

U.S. dominates Mammoth Grand Prix halfpipe

By USSA

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN – It was a highly successful day for the American halfpipe riders at the first stop of the U.S. Grand Prix in Mammoth on Sunday.

American women swept the podium with Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt.) taking the win, Chloe Kim (La Palma) finishing second and rookie team member Maddie Mastro (Wrightwood) earning her first pro-level podium with third. The U.S. men took four of the top-five positions including a pair of podium finishes: Chase Josey (Hailey, Idaho) grabbed second and Gabe Ferguson (Bend, Ore.) finished third; Ryo Aono of Japan topped the field for the win.

Mammoth Mountain has seen snowy, stormy conditions since the Grand Prix began on Thursday, which affected several competitions, including the cancellation of qualifications for the snowboard halfpipe.

“I’m glad that we were able to get the contest off today,” Clark said. “It’s been a challenging week of weather.”

The four-time Olympian used her veteran knowledge to approach the competition, landing a “safety” run on her first pass and then bumping it up by adding her signature 1080 on the second pass, which earned her the win. “We had an early start,” she said. “I just tried to make the most of my practice because we didn’t really have any this week.”

Fifteen-year-old Kim, who broke Clark’s five-year winning streak at X Games Aspen in 2015, also landed what she called her “back-up plan” to land in second. “I’m just happy that I had a back-up plan,” said Kim, who wanted to throw a

relatively new tailgrab 1080 she first landed at the U.S. Open in 2015. "I was really excited to maybe throw one today, but unfortunately that wasn't able to go down."

Mastro, a member of the U.S. Snowboarding rookie halfpipe team and Mammoth Mountain team, was thrilled to earn her first pro podium in front of family and friends. The 15-year-old will hopefully use the momentum rolling into her first X Games appearance in Aspen this week.

Idaho native Josey earned his first Grand Prix podium with a similar mindset to that of the ladies.

"There was definitely strategy going into the first runs, just wanting to land a run and then kind of see where you can go from there," he said. "The weather got better and the second run I just stepped it up and went for two more double corks, and that's what got me my score. It's my first Grand Prix podium and it really means a lot to U.S. Snowboarding and USSA, so I'm stoked."

Young Gabe Ferguson not only topped most of the field to earn his first Grand Prix podium, he also topped his fellow U.S. Snowboarding teammate and older brother, Ben Ferguson, who finished 24th. "This is my first Grand Prix podium and I'm super excited," Gabe said. "It's been tough with all the weather that's come through the last couple days so I'm just happy we're out here having fun today."

Rounding out the men, Jake Pates (Eagle, Colo.) was fourth, Ryan Wachendorfer (Edwards, Colo.) fifth, Toby Miller (Truckee) ninth, Joshua Bowman (Mammoth Lakes) 12th, Nathan Jacobson (Bend, Ore.) 17th, Robert Pettit (Aspen, Colo.) 20th, Chase Blackwell (Longmont, Colo.) 22nd, Dru Brownrigg (Bend, Ore.) 23rd and Ben Ferguson (Bend, Ore.) 24th.

For the women, Elena Hight (South Lake Tahoe) was fifth, Hannah Teter (Meyers) sixth, Zoe Kalapos (Vail) seventh, Jenna Dramise (South Lake Tahoe) 12th, Hannah Merson (Stowe) 16th,

McKinzie Johnson (Park City) 19th, Autumn Inouye (Hood River, Ore.) 20th and Madison Taylor Barrett (West Chesterfield, N.H.) 22nd.