

Truckee youth 13th in cross-country cross

By USSA

LILLEHAMMER, Norway – At the Winter Youth Olympic Games debut of cross-country cross, Hannah Halvorsen (Truckee) and Hunter Wonders (Anchorage) finished 13th and 30th, respectively.

The new cross country discipline challenges skiers agility and poise as they raced through bumps, jumps and slalom turns throughout the 1.5K freestyle course through the Birkebeineren Cross-Country Stadium.

“The cross-country cross was a really fun event,” said U.S. Coach Adam St. Pierre. “FIS is always trying to increase the excitement for spectators and racers and we are likely to see more races in this format in the future.”

In the women’s race, Sweden’s Moa Lundgren dominated throughout the qualifiers and semifinals and was able to snatch first in the finals from teammate Johanna Hagstroem by 1.74 seconds. France’s Laura Chamiot Maitral finished third.

Halvorsen started the cross-country cross with a strong qualifier, finishing 10th, which advanced her to the semifinal heats. But in the semifinals, Halvorsen was fifth, denying her a spot in the final heat.

“Hannah missed out on a spot in the final by a slim margin,” St. Pierre said. “She lost some momentum in the uphill slalom part of the course, but it was a fun way to start the week.”

In the men’s cross-country cross competition, Korea’s Magnus Kim ruled the course. The son of a Korean mother and a Norwegian father, Magnus was undefeated throughout the day winning the qualifiers, his semifinal heat and the final heat

to claim victory just 1.17 seconds ahead of Norway's Thomas Helland Larsen. Finland's Lauri Mannila finished third.

Wonders snagged a spot in the semifinal heats after qualifying 30th. The semifinal heat consisted of 10 athletes skiing on the tactical course, where Wonders ended up ninth and was not able to advance to the finals. He finished 30th overall.

"Hunter was excited to qualify and skied well enough in his semifinal to move up in the overall results," said St. Pierre. "His semifinal was pretty tight, with all 10 athletes skiing in a close pack."