

Victory lap: Chloe Kim takes her family on a gold-medal ride

By **Eddie Pells**
AP National Writer

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea — Chloe Kim stamped her name on a new era of snowboarding with a run down the halfpipe that, officially, did not mean anything. To her, it meant everything.

The Olympic gold medal was already hers, but she knew she could do better. So she cinched on her gloves, cranked up “Motorsport” on her iPod, said “This one’s for you, Grams” — a shoutout to her South Korean grandmother, who was watching her in person for the first time — and dropped into the halfpipe to make history.

On the last run of the sun-splashed final, Kim hit back-to-back 1080° spins on her second and third jumps — repeating a combination no other woman has ever done in a competition.

She landed them squarely, sent her already super-hyped family at the bottom into overdrive, scored a 98.5, and sent out the message that everyone from grandma to those at the roots of this sport love to hear: “I knew I wasn’t going to be completely satisfied taking home the gold, but knowing that I could’ve done better.”

The 17-year-old from California made it look easy, but only afterward did she concede how difficult the past several months have been. Her story has been told and sold and marketed for gold: Her parents both emigrated to the United States from South Korea, and though it was more coincidence than any grand plan, Kim making her Olympic debut in the country where her family was from set up a sure path to stardom in the halfpipe and beyond.

She has commanded the progression in women’s snowboarding for at least two years now, and it was hard to imagine



BACK-TO-BACK 1080s. Chloe Kim of the United States performs during the women’s halfpipe final at Phoenix Snow Park at the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. On the last run of the sun-splashed final, Kim hit back-to-back 1080° tricks on her second and third jumps — repeating a combination no other woman has ever done in competition. (AP Photo/Lee Jin-man)

“Chloe’s an outstanding snowboarder, but I’m more proud of her for how she’s handled herself as a person,” Clark said. “She’s handled success and pressure with grace and class, and it’s refreshing.”

Kim’s journey included two years in Switzerland, where she lived with her aunt, learned French, and honed her snowboarding skills.

Her father, Jong Jin, gave up his job to chase his daughter’s dream.

Down in the fans section, where Jong Jin was joined by his wife, Boran, along with Chloe’s two sisters, three aunts, two cousins, and her 75-year-old grandma, dad pointed to himself and said “American Dream,” then let out a big whoop.

“I did, like, a 12-year sacrifice, and finally I got my reward,” he said. “Thank you very much (to) my daughter.”

She put on quite a show, and she will be rewarded in ways large and small. Heck, her Instagram following nearly doubled, to 350,000, since she arrived in South Korea — and that was before she won the gold.

But deep down, she knows where the real thanks belonged. Her way of giving it was the classic run she put down at the end.

“To just quit work and travel with your kid full-time, leaving your wife behind and really chasing this dream because your kid is really passionate about this sport, I’m always so thankful for that,” she said. “And today, I really did it for my family and everything they’ve done for me.”

AP Sports writer Jake Seiner contributed to this report.

anyone beating her on the sport’s biggest stage, at her official coming-out party. But halfpipes are hard, the snow is slippery, and nothing is for sure.

“There is a lot of pressure revolving around these games,” she said. “You wait for four years to come here and it’s definitely a lot of hype around a one-and-a-half, two-hour time period. It’s pretty nerve-wracking. You know you’re at the Olympics. It’s been a dream of mine since I was a little girl, to land a run that’s very important for me.”

She didn’t have to do it.

In the first of the day’s three runs, she flew higher than anyone on her opening straight air, then landed one 1080, and closed with a pair of inverted spins, each with well-timed, easy-to-see grabs of the board that the judges appreciate. Her score there was a 93.75, which put her nearly nine points clear of the other 11 riders, none of whom would crack 90.

The rest of the day was a contest for second, and China’s Liu Jiayu won it. She

said injuries made her reboot and reconnect with her love of the sport, regardless of the result. It will be interesting to see how the 25-year-old’s attitude shifts four years hence, at the Winter Olympics in Beijing.

Third place went to another young American: 21-year-old Arielle Gold, who casually announced afterward that she had separated her shoulder here on the second day of training, much the way she did on a practice run in Sochi four years ago that forced her to scratch from the competition.

“The doctors (say) that the more that it happens, the less impactful it is,” Gold said.

That bronze-medal run pushed Kelly Clark — who has won one gold and two Olympic bronzes in the past — into fourth. This was Clark’s fifth Olympics, and the 34-year-old left the halfpipe with her own future to consider, but knowing the future of the sport she helped bring to the masses is in very good hands.

Shh, mom! No yelling when sister watches fellow Olympian

By **Teresa M. Walker**
The Associated Press

GANGNEUNG, South Korea — Supporting one daughter playing women’s hockey in the Olympics isn’t exactly easy. Especially when the other daughter, a fellow Olympian, wants no yelling.

So Greg and Robin Brandt sat as quietly as possible watching Marissa play for Korea with Hannah, a forward for the United States, sitting beside them.

Hannah’s schedule was a bit tight, so she could only watch the first period before leaving. That freed her parents to join the boisterous crowd at the Kwandong Hockey Centre cheering for the first combined Korean team ever to play in an Olympics.

“She says, ‘You don’t yell at my games like that do you?’ Robin Brandt said of Hannah. “I’m like, ‘No. I’m worse.’ I don’t know. It’s more exciting here. I really don’t yell at the U.S. games because it’s not as appropriate. But here ... everyone’s yelling. You have to yell.”

The sisters Brandt have given their family more than enough reason to cheer, sing, or simply beam with pride.

Marissa, who was born in South Korea, is one of six North Americans imported for the country’s first women’s hockey team in the Olympics. With the surprise addition of 12 North Koreans about three weeks ago, the team has drawn intense scrutiny and dignitaries attended their opening game (and North Korea’s famous cheerleader group has been at all three). Hannah, meanwhile, is trying to help the United States end a 20-year drought without a gold medal in women’s hockey.

Together, the sisters have brought the Brandts and Marissa’s husband, Brett Ylonen, all the way from Minnesota to the coastal town in South Korea for an Olympic experience with double the teams — and games. They sit in the stands wearing Korea blue jerseys and switch things up when the Americans play. They’ve stayed busy with a daughter playing every other day.

“This is for women and girls and anyone dreaming this is where you want to be,” Greg Brandt said. “And to have both Marissa and Hannah to be able to do this, it’s an absolute dream come true for us.”

Robin added: “And for them.”

“And for our family, it’s incredible,” Greg Brandt said.

Marissa thought hockey was over after finishing up



SISTERS ON ICE. Marissa Brandt (#23, left photo) defends Team South Korea’s goal in an exhibition hockey game in Minneapolis in this file photo. Marissa, a native Korean who was adopted as an infant by parents in Minnesota, and her sister Hannah (#20, right photo), are both competing in the Winter Olympics in women’s hockey — Marissa for South Korea and Hannah for the United States.

Marissa Brandt said. “I hope to be a role model for young girls and expand the sport here in Korea. Hockey isn’t very popular here, so I hope to just show girls that it’s fun to play and something they should do if they want to. So it goes bigger than hockey for me.”

Hannah starred at the University of Minnesota and just missed the U.S. roster in 2014 at Sochi. She scored her first Olympic goal in a 5-0 win over the Olympic athletes from Russia and just missed a second goal waved off as a

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Division III hockey at Gustavus Adolphus in St. Peter, Minnesota. Then came a call to help a country she hadn’t seen since being adopted as a baby build a hockey team for the Olympics. Married to Ylonen, who works in medical sales in Minnesota, she started to add trips to South Korea amid lots of texting and FaceTime calls to stay in touch.

“For me personally, it goes bigger than hockey.”

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