

Tahoe teen wins national skiing title

By Megan Harrod, U.S. Ski Team

Olympian Ryan Cochran-Siegle (Starksboro, Vt.) opened his Toyota U.S. Alpine Championships week off with an alpine combined national title, laying down an impressive super-G run and a fast slalom run on the tough Baldy slope in Sun Valley, Idaho. On the women's side, the young, talented A.J. Hurt (Carnelian Bay) – who started in her first FIS Ski World Cup this season at Killington at just 16 years old – won her first national title.

Cochran-Siegle – who started finding his groove and confidence prior to the 2018 Olympics, then skied with consistency in downhill (23rd), super-G (14th) and giant slalom (11th) in PyeongChang – noted that he has been able to build confidence little by little to get him where he is now.

“Starting with a few good results in combined right around the New Year, I was able to stop focusing on the pressures of Olympic qualifications, and really began to get a feel for my skiing across all disciplines,” reflected Cochran-Siegle. “Skiing well personally at the Olympics also provided me with that extra confidence needed to move up. Since then, I’ve felt that I have nothing to lose, and can put a lot on the line mentally come race day. This gave me a great result in the Kranjska Gora GS World Cup, and a little bit of trouble later in the Kvitfjell World Cups...but I know my competitive skiing is there. I feel that I’m skiing the best I have ever skied, in all events, and am just trying to ride this wave as long as it lasts.”

This is Cochran-Siegle's second national title in as many years. Last year at Sugarloaf, Maine, he emerged victorious in

the super-G, and will be looking to defend his title in Friday's super-G here at Sun Valley. After a commanding lead in the super-G portion of the alpine combined on Wednesday, the future is looking bright.

Hurt, who skis for the National Training Group, hails from Squaw Valley. She's cruisy-cool, inspects faster than Bode Miller, and skis with no fear. She put together both a solid super-G and slalom run to take her first national title home. At a mere 17 years old, this is Hurt's second U.S. Alpine Championships, after competing in her first last year at Sugarloaf and finishing ninth in slalom and seventh in super-G.

After winning a NorAm race in Copper Mountain in November 2017, she made her World Cup debut in Killington and followed that up by another NorAm win at Panorama in December. She had two more World Cup starts this season, at Lienz, Austria, and Kranjska Gora, Slovenia.