

Truckee teen 11th at Nordic World Championships

By USSA

SOLDIER HOLLOW, Utah – Germany's junior ski racers dominated opening day of the USANA FIS Junior Nordic World Championships at the Soldier Hollow Nordic Center on Jan. 30.

Janosch Brugger of Germany came from behind to take Norway's Petter Stakston at the finish line in the classic sprint. Norway's Herman Meyer won bronze. In the women's sprint, Polina Nekrasova of Russia took gold over Germany's Antonia Froebel in silver and Coletta Rydzek with bronze.

The races were run under clear blue skies, hard packed snow and cold temperatures on the trails used for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

It was a tough loss for Stakston, who was the fastest qualifier and won both his quarterfinal and semifinal heats. Brugger, meanwhile, had to come out of semifinals as a lucky loser to earn his spot in the finals. Stakston had the lead coming into the finish, but Brugger put on a strong push into the finish to take the win.

Nekrasova, who qualified 10th, established herself early as the top athlete in the women's field. In the opening heat, the Russian won over a strong effort by American Julia Kern by just 0.19. In the semifinals, Nekrasov won over Finland's Anita Korva, also by 0.19. And she ran away in the finals for a 3.56 second margin of victory. It was her first individual Junior Worlds medal, going with the bronze she won in the relay event two years ago in Rasnov.

Julia Kern (Waltham, Mass.) of Stratton Mountain School was the top American finisher in ninth. Kern finished second, just

0.19 behind Nekrasova, in the quarterfinals. She was skiing a strong semifinal before getting caught up at the bottom of a downhill and crashing. Hannah Halvorsen (Truckee) of the Sugar Bowl Ski Team was 11th. All four U.S. men qualified for the heats, with Bill Harmeyer (S. Burlington, Vt/) of the University of Vermont making semifinals and finishing 12th.