

For Immediate Release

2004 World Junior Championship Team Named Crocker, Williams, Weier Return for a Last Shot at World Juniors Hardware, Baldock Leads Young Men's Team.

Alison Crocker parlayed a couple of top ten overall finishes at the Chevrolet U.S. Cross-Country Championships into the top qualifying spot for the 2004 World Junior Team that was announced Monday by the U.S. Ski Team. The women's team has a good chance to bring home the United States's first ever World Juniors medal this year as Crocker is joined on the team by three former top twenty finishers at World Junior Championships. Lindsey Weier has her sights set on a podium finish in the classic race, while Lindsay Williams and Katie Ronsee are both medal contenders in the sprint. The men's team will be lead by Beau Baldock. Baldock, fresh off a year living and training in Norway, won the junior 10k skate and sprint titles at the U.S. Cross-Country Championships. The World Junior Championships start February 3 in Stryn, NOR.

The women's team will consist of Crocker (Hanover, NH), Williams (Hastings, MN), Weier (Mahtomedi, MN), Ronsee (Anchorage, AK), Morgan Smyth (Vernon, VT) and Sonne Nordgren (Marine on the St. Croix, MN). The men's team includes Baldock (Middlebury, VT), Tim Damrow (Roseville, MN), Mike Sinnott (Sun Valley, ID), Casey Simons (Heber City, UT), Bret Bedard (Cheshire, VT), and Tyson Flaharty (Fairbanks, AK).

The athletes are partially funded by grants from the National Cross-Country Ski Education Foundation's Future Fund.

Williams and Ronsee both posted top ten sprint qualifying times last year at World Juniors, and with another year of experience look ready to crack the A finals. Weier battled through a tough week of races at Nationals, but should be ready to improve on her World Junior top twenty finishes the past two years. Crocker, the surprise of 2003, has brought her sprinting and skating results up to her already outstanding classic levels. Sonne Nordgren made the Biathlon World Junior team the week before U.S. Nationals and will travel from Biathlon World Juniors in France to Nordic World Juniors in Norway. Morgan Smyth is the youngest member of the team and will gain valuable experience for 2005 and 2006.

The men's team saw six members of the 2003 squad move up to the U-23 age group, leaving the World Junior Team wide open for fresh faces. While this team is all new to the World Junior scene, Sinnott, Simons, Bedard and Flaharty have all had seasoning in Europe via the U.S. J1 Scandinavian Cup team. Damrow was the surprise of the week, winning the junior men's 30k and earning his first right to wear the red white and blue. The mens team will mainly be gaining experience for 2005, but Baldock and Flaherty should keep up the U.S tradition of sprinters in the top 15 at World Junior Championships.

The National Cross-Country Ski Education Foundation is a non-profit dedicated to raising funds for U.S. cross-country skiing development programs. Over the past five years over \$50,000 has been granted to U.S. development programs from the NCCSEF Future Fund. In addition to the \$10,000 raised for the J1 Scandinavian Cup Team the NCCSEF will grant \$15,000 to other U.S. Development programs this year.

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