

# Sarah Burke inspires freeskiiing Olympians

By Elliott Almond, San Jose Mercury News

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia – It was difficult not to cringe as Canadian freeskier Yuki Tsubota bounced off the icy slopes Tuesday at Rosa Khutor Extreme Park.

It was difficult not to think of Sarah Burke, a Canadian pioneer whose campaign propelled the women's freeski movement.

"We wouldn't be here if not for her," said Canada's Dara Howell, who won the women's slopestyle gold medal Tuesday with a flying first run no one could touch.

Tsubota escaped serious injury but in a high-risk sport the question always lingers after a horrific crash.

It lingers because Burke's fatal day two years ago makes it impossible not to.

The four-time X Games champion died nine days after a training crash in Park City, a potent reminder of the dangers of flinging off jumps while attached to skis and snowboards.

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