

White clinches berth to Sochi in slopestyle

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN -- Olympic halfpipe champion Shaun White, who rides for Northstar, mathematically clinched a spot on the inaugural U.S. Olympic team for slopestyle snowboarding on Thursday at the Paul Mitchell Slopestyle at the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix.

White crashed hard in Thursday's earlier competition and was down for nearly five minutes before he rode away. He then managed to refocus and put down a show-stopping run two hours later, posting a massive score and securing his spot on the Olympic team.

Three-time X Games champion Jamie Anderson (South Lake Tahoe) won the women's competition, going two for two during Thursday's slopestyle snowboarding doubleheader.

Thursday featured two slopestyle Olympic qualifiers after the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix at Breckenridge was canceled last week because of challenging weather conditions.

Sage Kotsenberg (Park City) took second, with Kyle Mack (West Bloomfield, Mich) third and Ryan Stassel (Anchorage) in fourth.

Jordie Karlinski (Snowmass, Colo.) sealed a second place finish for the women with Jessika Jenson (Rigby, Idaho) third and Ty Walker (Stowe, Vt.) fourth. Walker also endured a violent crash during her second run, when she skidded into the fencing, became tangled and slammed down hard, breaking her helmet in half.

The slopestyle snowboarding debut will open the 2014 Olympic

Winter Games in Sochi, with the qualification round a day prior to the opening ceremony and finals the day after the opening.

Saturday's slopestyle will be the last chance for the athletes to meet the objective criteria for Olympic qualification.

Shaun White and other halfpipe athletes are set to compete in a halfpipe snowboarding doubleheader Friday, when they will battle for Olympic spots at the third and fourth Olympic qualifier events.