



Contact Information:
 Jim Fredericks
 Rossignol Ski Company
 PO Box 298
 Williston, VT 05495
 802-863-2511 ext 2410

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It Wasn't The Olympics But They Raced As If It Was

Team Rossignol Master Athletes Take Home The Medals in Italy

As the U.S. winter Olympic athletes were settling into their Olympic quarters in Torino Italy, five Team Rossignol master skiers joined a 130 person American contingent on a similar trip to the small picturesque mountain village of Brusson, Italy just north of the Olympic venue. The 2006 Masters World Cup brought over 2000 of the worlds top 30 + year old cross country skiers to compete in their five year age groups in a series of four events. The World Masters World Cup is an open event and attracted a large representation from Russia, Italy, Canada, Scandinavia, and the Central European countries.

Mother nature wasn't as kind as usual in this mountain valley but it didn't deter the World Cup organizers from doing a superb job with over fifteen kilometers of trails covered with mostly man-made snow. Diane Holliday Welsh noted, "It was the best of two worlds giving us the opportunity to do some mountain hiking on the off days and skiing on great snow during the races." Besides having ideal weather for all the events, some of the athletes also took advantage of traveling to Torino to catch some of the Olympic ambiance.

Rossignol had plenty of representation at the World Cup events with four Team Rossignol racers coming home with thirteen medals and letting the world know that the U.S. masters group is a true a Nordic power. One of the most inspiring performances came in the relays as the US quartet of Gabriele Andersen, Trina Hosmer (Rossignol), Dagmar Eriksson (Rossignol) and Elisabeth Schluter were over 7 minutes ahead of the competition for the gold medal in 4 x 5km for ladies over 60. In one of the most hotly competitive events, the U.S. men's relay team of Milan Baic, David Edic, David MacLean, and Team Rossignol's Jon Engen in anchor position held on to a bronze medal behind the strong Russian and Italian superstars.

The top individual performance of the week went to Team Rossignol's Trina Hosmer of Stowe, VT winning all four events for the 60+ age group. A member of the first U.S. women's Olympic cross-country ski team in 1972, Trina is still skiing as strong as ever, challenging the top racers half her age. A strong contingent of Sun Valley athletes including Team Rossignol's 3-time Olympian Jon Engen and former national team racer Muffy Ritz, nailed down six medals between the two of them in the 45-49 age group. Jon skied exceptionally strong performances to captured two gold, two silver and one bronze while Muffy nailed down one silver and one bronze. Dagmar Eriksson of Bend, OR also skied into triple medal performances with one gold and two bronze medals. Also representing Team Rossignol was Kim Nalen of Sun Valley, ID and Diane Holliday Welsh of Duluth, MN who placed 6th and 7th. Congratulations to all these athletes for their great performances and their continued passion for the sport of cross-country skiing.





Photo credit: Dave Hosmer

Left to Right: *Kim Nalen, Trina Hosmer, Muffy Ritz, Diane Holliday Welsh*



Four medals for Jon Engen

Photo credit: Darlene Young



Jon Engen on way to a gold medal.