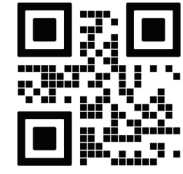


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SNOWBOARDING

Hirano lands first triple cork 1440

COPPER MOUNTAIN, Colo. — The next big leap in snowboarding went down Sunday on a sun-splashed halfpipe in Colorado with a trick that set the stakes for the gold-medal race to Beijing.

Japanese snowboard star Ayumu Hirano finished fifth at the Dew Tour, but his spot in the standings hardly mattered. What did was that he became the first person to land the difficult, dangerous and once unthinkable triple-cork jump in competition.

"It's just a game-changer because the level of halfpipe riding has gotten so crazy," said snowboarding commentator Jonathan "DC" Oetken, who was at the bottom of the pipe Sunday.

Ayumu, the two-time Olympic silver medalist, pulled off what's officially called a frontside triple cork 1440, a jump that involves three head-over-heels flips with a twist while grabbing the board above the 22-foot-high halfpipe.

Ayumu's history-making jump at the top of the pipe made him wobble in the setup to the next trick. He fell on it and didn't finish the run, which accounted for the fifth-place finish. But there was no denying that in a sport that treasures progression over practically everything else, his jump will be the buzz of the halfpipe world as the sport makes its way to the Olympics, and probably beyond.

"This is crazy," said Ayumu's Japanese teammate, Yuto Totsuka, who won the contest. "I will make sure (to have it in) the next competition."

All the top Japanese riders, including Totsuka and Sunday's third-place finisher, Ruka Hirano, have been working on the trick in practice. Whoever lands it best, or at all, could be wearing a gold medal around their neck come Feb. 11 in the mountains above Beijing.

Is Shaun White in that mix? Hard to tell.

Though the three-time Olympic champion has worked on the trick over time, he also has abandoned it before, feeling it was too dangerous to pull off in a high-stakes contest.

White was nowhere near thinking about triple corks on Sunday. A broken binding ruined his first run and he fell on the first jump of his second. He executed back-to-back 1260-degree jumps for the first time this season, but he finished seventh.

"I was fighting an uphill battle," White said. "I was just so happy to get a good run down."

He heads into the last Olympic qualifying contest, next month at Mammoth Mountain, California, without the podium finish that would give him an automatic spot on the U.S. team. Even without that, he would almost certainly make the team as a coaches' pick, but the clock is ticking on the 35-year-old who is saying this will be his final Olympic journey.

Another American, Taylor Gold, finished second thanks to the sort of stylistic run, filled with difficult grabs and spins, that makes snowboarding purists drool, even if it doesn't include the sky-high tricks that capture the headlines.

—Associated Press

ALPINE SKIING

Radamus makes an impact on World Cup

Once a junior sensation, the U.S. skier has three top-10 finishes in giant slalom races



Gabriele Facciotti/AP
U.S. skier River Radamus speeds down the course during a men's World Cup giant slalom in Alta Badia, Italy, on Sunday.

BY ANDREW DAMPF • Associated Press

LA VILLA, Italy — There's nothing easy about evolving from a top junior skier into a World Cup contender.

Just ask River Radamus, the Colorado racer who won three golds at the 2016 Winter Youth Olympics and four medals (two golds and two silvers) at the junior world championships from 2017-2019.

The 23-year-old Radamus has been pushing his body to the limit this season, though, and the results are starting to come — just in time for the Beijing Olympics in February.

Radamus matched his career-best World Cup result by skiing through pain in his lower right leg to finish sixth in the demanding Alta Badia giant slalom on Sunday. He then finished 10th in another GS race on Monday for his third top-10 finish in four GS races this season.

He also placed sixth in the season-opening giant slalom in Sölden, Austria, in October.

"Any time you can come here and put two runs together it feels good. I love this hill and getting sixth here is huge for me," said Radamus, who placed fourth in the opening leg with the No. 18 bib. "It's definitely a step in the right direction. I take the points, take the result and I keep going forward."

The Gran Risa has everything that a giant slalom should offer: steep pitches that wind through the woods at the start, 180-degree turns and even built-in rolls and flatter terrain toward the finish that sometimes result in small jumps.

It's a long course, too, leaving racers winded toward the finish.

See Radamus / A7

NFL

Seahawks' late-season playoff push is up against Rams' surge

BY GREG BEACHAM
Associated Press

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — Quandre Diggs lined up against Matthew Stafford every day in practice for 4 1/2 seasons in Detroit, so the Seattle safety knows a little more about the tendencies and talents of Los Angeles' quarterback than his teammates.

"That's my guy," said Diggs, the leading Pro Bowl vote-getter among NFC free safeties. "He's going to try to attack me, and I'm going to try and get him."

The Seahawks (5-8) will take every little edge they can get when they travel to SoFi Stadium on Tuesday (moved from Sunday due to COVID-19 outbreaks) for an NFC West showdown with the Rams (9-4) that could prove vital to both teams' playoff hopes.

Seattle is clinging to hope of a late-season surge back into postseason contention after its 3-8 start to the season. Back-to-back wins have kept the Seahawks alive for their 10th consecutive winning record under coach Pete Carroll, but a loss in Inglewood would end that streak — and could prove insurmountable in the crowded NFC playoff picture.

"According to the outside, we were out of it two weeks ago, and it doesn't matter what we've done the last two weeks," Diggs said. "We're still 5-8. ... We're comfortable with the uncomfortable. Right now we're in an uncomfortable situation, so we've got to make do."

Meanwhile, the Rams have also put together back-to-back victories after a three-game winless November, securing their fifth straight winning season under Sean McVay — something this franchise hadn't done in more than four decades.

They're leading the wildcard playoff standings while keeping pressure on NFC West leader Arizona (10-3) with four games to go, but every game left on Los Angeles' schedule looks difficult.

Seattle would never qualify as an easy game — even though the Rams have won seven of the rivals' past nine meetings, including games at Lumen Field in last year's playoffs and again last October. The Seahawks haven't even scored 20 points in their past five meetings with the Rams.

See Seahawks / A7

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

New Oregon QB Bo Nix has ties to Dillingham

BY JAMES CREPEA

The Oregonian

EUGENE — Oregon is adding a veteran quarterback from the SEC.

Bo Nix, the former Auburn quarterback who began his college career by beating the Ducks in the 2019 season opener, announced he's transferring to Oregon.

The 6-foot-3, 214-pound Nix just finished his third-year sophomore season at Auburn, where he completed a career-high 61% of his throws for 2,294 yards with 11 touchdowns and three interceptions and ran for 168 yards and four scores in 10 games before suf-

fering a fractured ankle.

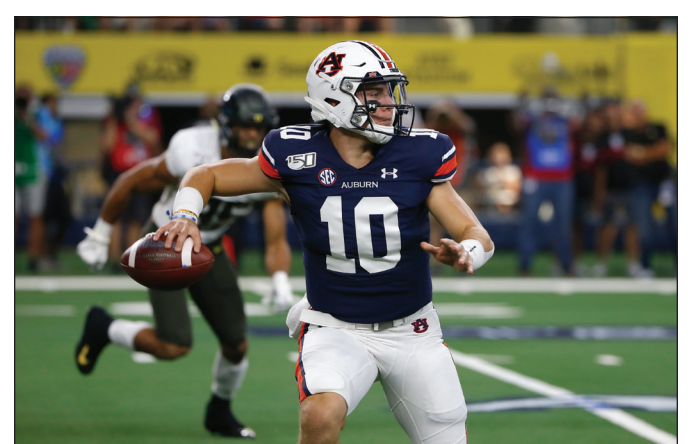
Oregon offensive coordinator Kenny Dillingham was in the same role at Auburn in 2019, when Nix won SEC Freshman of the Year.

Last week, Nix explained his decision to transfer from Auburn, where his father, Pat, also played quarterback, and what he would be seeking in a new team.

"I think when you look at it from afar the main thing is to go somewhere that needs a quarterback and can kind of make ends meet to what a great team is going to look like," Nix said during his weekly appearance on The

JBoy Show. "I'm excited to go and find a new team that is eager to continue to have success and I would like to go into a place to where, like I said, they're just missing a quarterback to the piece of the puzzle for them to be really good. With that being said, it's not everywhere — not everywhere needs a quarterback. There's a lot of places out there with great quarterbacks and then there's a lot of guys that are about to land great quarterbacks, a lot of guys like me in the transfer portal that are good and going to go and play somewhere."

See Nix / A7



Ron Jenkins/AP file

Auburn quarterback Bo Nix (10) throws downfield against Oregon during a 2019 game in Arlington, Texas. Nix announced late Sunday that he is transferring to Oregon.