

Bowman qualifies for finals at Snowmass

By Courtney Harkins, U.S. Ski and Snowboard

Battling rough weather in the latter half of the day, the Toyota U.S. Grand Prix freeski halfpipe and snowboard slopestyle qualifiers went off at Aspen's Snowmass Mountain in Colorado with 15 Americans qualifying for Friday's finals.

The women's freeski halfpipe went off without a hitch, with Olympic gold medalist Maddie Bowman (Meyers) celebrating her 24th birthday by leading the Americans in second place. Brita Sigourney (Carmel) was third and Olympic silver medalist Devin Logan (West Dover, Vt.) fourth. Carly Margulies (Mammoth Lakes) also made it into finals in eighth place with a solid second run.

But thick fog rolled in and heavy snow started during men's training. After delays throughout run one and before run two, the Americans stacked six skiers into the 10 spots. Aaron Blunck (Crested Butte, Colo.) led the U.S. Freeski Team men with an enormous 93.66-point first run and local boy Alex Ferreira (Aspen, Colo.) won his heat. Both chose to not take a second run due to conditions and high first-run scores. Also taking spots in Friday's finals were Olympic gold medalist David Wise (Reno), Birk Irving (Winter Park, Colo.), Taylor Seaton (Avon, Colo.) and Olympic silver medalist Gus Kenworthy (Telluride, Colo.).

The women were able to get their snowboard qualifiers off cleanly, with Jessika Jenson (Rigby, Idaho) snagging the top spot and Ty Walker (Stowe, Vt.) also making finals. Jules Marino (Westport, Conn.) and Hailey Langland (San Clemente, CA) did not qualify.

The men squeaked in their first run of slopestyle qualifiers,

but the increasing darkness and snow stopped a second run from happening. Three U.S. men qualified: Red Gerard (Silverthorne, CO), Ryan Stassel (Anchorage) and Chandler Hunt (Park City, Utah).

Friday's snowboard slopestyle and freeski halfpipe finals count as an Olympic qualifier. Bowman has met objective criteria for the U.S. Olympic Team with two podiums and would confirm her nomination with a first or second place at Snowmass. Already qualified for the U.S. Olympic snowboard slopestyle team are Jamie Anderson (Meyers) and Chris Corning (Silverthorne). Neither Anderson nor Corning are in attendance at Snowmass.