

White remains king of the superpipe

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

The showdown became a battle of East vs. West at the Burton U.S. Open Saturday, with Shaun White edging past Japan's rising son of snowboarding Ayumu Hirano to win his fifth open title.



Shaun White trains at Northstar in Truckee.

White's second run – with five tricks including back-to-back double-cork 1080s and back-to-back double 1260s – earned the highest points of all tricks thrown by each of the 12 finalists in the 22-foot superpipe on Saturday. After a first run score of 92.5 drew pointed criticism that it should not have eclipsed 14-year-old Hirano's monster first run, White crushed any judging skepticism with a dominant, indisputable second run.

While White's win was hardly surprising – he's now won 13 consecutive halfpipe contests – but Hirano's performance solidified his status as the greatest threat to White's decade-long reign and the leader of the next generation of snowboarding.

The 75-pound eighth-grader with springs for legs notched the

highest airs of the contest – and arguably the loftiest airs in the history of snowboarding halfpipe competition – but was unable to match the master’s signature double-cork 1260 McTwists, the indomitable trick that has sustained White’s invincibility. Still, Hirano seemingly stalled in midair, floating as if in slow motion through technical spins and tight grabs.

Louie Vito, Ohio’s magnate of the board, took bronze with solid airs and technical spins.