
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4. Seth Wescott, Sugarloaf, ME
5. Jonathan Cheever, Saugus, MA

8. Graham Watanabe, Sun Valley, ID
10. Shaun Palmer, South Lake Tahoe, CA
11. Ross Powers, Stratton Mountain, VT
15. Jayson Hale, Sierraville, CA
17. Alex Deibold, Manchester Center, VT