

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**International Paralympic Committee Nordic Skiing World Cup events
come to Cable, Wis., Minneapolis Jan. 26-Feb 3**

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. – Some of the world’s best cross country skiers with physical disabilities will be coming to the upper Midwest Jan. 26-Feb. 3 on the second of three stops as part of the 2012 International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Nordic Skiing World Cup series. It’s the first time the United States has hosted a major Paralympic Nordic ski event in seven years.

“We’re excited to bring elite competition onto our home soil,” said John Farra, director High Performance Paralympic Nordic Skiing for the U.S. Olympic Committee. “This is an exceptional opportunity for many of our up-and-coming athletes to get some international experience two years out from the 2014 Paralympic Games in Sochi.”

The event will feature four cross country and two biathlon races where athletes can earn World Cup points. The first half of the competition will be held Jan. 26-30 at Telemark Lodge in Cable, Wis., home of the famed Birkebeiner ski race. Competition concludes Feb. 1-2 at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis.

Top athletes expected include Paralympic and world champion Katarzyna Rogowiec of Poland, who lost both forearms in a childhood farming accident. She claimed victories in the sprint, 5K and 15K at last month’s World Cup stop in Sjusjoen, Norway. Meanwhile, the men’s circuit has been dominated by Russians, who won nine out of the 10 races in Norway.

U.S. national team members to watch include:

- **Dan Cnossen (Jamestown, Mich.)** Recent double-leg amputee Navy SEAL who competes in the sit-ski division. Finished a career best seventh place in Norway with 9 for 10 shooting in the biathlon.
- **Sean Halsted (Ephrata, Wash.)** Sit-skier who became paralyzed in 1998 after surviving a 40-foot fall from a helicopter during a rescue exercise with the Air Force. Has several top-10 finishes in World Cup and Paralympic Games competition.
- **Andy Soule (Pearland, Texas)** Sit-skier who lost both legs while serving in Afghanistan in 2002. Soule became the first American to win an Olympic or Paralympic biathlon medal, earning a bronze during the Vancouver Games.
- **Kelly Underkofler (St. Paul, Minn.)** Born without one of her forearms, Underkofler began cross country skiing at age 3 and later competed for St. Olaf College. She’s a multiple national champion and has represented the United States in three Paralympic Winter Games (2002, 2006 and 2010).

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After the World Cup races, athletes will have the opportunity to participate in the City of Lakes Loppet Feb. 4-5 in Theodore Wirth Park. The annual cross country ski festival is expected to draw 10,000 participants.

U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, is hosting this IPC Nordic Skiing World Cup in partnership with Central Cross Country Ski Association (Madison, Wis.) and the City of Lakes Nordic Ski Foundation (Minneapolis, Minn.). For more information on these organizations, visit www.excskiing.org and www.loppet.org.

The official Web site for the event is www.NordicWorldCupUSA.com.

For more information, please contact the USOC Communications Division at 719-866-4529 or visit www.usparalympics.org.

Competition Schedule

Telemark Lodge, Cable, Wis.

Thursday, Jan. 26

Competition: Cross Country Long Distance (10/15/20 km Classical)

Saturday, Jan. 28

Competition: Biathlon Short Distance (6/7.5 km)

Sunday, Jan. 29

Competition: Biathlon Middle Distance (10/12.5 km)

Monday, Jan. 30

Competition: Cross Country Middle Distance (5/10 km Freestyle)

Theodore Wirth Park, Minneapolis

Wednesday, Feb. 1

Competition: Cross Country Sprint(1 km Classical)

Thursday, Feb. 2

Competition: Cross Country Long Distance (12/15/20 km Freestyle)

City of Lakes Loppet (No World Cup scoring)

Saturday, Feb. 4

Competition: Cross Country Sprints

Sunday, Feb. 5

Competition: Cross Country Loppet

- 8 km for sit-skiers
- 25 km Classical
- 30 km Freestyle

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