



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Schumacher, Kramer continue standout seasons, four other skiers also crowned champions on opening day of U.S. Junior Nationals

Monday's freestyle interval-start kicked off a week of skiing, with next races coming Wednesday

ANCHORAGE, AK – The podium was packed with young skiing stars as six national champions were crowned in the first day of racing, the individual freestyle, at the 2019 U.S. Ski & Snowboard Cross Country Junior National Championships Monday at Kincaid Park.

Anchorage's Gus Schumacher (U20, Alaska Winter Stars) continued his dominant season with a 10-second win and a national title in the men's U20/U18 10K race; Johnny Hagenbuch (Sun Valley SEF/Intermountain) finished second behind Schumacher, and was the first U18 finisher, earning him that national title. Wally Magill (Green Mountain/New England) put up a strong 12-second win in the speedy U16 5K event.

Alaska's Kendall Kramer (U18, Fairbanks XC) kept her magical season rolling with a win in the women's U20/U18 5K race; Lucinda Anderson (Loppet Nordic Racing/Midwest) finished second behind Kramer, and was the top U20 finisher. Haley Brewster (Ski and Snowboard Club Vail/Rocky Mountain) notched her first Junior National title with a four-second win in the U16 5K event.

Monday's individual freestyle racing had an interval start format, with skiers leaving the starting line one at a time in 30-second increments. The fan-friendly 5-kilometer roller-coaster course wove in and out of all corners of the Kincaid Park stadium area. The U20/U18 men skied the loop twice for their 10K event, while all other racers covered the course once. The day was warm, windy and a little wet, with sprinkles of rain at times. The constant wind slowed skiers in some stretches, then pushed them ahead in other; the warm weather created sticky and slick course conditions.

U20/U18 men 10K individual freestyle

There are probably few skiing secrets between the top three finishers in the U20/U18 10K freestyle event. In January, Schumacher, Hagenbuch and third-place overall finisher Zanden McMullen (U18, APU/Team Alaska) were teammates representing the U.S. at the FIS Junior World Cross Country Championship in Lahti, Finland. They know each other, and one another's skiing, well.

So it was no surprise that Schumacher won Monday's race, given his impressive season, his home course advantage, and his emergence as America's top junior skier. Schumacher finished in 22 minutes, 48.2 seconds, topping Hagenbuch by more than 10 seconds (22:58.9). McMullen was third at 23:24.7.

"I've skied these trails my whole life and during the last few weeks I was training on the race courses," Schumacher said. "That gave me a pretty big boost. ... And the novelty of skiing Nationals at home is pretty cool."

Schumacher and Hagenbuch are equal parts tight teammates and avid adversaries. They were two of four U.S. skiers who set the bar for young Americans at the recent FIS Junior World Cross Country Championship in Lahti, Finland. Their gold medal finish in the 4X5K relay race – along with teammates



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Ben Ogden and Luke Jager – was the best result ever for American men at Worlds. (Schumacher was also a member of the silver medal team at the 2018 Worlds, which was the first-ever Worlds medal for U.S. men.) Schumacher also posted the best individual finish ever by an American male at the 2019 Worlds, finishing fourth in the 30K classic.

Monday, the U.S. teammates were facing off and it was Hagenbuch who set the pace, posting the fastest time in the first 5K lap – 11 minutes and 7.8 seconds, 4.1 seconds ahead of Schumacher.

“I knew given Gus’s strength, it would take a super-human effort today,” Hagenbuch said. “So I knew I had to go out strong and leave it all out there.”

Schumacher dropped the hammer in his second 5K, making up the time in part by using the wind and downhill for recovery and then powering over up-hills and through the flats.

“I kept it easy the first few Ks, but I wasn’t picking up time,” he said. “The last 5K, I knew I had to let loose with all I had. It was a good course with a good amount of recovery, so I could hammer a lot of it.”

And he did, crushing a fantastic final 5K that netted him the win over Hagenbuch. Shortly after they finished their respective races, the two were back to being pals.

“Johnny’s a great teammate and a great competitor,” Schumacher said, nodding at his friend as they hung out after the race.

McMullen was also grinning, finishing third overall and second in U18.

“It’s really awesome skiing with them – they’re really good guys,” McMullen said of Schumacher and Hagenbuch. “Hopefully I’ll be catching them soon.”

The field in the U20/U18 race consisted of 135 skiers. The top three U20 finishers were Schumacher, Scott Schulz (Sun Valley SEF/Mid-Atlantic; fifth overall at 23:52.9) and Reid Goble (Michigan Tech/Great Lakes; sixth overall at 23:56.6). The top three U18 finishers were Hagenbuch, McMullen and Will Koch (Stratton Mountain School/New England; fourth overall at 23:30.7).

U20/U18 women 5K individual freestyle

Alaska’s Kendall Kramer (U18, Fairbanks XC/Team Alaska) showed off the skill, fitness and aggressiveness of a skier who scored a fourth-place finish at World Juniors in January, was crowned Alaska’s high school Skimeister for a second straight season in February, and posted a dominant Junior Nationals win on Monday, taking the 5K national title in the women’s U20/U18. Kramer, from Fairbanks, threw down a 13:09.7, topping second-place finisher Lucinda Anderson (U20, Loppet Nordic Racing/Midwest) by 26.6 seconds. Mara McCollor (U20, Minneapolis Ski Club/Midwest) was third, just behind Anderson at 13:37.1.

“I see how hard these girls work – I go to camps with them, I see them on social media,” Kramer said. “So it’s great to come out on top today.”

Kramer said she prefers mass starts to interval starts, but found her groove on the course Monday: “I’m an aggressive skier, so this is more difficult for me than a mass start. But I like that there are no external circumstances (in interval starting) and it shows off the true skill of the sport.”





She displayed her all-around aptitude Monday. Already strong on hills, she said her work on becoming better on the flats came together as she powered around the Kincaid Park stadium portions of the course.

"I want to be a really well-rounded skier," she said.

Anderson said she was proud of her approach to Monday's interval start, mixing consistency with pushing herself, all while trying to chase down whoever was in front of her. Monday, Anderson found a tough rabbit to chase: starting 30 seconds ahead of her was the speedy Sophia Laukli (U20, Stratton Mountain School/New England), who finished fourth overall and third in U20. That pace and chase led Anderson to her first Junior National title.

"It's pretty awesome," Anderson said with a big smile.

The field in the U20/U18 race consisted of 116 skiers. The top three U20 finishers were Anderson at 13:36.3 (second overall), followed by McCollar at 13:37.1 (third overall) and Laukli at 13:46.2 (fourth overall). The top three U18 finishers were Kramer at 13:09.7, Nina Seemann (Stratton Mountain School/New England) at 13:52.1 (sixth overall) and Libby Tuttle (Loppet Nordic Racing/Midwest) at 14:08.4 (eighth overall).

U16 men 5K individual freestyle

Wally Magill (Steamboat Springs Winter Sport/Rocky Mountain) cashed in a season of sweat equity Monday. He posted a 12-second national title win in the men's 5K U16 race with a 12:31. Trey Jones (Green Mountain Valley/New England) was second at 12:43.2, barely edging Adrik Kraftson (Loppet Nordic Racing/Midwest) at 12:43.3. The race featured a field of 72 finishers.

"My strategy was go as hard as I can all the time, and I did," Magill said. "I'm super-happy. I've worked hard all season and it's great that the hard work is paying off."

U16 women 5K individual freestyle

Before Monday's racing, Haley Brewster (Ski and Snowboard Club Vail/Rocky Mountain) allegedly spilled all of her team's glitter before it could be applied for sparkling spirit.

"I spilled some of it, not all of it!" she said rolling her eyes as her teammates, all with glitter on their red, wind-blown cheeks, laughed nearby.

However, Brewster held a firm grip on the women's U16 5K race, winning her first Junior National title with a 14:15.1, nearly five seconds ahead of Sofia Scirica (Cambridge Sports Union/New England) at 14:19.8. Molly Moening (Minneapolis Ski Club/Midwest) was third at 14:23.9. The podium moment was a great way to end the day for all three racers – it was Brewster's first JN win while it was Scirica and Moening's first JN race, respectively. The race had 72 finishers.

Brewster said the win was "unexpected but exciting," and that it was all set up by her focus on the course's rolling hills, which were faster than she anticipated.

"Hopefully this sets the bar for the rest of the week," she said.

Find full race results at www.superiortiming.com/2019/03/us-cross-country-junior-nationals-2019/.

Upcoming race schedule and other media relations information follows:

All races at Kincaid Park; Alaska Standard times listed; schedule subject to change



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Wednesday, March 13: Classic sprints

- U20/U18 boys, 10 a.m. start; Finals: 1 p.m.
- U20/U18 girls, 10:45 a.m. start; Finals: 2:35 p.m.
- U16 boys, 11:25 a.m. start; Finals: 4:15 p.m.
- U16 girls, 11:50 a.m. start; Finals: 4:15 p.m.

Friday, March 15: Mass start classic

- U20 girls, 10 a.m. start
- U20 boys, 10:55 a.m. start
- U18 girls, 12:05 p.m. start
- U18 boys, 1:05 p.m. start
- U16 girls, 1:55 p.m. start
- U16 boys, 2:30 p.m. start

Saturday, March 16: Relay freestyle

- U16 boys, 10 a.m. start
- U16 girls, 11 a.m. start
- U20/U18 girls, noon start
- U20/U18 boys, 1 p.m. start

- **Find a full schedule** – race days and off-days – at www.juniornationalsxc2019.com/event-info/. Event course maps are available at www.juniornationalsxc2019.com/course-maps/.
- **The races will be livestreamed** at by U.S. Ski & Snowboard at <https://livestream.com/engagelivestream/xcjunionationals2019> and will be shared on www.facebook.com/xcjrns2019.
- **Results from every race** will be posted in real time at www.superiortiming.com/2019/03/us-cross-country-junior-nationals-2019/, and later at www.juniornationalsxc2019.com/results-media/ and www.facebook.com/xcjrns2019.
- **A complete event program**, which includes team rosters and race course maps, is available on PDF at www.juniornationalsxc2019.com/event-info/ and in hard copies in limited number at Kincaid Park. Racer registration is available at www.superiortiming.com/2019/03/us-cross-country-junior-nationals-2019/.
- There are **media working areas** with electricity and internet access available upstairs in the Kincaid Park chalet. If working media has questions or needs, please contact Josh Niva, Chief of Media, at nordicskiereditor@gmail.com or (907) 301-5287.

For more event, race, team and athlete information, bookmark www.juniornationalsxc2019.com and www.facebook.com/xcjrns2019.



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