

U.S. riders sweep halfpipe in Copper

By USSA

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. -- Rookie rider Taylor Gold (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) led a U.S. sweep Dec. 21 with Greg Bretz (Mammoth Lakes) and Ben Ferguson (Bend, Ore.) in the halfpipe final at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix at Copper.

Gold put down his winning score during the first run of the competition after barley qualifying for the final in 16th. The entire international field was not able to top Gold's run, which resulted in his career-first World Cup victory.

All spots on the men's Olympic team are still up for grabs, and the competition will be at an all time high when the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix goes to Breckenridge Jan. 8-11.

Saturday's results kept Bretz in the lead in the qualification standings while boosting Gold into second above Northstar rider Shaun White, who chose not to compete Saturday in order to focus on the slopestyle competition on Sunday. Ferguson also moved up in the standings into third on Saturday.

Snow fell throughout the day, which made the halfpipe a bit slower than normal and prevented many riders from stomping tricks cleanly.