

T H E F I R E W I T H I N



SALT LAKE 2002





T H E F I R E W I T H I N



The Olympic Flame

SHEILA METZNER

T H E F I R E W I T H I N

12 PHOTOGRAPHERS' QUEST TO CAPTURE THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT
PRESENTED IN THE OFFICIAL COMMEMORATIVE BOOK OF THE

SALT LAKE 2002
OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES



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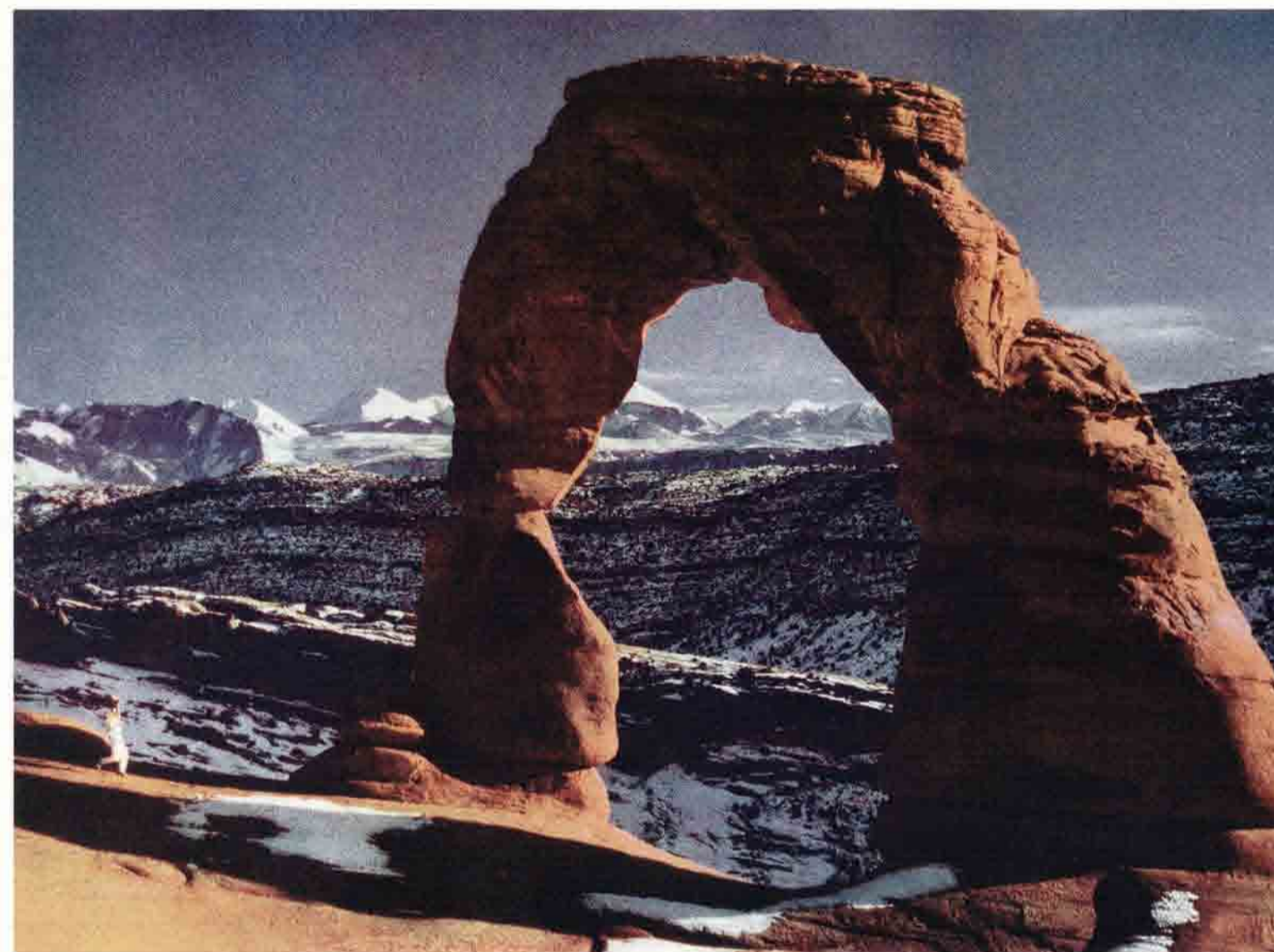
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INTRODUCTION • YOU KNEW WHEN THE SALT
LAKE 2002 OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY WAS COMING TO
TOWN, FOR CHILDREN LINED THE STREETS, LONG BEFORE
DAWN. THEY WAVED FLAGS, STAMPED THEIR FEET IN THE
COLD MORNING AIR AND CRANED THEIR NECKS FOR A
GLIMPSE—JUST A GLIMPSE—OF THAT MAGICAL FIRE. AND
WHEN THE OLYMPIC FLAME FINALLY ARRIVED, HELD ALOFT
BY THE PROUDEST PERSON IN THE WORLD AT THAT
MOMENT, THE KIDS WRIGGLED FROM THEIR PARENTS AND
BEGAN TO CHASE THE FLAME. IT WOULD ALL BE GONE IN AN



Delicate Arch, Moab, Utah

SHEILA METZNER

instant. The convoy of cars, the torchbearer, the silvery shaft of light, all gone down the road, one step, one mile, one state closer to the Salt Lake 2002 Games. No matter. For now, there was this delightful feeling of hope, a belief that all things were indeed possible in the world. So the children chased the flame until they ran out of breath.

Thus it began, a winter of wonder, when the Olympic Spirit streaked across the country like fairy dust, and settled in the mountains and valleys of Utah for nothing less than a fairy tale.

In November 2001, a spark of fire was brought to life in the olive groves of ancient Greece, where the Olympic Games were born. After a brief stay in Athens, the Olympic Flame was on its way toward Salt Lake City in one of the most remarkable journeys in history. The theme of the Salt Lake 2002 Games, *Light the Fire Within*, began with the very first step of this unique Torch Relay, for the torchbearers had been selected for inspiring another. In their strength, their dedication and their bravery, they resembled the athletes who would compete in the Games: the very best of their country.

More than 12,000 torchbearers carried the Olympic Flame, and like tiny dots of pointillism, they painted a portrait of a nation. There were parents and police officers, soldiers and schoolteachers, heart surgeons and Hiroshima survivors who spoke to children about the value of forgiveness. For Olympic champions, it was an old flame rekindled, while would-be Olympians who had missed their shot at a Games—because of war, because of an unfortunate twist of fate—finally felt that moment of glory. They ranged in age from 12 to 103, bound together by the leap of faith that had brought them here, and now, joined by the leap of the flame from torch to torch. Some torchbearers who had once inspired each other ran in pairs, and never before had the human connection seemed so strong.

World-famous actors and musicians were among the torchbearers, but the biggest celebrity of all was the Olympic Flame itself. Guarded 24 hours a day, the flame toured with a royal itinerary: the White House and the Pentagon, the Statue of Liberty and the Golden Gate Bridge, monuments and national parks, ski resorts and hot springs, rivers, lakes and oceans. It traveled by truck and by train, by bicycle, canoe and kayak and even soared off ski jumps. It took rides in a hot-air balloon, airplanes,

THUS IT BEGAN, A WINTER OF WONDER, WHEN THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT STREAKED ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

and a dogsled. There were cattle drives and auto shows, Native American celebrations, and chili cook-offs and pancake breakfasts. Flags, hundreds of thousands of American flags, fluttered from front porches and shop windows. Somehow, the flame and the Olympic Spirit illuminated, inspired and helped to heal a country still reeling from the events of September 11, 2001.

And when you held that flame, you were transformed; it was as if you were holding all of humanity in your hands. If you couldn't hold a torch in your hands, you carried it in your wheelchair, or fashioned a carpenter's belt with a special holder and strapped it to your waist. You ran as fast as you could, fleet-footed with adrenaline, or sashayed slowly, relishing every second. It blew your mind, this feeling. You rolled and skipped and danced and laughed and cried, across 13,500 miles of America.

On February 4, the Olympic Flame arrived in the land of the XIX Olympic Winter Games, a place of ancient redrock formations and alpine peaks that touched azure skies. When the flame passed him at Delicate Arch, Governor Michael Leavitt said "Utah will never be the same," and he was right. By the time that flame arrived in Salt Lake, three days later, a spell had been cast on the city, a spell

that would last for nearly three weeks, and in some ways, much longer. Downtown, and in the venues beyond, buildings and bleachers were hung with towering and luminous banners of athletes, the skyline transformed by the Salt Lake 2002 theme of *Light the Fire Within*. Looking out from a ridgetop, or strolling the wide streets, you could not help but feel privileged to be in such a marvelous place at such an uncommon time. The city was aglow with Torch Relay festivities, from the State Capitol to Washington Square to the Wasatch foothills, where the five Olympic Rings were suddenly alight. The first curious fans peeked at the final touches being made to Salt Lake Olympic Square. And up in Park City, Main Street was strung with lights, closed to traffic, ready for the tens of thousands of visitors who would amble along its way, a cup of hot chocolate or soup in hand. The Games were here.

Like the Olympic Flame, which blazed to life in the cauldron the following night in a glorious Opening Ceremony, it would all pass us by in the blink of an eye: the athletes, the sea of spectators with their brightly colored parkas, the sparkling days and electric nights. But like the children who lined the Torch Relay route, we chased the Olympic Spirit until we ran out of breath.

We traveled up to the mountains to watch Janica Kostelić and Ole Einar Bjørndalen haul in heaps of medals, to see Bode Miller resurrect himself from reckless runs, to follow the snowboarders' flips and twists. In the early morning light, sunrise just peeking over the Rockies, we climbed up to the ski jumps of Utah Olympic Park, where we saw Swiss wunderkind Simon Ammann soar, and Team Germany win by a whisker. We felt the roar of the sleds, the rattle and hum of the track as women's bobsleigh made its spectacular debut. A snowstorm swirled around us as Jimmy Shea went sliding with a picture of his grandfather tucked in his helmet and a dream tucked in his heart. The Olympic Spirit had surely swept over Shea during his skeleton run. "It's about competing and bringing the world together in a peaceful, friendly competition," he reminded us.

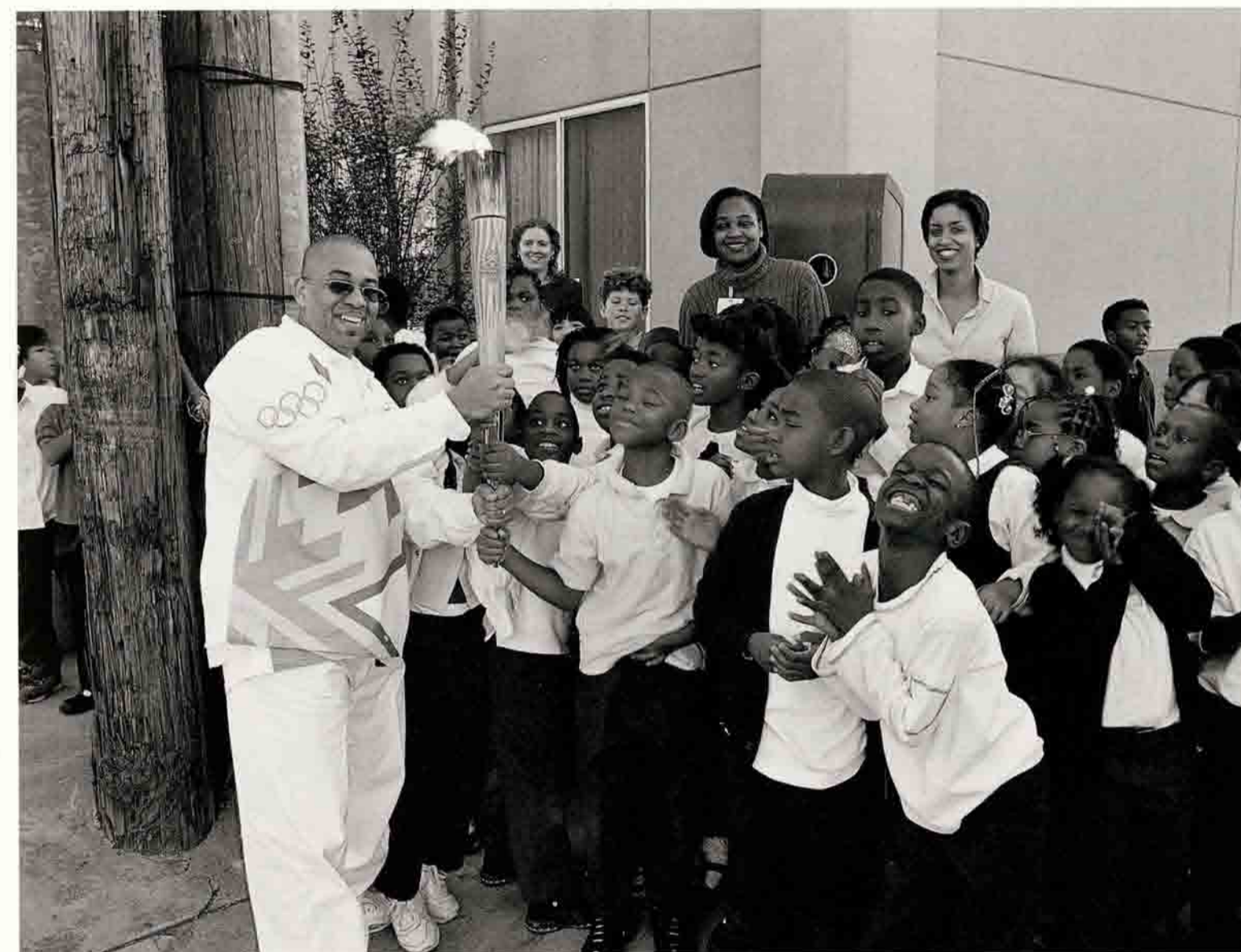
Still chasing it, we caromed through the valley, from ice hockey in Provo to curling in Ogden, finding exhilaration in each. As the mighty hockey behemoths battled for gold, our loudest cheers often erupted for those who played in their shadows: Kazakhstan, Belarus, Latvia. We basked in the radiance of spangled figure skaters, witnessing a 16-year-old student leapfrog past the favorites. While we could not hear all those records falling, we listened to the rush and clap of skates on the fastest ice in the world at the Utah Olympic Oval. We watched the short track tumbles, the astonishing wins of Steven Bradbury and Apolo Anton Ohno. Each night, we gathered at Olympic Medals Plaza, where we witnessed the Olympic Spirit held high in the lanterns of the symbolic Children of Light and twinkling in the watery eyes of the champions. Finally, late in the evening, we slept, impassioned, visions of our own potential dancing through our heads.

An extraordinary group of photographers, meanwhile, also went looking for the Olympic Spirit in the hills and dales of Utah. They brought myriad backgrounds, styles and visions to document the Salt Lake 2002 Games. And they were granted an artist's utmost wish: unprecedented access. Not since the 1936 Olympic Games and the legendary work of Leni Riefenstahl have photographers been so close to Olympians. And so, with old-fashioned cameras on their backs, these explorers moved out of the press box and onto the field of play. Their discoveries are surprising portraits of perseverance and patience, of speed and serenity, of beauty, light and hope. Above all, they are timeless and inspiring images that manage to capture the elusive and powerful Olympic Spirit, the fire within.



Cycling champion and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong helped welcome the Olympic Flame to Atlanta, Georgia, on December 4, 2001. He would later cycle with the flame in his hometown of Austin, Texas, while accompanied by a group of young cancer survivors.

STEVEN CURRIE



"People always talk about bridges and dividers. Wearing no colors and no name, today I united the world," said one torchbearer of carrying the Olympic Flame.

STEVEN CURRIE



To remember the victims and heroes of September 11, 2001, special events were held in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. John Gill, above, joined several family members of victims to carry the flame through New York Harbor and past the Statue of Liberty by ferry. His only son, Paul, 34, was a firefighter with Engine 54 in Manhattan and one of the first to respond to the attacks on the World Trade Center.

J O H N H U E T



Torchbearer Mike Casey of Welleley, Massachusetts, holds his 10-month-old daughter, Riley. Mike's wife, Nellie, was on the first plane to crash into the World Trade Center. Carrying the Olympic Flame "was an incredible connection with Nellie, because running was our thing," he says. "And it was a nice metaphor, because she was such a bright light. I don't even remember running, I felt like I was floating."

E L I S A B E T H O ' D O N N E L L



10

The Olympic Flame traveled with 50 vehicles and a staff of 150. Passengers in passing cars often honked and waved at the torchbearers; just this small glimpse of the flame had made their day.

STEVEN CURRIE



11

A North Carolina businessman steps from his office to wave an American flag for the Torch Relay.

STEVEN CURRIE



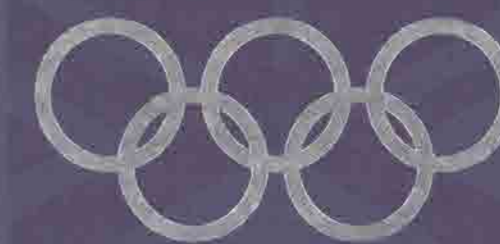
*"Excellence—the sheer beauty of human excellence—is here, possible, part of us,
part of life." – Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney*

C H A D H O L D E R



More than 10,000 banners lined the streets of Salt Lake City and adorned the Olympic venues.

I A N L O G A N





OPENING CEREMONY • MOTHER NATURE,
IT SEEMED, HAD JOINED THE CAST OF 3200 FOR THE
OPENING CEREMONY ON FEBRUARY 8. AFTER BLANKETING
THE WASATCH MOUNTAINS WITH SEVERAL INCHES OF POW-
DER, THE SKIES SUDDENLY CLEARED AS MORE THAN 50,000
SPECTATORS FILED INTO RICE-ECCLES OLYMPIC STADIUM.
WHEN THE SHOW BEGAN, IT WAS UNDER A SOFTLY FALLING
SNOW, A FEW FLAKES DRIFTING LIGHTLY INTO THE STANDS
AS THE FIRST SKATERS CARRIED BANNERS NAMING AND
YEARS OF OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES PAST AND PRESENT.



The Olympic Cauldron, Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium, February 8, 2002

JOHN HUET

And there was something in the way the breeze blew when an honor guard of American athletes, flanked by firefighters and police officers, carried in a flag rescued from New York City's World Trade Center after September 11, 2001. "A gust of wind would come through and blow through the rips in the flag, and it billowed in the wind. It was so beautiful," said American snowboarder Chris Klug, one of the flag bearers. "But I could feel this little bit of shaking and it wasn't the wind, it was just all of the Olympians holding it, we were shaking." The stadium was shrouded in absolute silence, a silence broken only by the strains of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as a new American flag was raised, honoring the host country.

Moments later, a drama unfolded on the ice, spinning the fabric that would weave together each event of the Games: the theme of *Light the Fire Within*. No Opening Ceremony had so connected each element. A child, holding a lantern, battled and overcame a storm—representing life's adversities—because he found the courage to summon an inner force, the Fire Within. He shared his power with other children, who spilled into the stands with their lanterns. This Child of Light became "a little thread that went through all this tonight," said American astronaut and former senator John Glenn, chosen as one of the eight Olympic flag bearers. "He kept coming back and that's really what this is all about, encouraging young people to strive for excellence and do their very, very best."

The Child of Light led in the parade of athletes—the Greek team appearing first in honor of the birthplace of the Olympic Games—followed by some 2300 athletes from 76 delegations (Costa Rica's delegation of one would join the Games after the Opening Ceremony). Dressed in every type of uniform from Bermuda shorts to elaborate silver and red capes, they waved exuberantly at the crowd, taking photos and videotaping this extraordinary moment. It was a moment they had been dreaming of, working toward, for years, even lifetimes. Whether they won a medal in the next 16 days seemed to matter little: they were *here*, they were Olympians, and they were going to remember this forever. In past Opening Ceremonies, athletes had arrived toward the end of the program; this new, early entrance meant they could see the show, rather than wait backstage. After finding their seats, members of the French delegation began a spur-of-the-moment wave that rippled through the crowd, with other athletes, the audience and even the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, joining in.

The impromptu wave preceded a planned, and poignant, moment of unity. For the first time in history, Utah's five native tribes—Goshute, Navajo, Paiute, Shoshone and Ute—joined together in public celebration, to welcome the world to their homeland. In traditional dress and honoring Native American traditions and symbols, they performed a vibrant and colorful stomp dance, set to the beat of more than 100 drummers, and then accompanied by the music of Robbie Robertson, Sadie Buck and Walela. They were followed by a wondrous display of the wilderness that inspired thousands of settlers from many different cultures to band together and travel west, to a land of enchantment. Gossamer creatures—wild horses, jackrabbits and coyotes, even a herd of buffalo—skittered across a star field toward a watering hole, dazzling the settlers' children. The reverie was broken by the sunrise-like sparks of pyrotechnics, and the arrival of the Dixie Chicks, who sang and played the fiddle while skaters, clad in Western costumes, joined in an old-fashioned rendezvous. The suite culminated in a tribute to the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Summit, 40 miles north of Salt Lake City, which joined East and West and completed the first transcontinental railroad in 1869.

"It was a wonderful celebration of the American West," President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Jacques Rogge said later. Rogge and Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney spoke shortly after the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Utah Symphony performed the official Salt Lake 2002 musical theme, "Call of the Champions," which had been composed by John Williams. "You remind us all that excellence—the sheer beauty of human excellence," said Romney to the ath-

letes, "is here, possible, part of us, part of life." President of the United States of America George W. Bush opened the Games officially, his declaration followed by the arrival of the Olympic Flag.

The eight flag bearers had been chosen for their power to inspire the world and represented the three pillars of Olympism—sport, culture and environment—and the five continents of the Olympic Rings. Such a gathering had never been seen in any Olympic ceremony. Skiing legend Jean-Claude Killy was chosen for sport, filmmaker Steven Spielberg for culture and activist Jean-Michel Cousteau for environment. "It was such a feeling of renewal of faith and diversity, and I was just honored to be anywhere near the individuals I was selected to accompany," said Spielberg. He was also joined by John Glenn, representing the Americas; Nobel Laureate Lech Walesa, Europe; Nobel

"IT WAS LIKE ALL THREE OF US WERE STANDING THERE TOGETHER. IT WAS THE MOST EXCITING NIGHT OF MY LIFE."

Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Africa; Nagano 1998 ski jumper Kazuyoshi Funaki, Asia; and Sydney 2000's track and field star Cathy Freeman, Oceania. "It's been a very, very great exhilarating moment," Tutu later said, "to participate in what has turned out to be a tremendous extravaganza." In an unusual duet, pop artist Sting and celebrated cellist Yo-Yo Ma then took center ice, performing the song "Fragile" as dove-like skaters circled the ice, and thousands of flashlights flickered in the stands.

But the most-awaited moment of the ceremony—the arrival of the Olympic Flame—had yet to come. After its 65-day journey from Greece and throughout America, the flame was carried toward the Olympic Cauldron by pairs of athletes who had inspired one another, and the world, with their courage and conviction. Figure skaters Dorothy Hamill and Dick Button handed the flame to figure skaters Peggy Fleming and Scott Hamilton. Then, alpine skiers Phil Mahre and Bill Johnson carried it to speed skaters Dan Jansen and Bonnie Blair, who handed it to skeleton racer and third-generation Olympian Jim Shea Jr. and his father, Jim Sr. Missing from the Shea reunion was 91-year-old Jack, who had been killed in a car accident just weeks before the Opening Ceremony. But as his son and grandson held a torch aloft, they felt something peculiar. "It was like all three of us were standing there together," said Jim Shea Jr. "It was amazing. It was the most exciting night of my life."

Finally, alpine skier Picabo Street and hockey player Cammi Granato ran the Olympic Flame up the stairs to the most closely guarded secret of the Salt Lake 2002 Games: the person who would light the Olympic Cauldron. Mike Eruzione, captain of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team, which overcame prodigious odds to win the "Miracle on Ice" game against the Soviet Union, emerged from the shadows and beckoned his former teammates to experience the honor with him. The moment symbolized sharing the fire within, and the flame roared up the cauldron, where it would burn for 16 more days, as a beacon to the athletes going to and from events, as a reminder of the Olympic Spirit.

As LeAnn Rimes and a choir of 600 children sang "Light the Fire Within," the evening drew to a close. Under a sky of fireworks, set to Igor Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite" and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," athletes who had arrived as nations began leaving as fellow competitors. A final, luminous moment: The Olympic Rings emerged in flame from the center of the ice sheet, a brilliant symbol of the power of humankind when united as one. It was a moment when, as environmental crusader Jean-Micheel Cousteau said of the Olympic Games, "All the boundaries fall apart."



Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney, President of the United States of America
 George W. Bush and President of the IOC Jacques Rogge watch as the American flag rescued from New York
 City's World Trade Center after September 11, 2001, is brought into the stadium by U.S. athletes.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



"When they opened the curtain to let us walk out, I couldn't believe so many people
 could be so silent. You could hear a pin drop." - Lea Ann Parsley,
 U.S. skeleton athlete and flag bearer

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



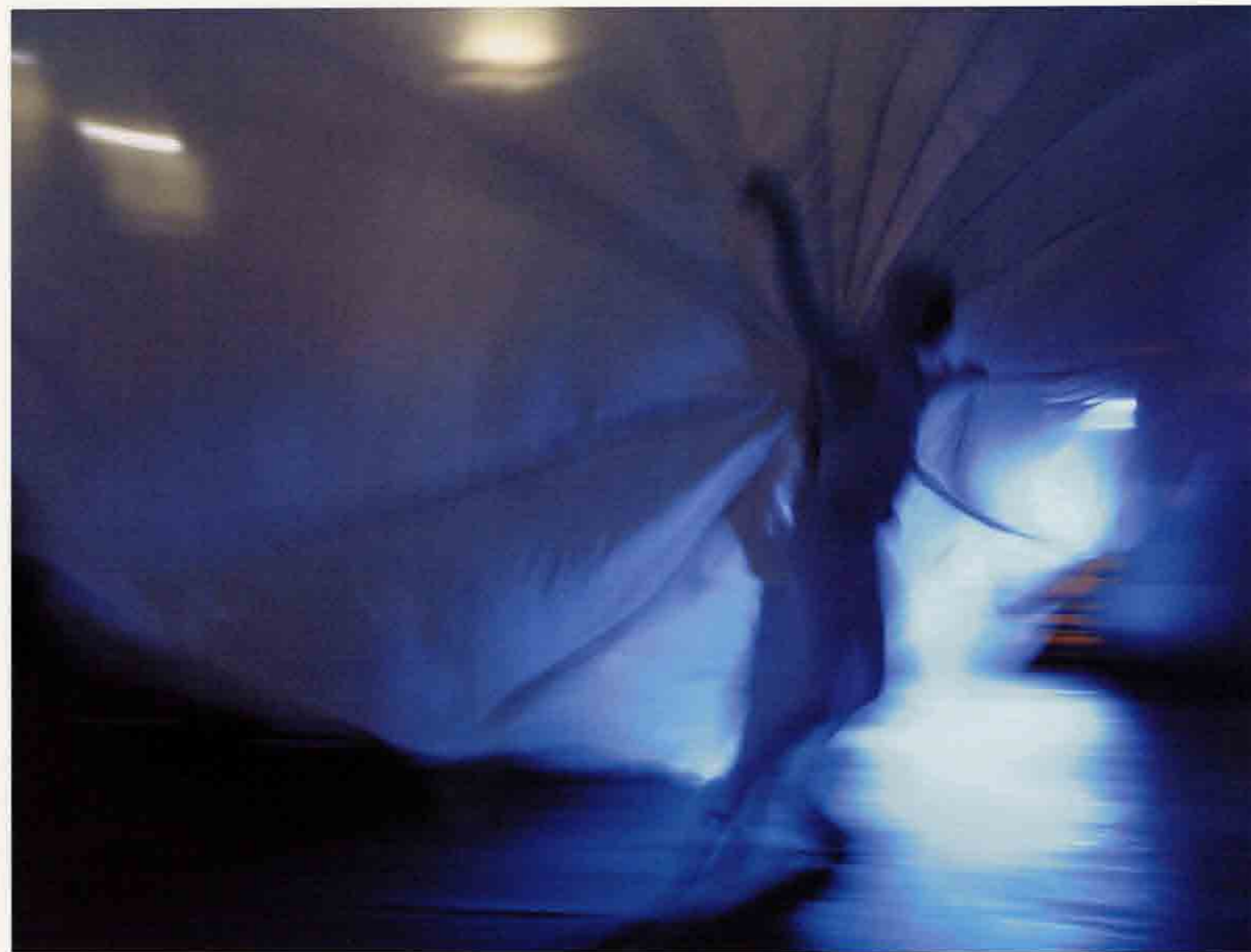
The Child of Light, played by 13-year-old Ryne Sanborn, finds himself surrounded by stormlike elements, representing life's adversities, in The Fire Within segment. His appearance ushered in a thematic unity never before seen in an Olympic Games.

SHEILA METZNER



Some 30,000 costume pieces were created for the Opening Ceremony.

JOHN HUET



More than 500 adults and children appeared in The Fire Within performance.

DAVID BURNETT



Conjuring a winter storm, skaters race around the ice in The Fire Within segment.

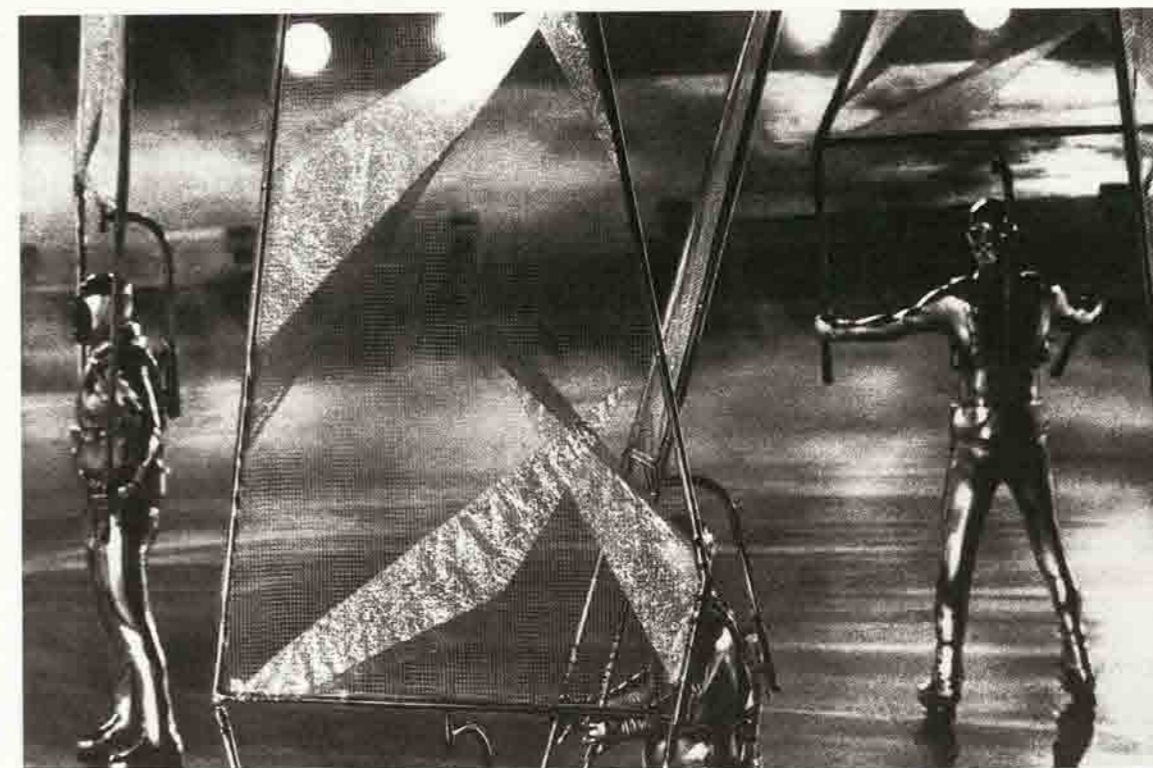
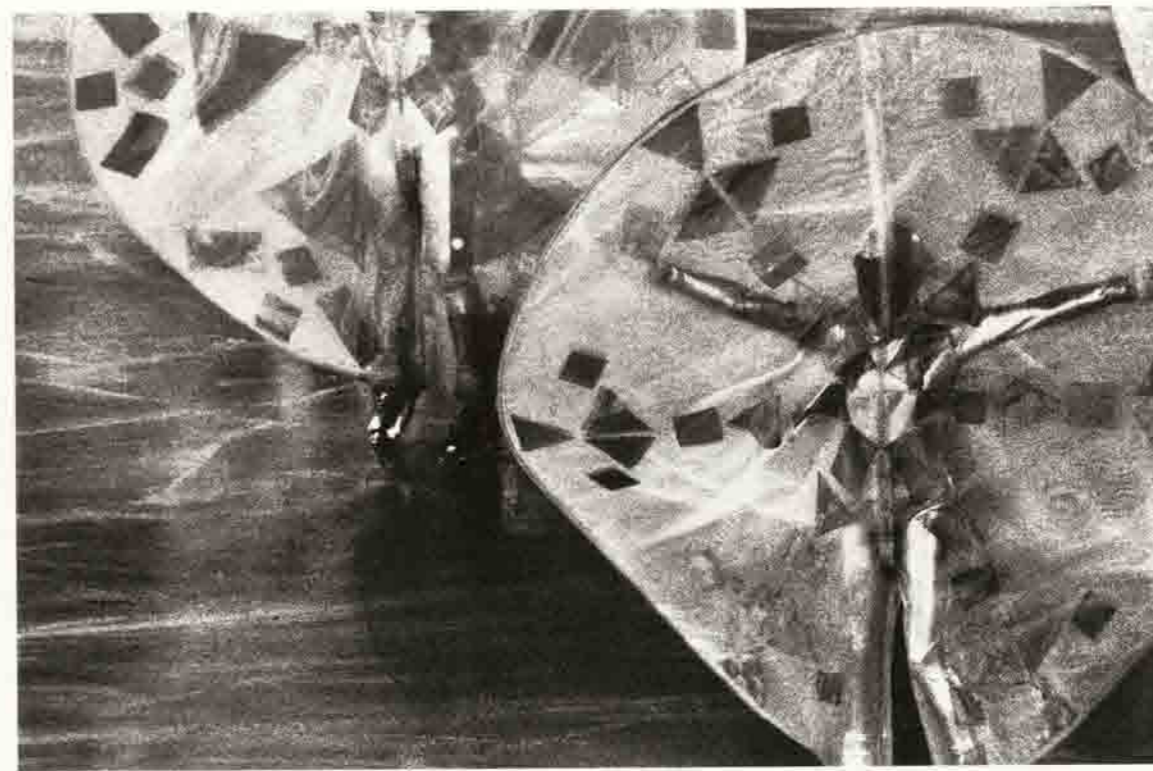
JOHN HUET (TOP)

SHEILA METZNER (BOTTOM)



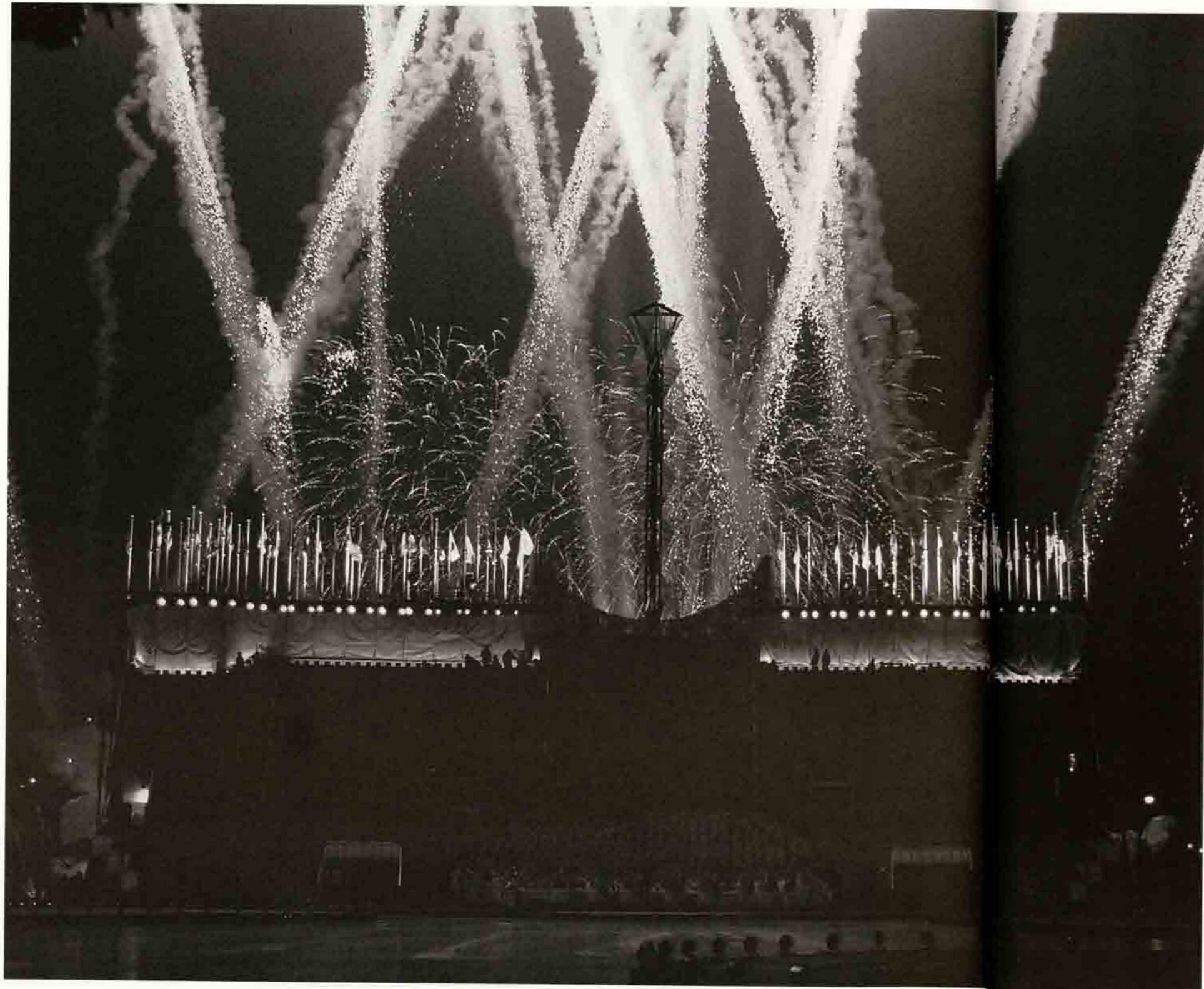
"Children around the world are dreaming, dreaming of daring performances, cheering friends and proud families." – Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney

TIBOR NEMETH



Performers create the effect of snow and ice crystals, top, and ice shards, bottom.

SHEILA METZNER



The Olympic Cauldron still dark, Riet-Eccles Olympic Stadium is lit by fireworks in the shape of XIX, marking the opening of the 19th Olympic Winter Games.

T I B O R N E M E T H



As the Children of Light entered the stadium, beams of light illuminated flags along the athletes' stand.

J O H N H U E T



"There is no better feeling" – Freestyle mogulist Egan Dybuig, United States of America, on walking into Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium. Salt Lake 2002 organizers had persuaded the IOC to depart from tradition and allow athletes to appear at the beginning of the ceremony and enjoy the show.

I A N L O G A N



Six hundred and eighty Children of Light symbolized the power to inspire.

T I B O R N E M E T H



"Deep in my heart it makes me feel very proud, my heart just swelled. It is so exciting and impressive to see all the Indian tribes out there together for the first time, this has never happened before." – Rupert Steele, Goshute Ceremonial Leader, on the gathering of the Goshute, Navajo, Paiute, Shoshone and Ute tribes at the Opening Ceremony.

T I B O R N E M E T H



After arriving in the stadium, the leaders of the five Utah native tribes were presented with symbolic gifts from athletes representing five nations that have hosted Olympic Games. In return, the tribal leaders offered blessings to the athletes.

D A V I D B U R N E T T



"The five [Indian] nations coming together shows the world that we can work side by side. It is just amazing how the five [Olympic] Rings fit into the five nations that are part of Utah."
 — Kenneth Maryboy, Navajo Ceremonial Leader

I A N L O G A N



The Native American Welcome began with the sounds of five distinct, ethereal tunes from five flute players. The final, unified chord signaled the landing of a live golden eagle in front of the athletes.

J O H N H U E T



Appearing in the Native American Welcome were participants of every age, from infant to elder.

SHEILA METZNER



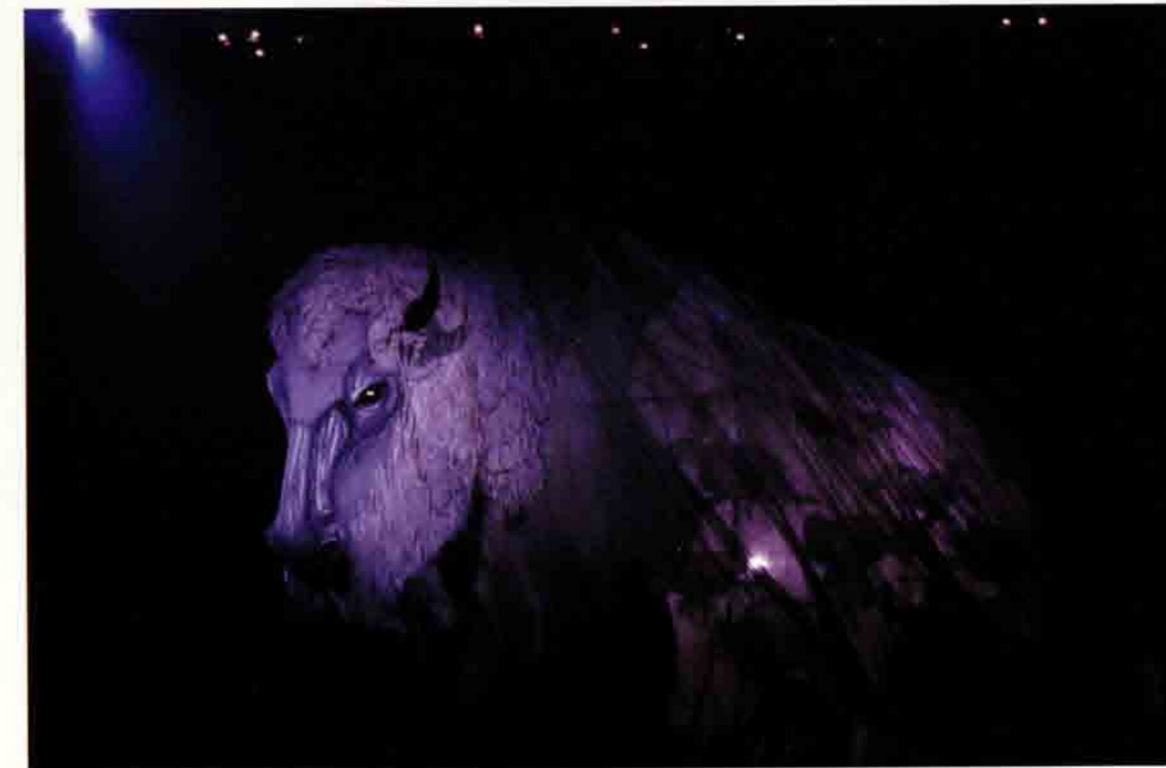
Sixty-six skaters swept around the ice, emulating the flight of the golden eagle.

SHEILA METZNER



*"The mix of color, light and emotions surely lit the spirit of global unity
across the world" – IOC President Jacques Rogge*

STEVEN CURRIE



Square-dancing pioneers and a giant bison arrive on stage for the American West Suite.

DAVID BURNETT



A stampede of horses joins the wild beasts, birds and fish in the Land of Enchantment.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Sing and Yo-Yo Ma perform "Fragile" on a star field of ice as 25 skaters form a flock of doves, symbolizing the traditional release of doves as a sign of peace.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



The 1980 U.S. "Miracle on Ice" hockey team lights the Olympic Cauldron.

DAVID BURNETT



A sudden burst of flame creates the Olympic Rings on the ice as the Opening Ceremony draws to a close. "I remember thinking, 'This is it. This is my dream. I'm finally an Olympian!'"
— Women's hockey player Julie Chu of the United States of America

IAN LOGAN



*Fireworks explode over the athletes' stand, the moment accompanied by Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"
and Igor Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite"*

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R





ALPINE SKIING • THEY CALLED THE COURSE GRIZZLY. NEARLY TWO MILES OF SHEER TERROR FROM START TO FINISH, LINED WITH 18 MILES OF FENCING TO CATCH THE UNFORTUNATE SOUL WHO MIGHT SNAG AN EDGE ON THE NASTY JOHN PAUL TRAVERSE OR LOSE CONTROL OFF THE BUFFALO JUMP. A DROP OF 74 DEGREES MEANT ZERO TO 70 MILES PER HOUR IN 10 SECONDS. THIS WAS THE MEN'S DOWNHILL AT SNOWBASIN SKI AREA, AN UNPREDICTABLE RIDE OF SPEED AND SKILL IN WHICH RISK WAS REWARDED WITH VICTORY—OR PUNISHED WITH PAIN



"Skiing is all a matter of balance, of your position on the skis... You can feel the speed on the good turns, you can be balanced," says women's downhill gold medalist Carole Monillet of France. "You're on a peak, and then it seems easy. You love the speed, and you want to go faster."

JOHN HUET

and loss. And on February 10, it was a fitting kickoff to the Salt Lake 2002 alpine events.

From the downhill, super-G and combined at Snowbasin Ski Area to the giant slalom at Park City Mountain Resort and the slalom at Deer Valley Resort, hundreds of skiers tore down Utah's mountains in a spine-tingling show of aggression and athleticism. Legends such as Picabo Street, Lasse Kjus and Stephan Eberharter returned, while new heroes were made of Janica Kostelić, Bode Miller and Anja Pärson. Tens of thousands of spectators shared the experience, cheering madly for each and every competitor, finding some element of truth or hope in their triumphs and struggles. "That is what the Olympics are all about," said Street. "We're making childhood dreams come true."

MEN'S DOWNHILL •

The grueling Grizzly course was Austrian Stephan Eberharter's chance at redemption. A spectacular breakthrough at age 21, when he became a double world champion in 1991, had been followed by a string of injuries that forced him to miss part of the 1992 and all of the 1994 Games and to fight his way back onto the Austrian team. Then he found himself skiing in the shadows of teammate Hermann Maier, often in second and so close to victory, but constantly edged out by the "Herminator." Perhaps this time it would be different. Maier had been severely injured in a motorcycle crash, unable to compete, and Eberharter, 32, was ready to crown his own comeback with gold at Snowbasin.

Incredibly, every competitor managed to complete his run and cross the finish line, the mighty Austrians taking the riskiest lines and sharpest turns. But when the top competitors had raced, Eberharter had again been bested by an Austrian teammate, Fritz Strobl, who had skied the course in 1:39.13. Norway's Kjus had earned the silver, with 1:39.35, and Eberharter was in third with 1:39.41. Kjus, who had been struggling with chronic sinus and bronchial problems that often interrupted his competition schedule, had earned his fourth Olympic medal. "I had a good day today," he said. "Everything went my way." Eberharter, meanwhile, shrugged off his disappointment at missing the gold and looked ahead. "There are plenty of races to collect," he said. "It's not over yet."

For gold medalist Strobl, a quiet policeman whose goal is to take over his parents' farm when he retires, shook his head at his victory. "Skiing, the fun of skiing—that's all I was thinking," he said, "and now my joy is even greater to have won."

LADIES' DOWNHILL •

The dangers of downhill may have been on Carole Montillet's mind as she careened down Wildflower (a misleading name, for the course was nearly as tough as the men's) on February 12. After all, her French teammate Régine Cavagnoud had been killed after crashing into a German coach during a training run in October 2001. But Montillet, known for her fearlessness and love of speed, showed no signs of even the slightest trepidation as she blazed through the course in 1:39.56, the fastest time of the day. "I chose the most direct line coming down," she said.

Her victory was a gift to a grieving team, and to a country that had not won ladies' alpine gold since 1968. "We had a difficult time this winter, but I really raced this race for myself," said Montillet. "However, I know that she [Régine] helped me because I know she was with me."

Close behind Montillet were silver medalist Isolde Kostner of Italy with a time of 1:40.01, who dedicated her victory to Amnesty International, and first-time medalist Renate Götschl of Austria, whose time of 1:40.39 earned her the bronze. American Picabo Street, who had been hoping for one more Olympic medal, finished 16th and announced her retirement from competitive ski racing. "I'm really relieved to be done with my career," she said. "I'm relieved to be safe."

MEN'S COMBINED •

American Bode Miller feared for his life. It was the downhill portion of the combined event, and his skis suddenly skipped out of control. "It was a crash," he said, remembering how, flooded with

adrenaline, he somehow righted his body and avoided killing himself and officials in his path. "If it hadn't been a life-threatening situation, I probably wouldn't have been able to pull it off." The near disaster had landed Miller way behind the leaders in 15th place, with two slalom runs left to complete. In the first, he nearly slid off course again, ruining his chances at a medal by finishing a distant 2.44 seconds behind the leader, Norwegian Kjetil Andre Aamodt.

"HE'S REVOLUTIONIZED THE WAY OF SKIING," SAID AAMODT.
"NOBODY'S EVER SKIED THAT FAST...HE HAS NO LIMITS."

Or so we thought. In his final run of the day, Miller decided to forget about the fear and think about the fun. "I was looking at the slalom course, which for me is a lot like looking at a great golf course, or a playground if you're a kid," he said. "And I went out and charged the second run." Once again, Miller seemed out of control, but this time, his reckless style catapulted him into an incredible comeback—and a silver medal. He made up 2.16 seconds, grabbing the lead until Aamodt raced, winning the gold. Austria's Benjamin Raich won the bronze, his first Olympic medal.

Aamodt had broken his own record of 15 Olympic and world championship medals, becoming the most decorated alpine skier in history. But even the 30-year-old veteran was astounded by Miller's raw speed and ability to turn a potentially deadly day into a silver medal. "He's revolutionized the way of skiing. Nobody's ever skied that fast," said Aamodt. "When he's putting it all together, he's in a class of his own...He has no limits."

LADIES' COMBINED •

With all three runs on a single day for the first time in Olympic history, the combined event demanded versatile skiing skills and incredible mental toughness. Janica Kostelić, who would soon be known as the "Croatian Sensation," was the perfect match. She began ski racing at age 9 and soon fled her war-torn country to train in the mountains elsewhere in Europe. Beset by a lack of funds, Kostelić often slept in her father's car, while her brother Ivica, who also raced, slept beneath it.

Kostelić's stamina had guided her through a number of painful crashes and surgeries and on February 14, it would reward her with her first Olympic medal. After the two slalom runs (the event was held in the reverse order of the men's), Kostelić was a full 1.1 seconds ahead of Germany's Martina Ertl. Even a third-place finish in the downhill portion—her weakest discipline—couldn't knock Kostelić from atop the podium. She won the gold, Croatia's first-ever medal at an Olympic Winter Games. Two-time Olympian Götschl of Austria and two-time Olympic silver medalist Ertl of Germany took the silver and bronze, respectively.

"This is kind of a family medal, because it was always in the family—everything, always training," said Kostelić, who had her brother's name painted on the nails of her left hand before the race. "Everything was always me, my brother and my father. My mother was always on the side, but she's the boss. It's a great thing, and my family's dream came true."

MEN'S SUPER-G •

There are no practice runs in super-G, just an hour and a half to study the course and choose a line. That meant that Norwegian Aamodt's 10 years of experience could amount to little once he flew out of the start hut on February 16 at Snowbasin. Aamodt had won the gold in super-G at the Albertville 1992 Games and had since won a World Cup title in every discipline, one of only four

men to accomplish such a feat. Nevertheless, he was not favored to medal in the 2002 super-G, thanks to the strength of teammate Kjus, Switzerland's Didier Cuche and Austrian Eberharter.

But Aamodt finished the race in 1:21.58, a time he would be astonished to see hold strong throughout the event. A tricky gate at the top of Rendezvous Face, with a 74 percent grade, cut the race short for both Kjus and Cuche. Eberharter slipped trying to make a hard right turn, but managed to stay on the course and finished second behind Aamodt by one-tenth of a second. "To win the super-G again after 10 years," said Aamodt, "is a dream come true."

Once again, Eberharter had just missed the gold, winning the silver. Teammate Andreas Schifferer, who finished just 0.25 seconds behind Aamodt, was elated by his bronze-medal performance after a difficult year recuperating from a knee injury. "You know, you have to be really patient," he said. "Now I think I'm harvesting the fruits of my work. If you know that there is something that you should fight for, then you must really do it."

LADIES' SUPER-G •

Daniela Ceccarelli of Italy grew up in the sun-baked, gently rolling hills of Rocca Priora, just 20 minutes from Rome and five hours from the nearest major ski area. But she also grew up with a father addicted to thrills—an air-force pilot who spent his free time skiing and decided his children should be racers. So when Ceccarelli, a military police officer ranked 40th overall in the 2000–01 World Cup standings, rocketed to the top of the winner's podium in the super-G, with a time of 1:13.59, she turned to thank her mentor.

"I owe my victory to my father," she said. "This love for speed, this love for adrenaline comes from him." It was her first international victory and one of the biggest upsets of the alpine races. Favored to win were Germany's Hilde Gerg, No. 1 in the World Cup super-G standings, Austria's downhill bronze medalist Götschl and France's downhill gold medalist, Montillet. They finished fifth, eighth and seventh, respectively.

THE STEEP COURSE BECAME EVEN MORE BRUTAL, SENDING FRUSTRATED SKIERS FLYING OFF TOWARD THE FENCE.

Just behind Ceccarelli was Kostelić, winning the silver with a time of 1:13.64. For her second event, Kostelić had MAMA painted on the fingernails of her left hand. After finishing, she embraced her mother and asked, "Am I good? Am I good?"

Italy's Karen Putzer had skipped the combined event to train for super-G and was rewarded with the bronze. "It's like a dream," she said. "I can't believe it."

LADIES' SLALOM •

After nearly ideal, bluebird conditions for the first three alpine events, with only the ladies' downhill postponed due to high winds, the weather turned a corner. A snowstorm hit Deer Valley Resort on February 20, just in time for the ladies' slalom on the Know You Don't run. In the blinding snow and flat light, the steep course became even more brutal, sending frustrated skiers flying off toward the fence. American Kristina Koznick, a top contender who compared the race to a rodeo, was one of 19 skiers who failed to finish the first run. Eleven skiers fell during the second run. Simply put by Kostelić, "I think everyone skied really bad."

Kostelić, however, managed to remain on course for both runs, earning a combined time of

1:46.10 and her third Salt Lake 2002 medal—a gold. "I skied the best way through a bad course," she said. Just 0.07 seconds behind was France's Laure Péquegnot, who relished the conditions. "I like it like this," she said after her first run. "It will be a fight."

And Sweden's Anja Pärson, who was raised in the same town as the legendary skier Ingemar Stenmark, won bronze and her country's first alpine medal of the Games. "The course was very steep," she said, elated with her run. "When we're in the World Cup, it's flat hills. It's like skiing a parking lot. I just haven't raced on this kind of hill. But I'm happy with what I've done."

MEN'S GIANT SLALOM •

Eberharter stood in the start hut atop Park City Mountain Resort, awaiting his second run in the giant slalom. Three-quarters of a mile below, the 18,000 fans were still screaming for Miller, whose combined time of 2:24.16 had placed him in the lead. After a wild run in his signature, on-the-edge style, Miller had leapfrogged the field from seventh to first place. Now Miller waited for Eberharter. Near the finish line, he caught his breath and looked up at the ridgeline, toward Eberharter, the last of the top 15 competitors to race.

Despite the noise below, the Austrian heard nothing. "Actually, it was very quiet at the start," he said. "It was a bit unusual. I said to myself, 'I've got two medals, and on the other hand it's your last chance to win a gold medal.'" And so he charged the course in 1:11.30 for a combined time of 2:23.28. He had finally won his gold, and when he saw his time, he fell to the ground in joy and relief. "I knew I had to ski a near perfect run, and I made it," he said.

One of the first to congratulate Eberharter was Miller, who was in turn congratulated by Kjus, who had won the bronze. It seemed the American, despite missing the gold, had impressed his competitors. "He is a tough racer and has a great future," said Eberharter. "He has a crazy style of skiing, but he's fast and that's all that counts."

LADIES' GIANT SLALOM •

On February 22, Kostelić made history as she won the giant slalom and became the first alpine skier ever to win four medals at a single Olympic Winter Games. And with her winning combined time of 2:30.01, she also joined France's Jean-Claude Killy and Toni Sailer of Austria as the only skiers with three golds from one Games. Three days later, she was welcomed home to Croatia by 100,000 who skipped work and school to celebrate their hero, whom they had nicknamed the "Snow Queen."

Kostelić had barely prepared for the giant slalom event, logging only two training sessions in the weeks before the Games. She had never finished higher than fourth in a World Cup giant slalom. And that's precisely how she won. Like Eberharter the day before, Kostelić was the last of the top 15 skiers to race in the second run. She had heard that Pärson and Switzerland's Sonja Nef had skied well, and figured she wouldn't catch them. "I didn't have any pressure," she said. "I felt really relaxed."

She won by 1.32 seconds, while Pärson and Nef would earn silver and bronze, respectively. While shocked that she had beaten Nef, who was the giant slalom leader of the season, Kostelić remained sanguine about her historic feat. "I'm tired," she said. "For sure I am happy, but I'm tired. It's great but someone is going to break that record soon. The next Olympics maybe."

Pärson, it seemed, hoped to be that someone. "I'm very happy for Janica," she said. "We're good friends. But now she's the one to beat. I'm happy for her, yes. But I am still a competitor, and I'll try to do my best to beat her."

MEN'S SLALOM •

After blowing out both his knees in a 1999 training accident, France's Jean-Pierre Vidal didn't think he would walk, let alone ski. He was confined to a wheelchair, devastated and depressed. His

career, it seemed, had come to an end. "I thought it was finished for me," Vidal said. "But after a few months, I had this passion to ski."

He spent day after day in rehabilitation, stubborn in his vision of competing again. "I've been dreaming about the Olympics since I was a child," he says. "After the accident, I came back. I prepared intensely."

The steep Know You Don't course struck again, with softening snow that tripped up some of the top skiers, including the first four competitors of the second run. Miller, hoping for a third Salt Lake 2002 medal and in second place behind Vidal after the first run, charged the course and missed a gate, finishing in 25th place. "That's what happens when you push hard," he said.

Among those who held on was Alain Baxter of Aviemore, Scotland, who won the bronze, Great Britain's first-ever Olympic alpine medal. Less than a month later, the medal was stripped and awarded to fourth-place finisher Benjamin Raich of Austria after it was discovered that Baxter had mistakenly, but illegally, used a banned substance found in a nasal inhaler.

And then there was Vidal, who clung ferociously to his lead and won the gold, 0.36 seconds ahead of teammate Sebastien Amiez, who earned the silver. Vidal was the first Frenchman in 34 years to win Olympic gold in the slalom; the last victory belonged to Jean-Claude Killy at the Grenoble 1968 Games. Looking back at his recovery and the road to gold, Vidal seemed inspired by the same passion that had fueled Killy.

"After two months in a chair, I feel that all is going to be OK," he said. "I knew that I had skiing in my heart, and I just had to light a fire in me."



"It's downhill. It's just the best kick you can get. Where else can you go from top to bottom with no people in your way?" – Ireland's Paul Patrick Schwarzacher-Joyce

SHEILA METZNER



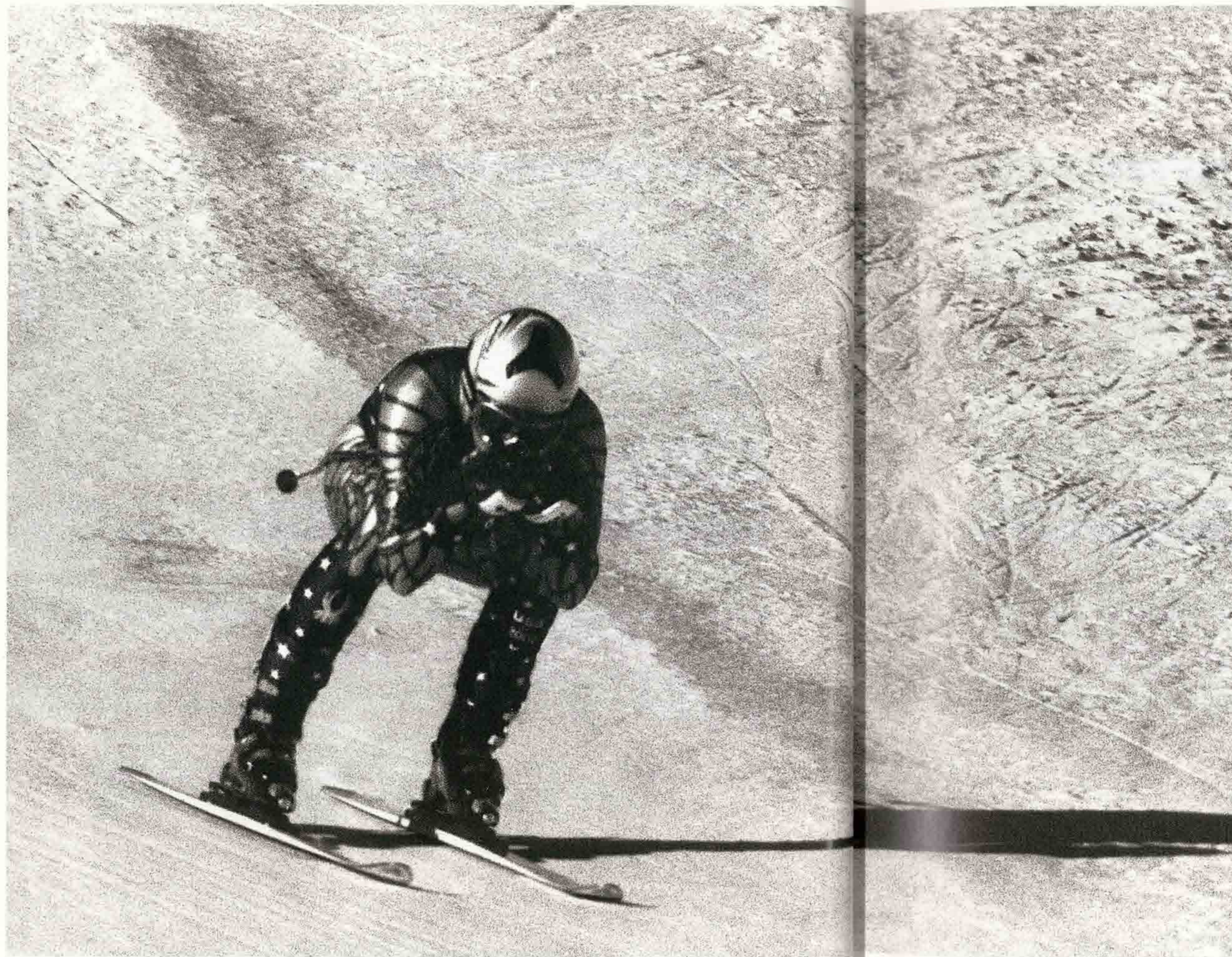
Switzerland's Tobias Grünenfelder prepares to race the super-G.

T I B O R N E M E T H



Canada's Annie Marie Lefrançois shoots out of the start house during the second downhill training run on Snowbasin's Wildflower course.

S T E V E N C U R R I E



"The Olympics are different for each person, but for me the medal is sort of a bonus. It's more for the crowd, the country and my family and coaches. For me, that feeling I had when I skied that second run was better than any medal." — Bode Miller of the United States of America (left). His second slalom run of the men's combined event was one of the greatest comebacks in the Games and earned Miller the silver medal.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



The men's Grizzly downhill course, above, was named for a local legend about Old Ephraim, a huge grizzly bear that roamed the area in the early 1900s, outsmarting shepherds and hunters for years. Other parts of the course, such as Flintlock Jump and Trapper's Loop, were named for the area's rich mining and hunting history.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



Amazingly, every competitor in men's downhill managed to cross the finish line of a course described by designer and Sapporo 1972 downhill gold medalist Bernhard Russi as a roller coaster and a rodeo.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



"It's a long story. I was 9 when I started skiing, for serious. And I was skiing and skiing and skiing and I came here and I got a medal." — "Croatian Sensation" Janica Kostelić, who became the first alpine skier ever to win four medals at a single Olympic Winter Games.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Anne Marie LeFrançois of Canada overcame a string of injuries to compete in the downhill and super-G at Snowbasin.

T I B O R N E M E T H



"I love skiing and I always try to push myself, and those two things are the most important. If you love skiing and you love competition and you still want to push yourself to win more, then you can go a long way for a long time." — Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway. His gold in the Salt Lake 2002 super-G gave him a total of seven Olympic medals, the most ever for an alpine skier.

SHEILA METZNER (ABOVE)
TIBOR NEMETH (RIGHT)





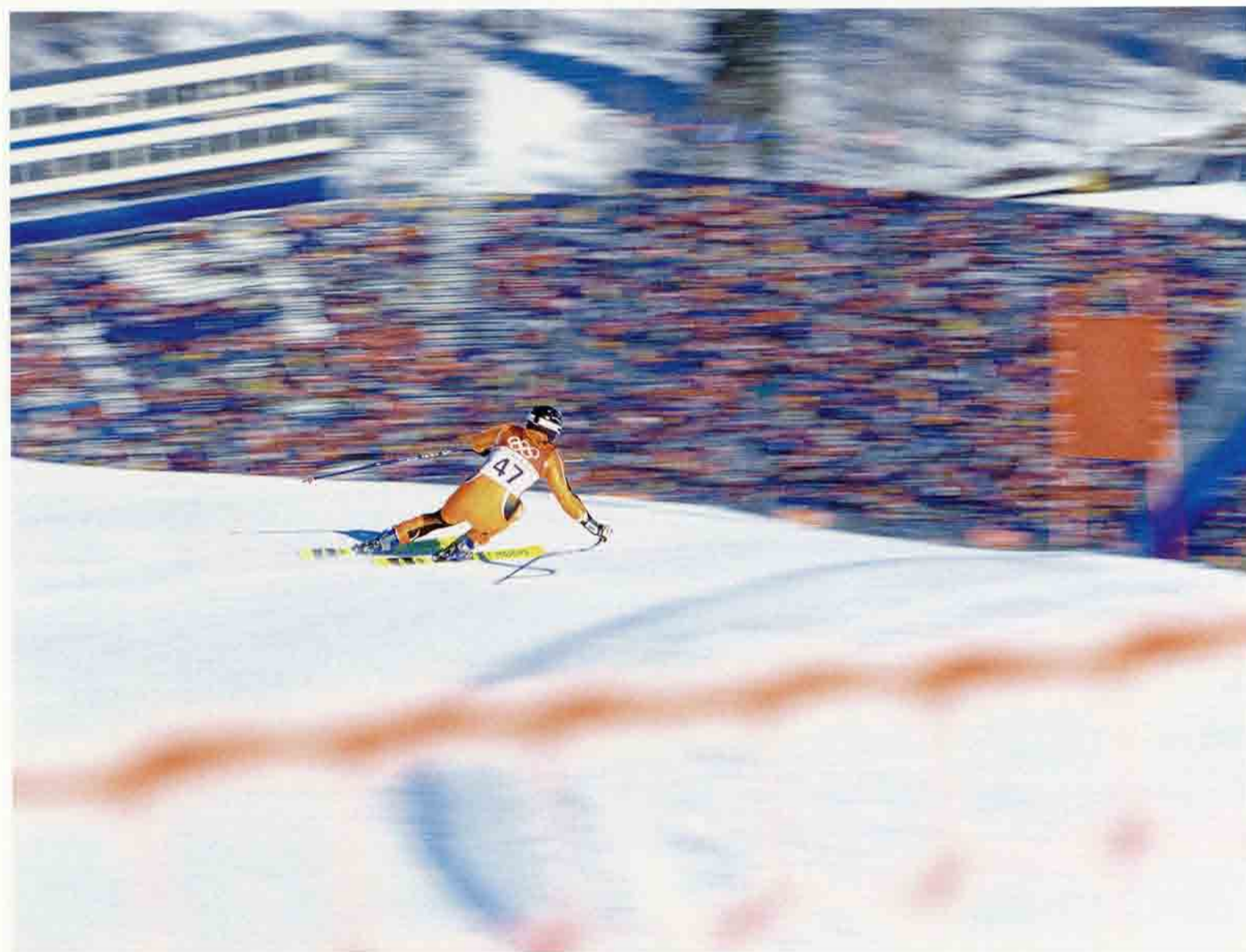
"I must admit that I was truly confused. I was so excited that I looked up at the screen, and I thought I saw the number 9 next to my name. So I said, 'well, I'm last.' Then I saw the audience cheering, and I saw my teammates cheering." – Super-G gold medalist Daniela Ceccarelli of Italy

ALBERT COLANTONIO



Alexandra Munteanu represented Romania in four alpine events.

MICHAEL SEAMANS



Maui Gayme of Chile delivered the best South American performance of the men's downhill with a time of 1:47.63.

STEVEN CURRIE





F R E E S T Y L E S K I I N G • IN THE WORLD OF SKI RACING, FREESTYLERS WERE ALWAYS DIFFERENT. THEY EMERGED ON THE SKI SLOPES IN THE 1970s WITH LONG HAIR AND BRIGHT, BAGGY CLOTHES, SHATTERING SKIING'S SERIOUS SIDE. THEY WERE SO-CALLED HOTDOGGERS, WHO BOUNCED OVER BUMPS AND FLIPPED OFF KICKERS, EVER PUSHING THE LIMITS OF HOW A HUMAN COULD SLIDE DOWN A SLOPE. AND AT THE SALT LAKE 2002 GAMES, THE FREESTYLE ATHLETES WERE ONCE AGAIN, WELL, DIFFERENT. THEY TALKED BIG AND SKIED BIG, ATTEMPTING NEW TRICKS



"I wanted to get gold or last" — Eric Bergoust, United States of America

A N D Y A N D E R S O N

and flying faster than ever down the hill. Freestyle tickets were some of the hottest of the Games, thanks to the rock 'n' roll show displayed at Deer Valley Resort. With the course visible from top to finish, spectators could watch every minute of knee-bumping, death-defying action. They also saw moments of human drama from legends to newcomers, who proved that the sport will always be free.

Alisa Camplin trained with leeches. Literally.

"It made us tough," said the aerialist of her sessions in a leech-filled, scum-covered landing pool back home in Australia. Again and again, Camplin and teammate Jacqui Cooper worked on their flips and twists. After landing, they would have to hike through the mud, covered in leeches. They tried to feed the fish with bread so they would grow and eat the leeches. "I guess we did it the hard way," she said. Cooper, meanwhile, was drinking cockroach extract mixed with diet Coke to cure her bad back.

Having recovered from her back pain, Cooper broke her kneecap during training and pulled out of the Salt Lake 2002 competition. "It isn't just about my leg," she said. "I've got a broken heart."

But the leeches worked wonders for Camplin, who stunned the world—and herself—by winning the gold at Deer Valley Resort's White Owl course on February 18. After Cooper's injury, Australian coach Peter Judge had asked his team to step up and take her place. And so the 27-year-old Camplin, who had left her job at a major computer company to train and had sold her car to make ends meet, answered the call. She had placed second in the qualifying round on February 16, behind Switzerland's Evelyn Leu, who had set the world record by earning a total score of 203.16, and ahead of Belarusian Alla Tsuper. Two days later, during the first of two final jumps, she moved to third place, while Leu, one of only two competitors to try a triple flip, wiped out and Russia's Olga Koroleva advanced to first, with a back layout tuck full jump. Then, on Camplin's final run, she pulled off a second triple-twisting, double backflip jump, nailing the landing and then skidding to a stop. She stood in disbelief as she realized she had taken the lead. And then more disbelief, as Tsuper missed her landing and Koroleva fell just short of medal contention, finishing fourth. It was official. Gold. Camplin looked around in disbelief. "I won?" she said. "I won!"

She had become the first Australian woman to win gold in the Olympic Winter Games and part of a string of unexpected victories for her country. "This is the craziest thing that has ever happened to me," Camplin said later. "This is the first time I've ever won anything. It still doesn't seem real. I feel like a normal girl from Melbourne, Australia, who went out on a normal day and just landed two jumps. All of a sudden I've got people clapping for me every time I walk into a room."

Joining Camplin on the podium were Canadians Veronica Brenner and Deidra Dionne, who won silver and the bronze, respectively. Two-time Olympian Brenner was known for quoting Shakespeare while Dionne studied university courses during training. Looking back and forth between Brenner and Dionne, Camplin started to laugh. "We three girls up here are the dorkiest girls on the tour," she said, clutching Errol, a stuffed sheep who served as her good luck mascot. "Everyone always laughs at us. We never go out once. We sit inside and we read books. But it pays to be smart."

American Eric Bergoust defied the laws of gravity, but he arrived at the Salt Lake 2002 Games with the weight of the world on his shoulders. In the four years since he won gold at Nagano, Bergoust had been expanding the frontier of aerials, experimenting with new maneuvers, exhaustively training and drawing diagrams of the physics of flying. He mastered not only double and triple flips, but a quadruple flip, a move officials banned from competition until at least 2003. Bit by bit, the pressure was building on "Air Bergy" to win again. Olympic experts consistently picked him as the 2002 gold medalist. His father Don had written a poem that begins, "In aerial skiing one's known as the best."

Serious expectations, but Bergoust was just as serious about meeting them. In the qualification round, held just after the women's qualifiers on February 16, he was in second place after Belarusian Alexei Grichin (Bergoust's chief rival) and followed by American Joe Pack and nine other athletes.

As the finals began to unfold three days later, it was clear that the competition was fierce. One by one, the aerialists were landing difficult jumps. By the end of the first run, however, the leading lineup had barely shifted: Bergoust was in first with a score of 130.38—which almost guaranteed the gold—while Grichin had slipped to second and Pack remained in third. A Park City local, Pack was surrounded by friends and family. "This just allows me to go that much bigger," he said. "This is my backyard. This is my home. I know what's going on."

Aleš Valenta of the Czech Republic also knew exactly what was happening as he took off for a quint-twisting triple backflip, the first ever attempted at the Olympic Winter Games. If he landed the extremely tricky jump, he could vault from fifth to first place. There seemed nothing to lose: Valenta

"I KNEW SOMETHING GREAT WAS GOING TO COME," SAID
BAHRKE. "AND I JUST STOOD AT THE TOP, SMILING."

had missed the Lillehammer 1994 Games because he had been drafted to serve a year in the Czech army, and finished an agonizing fourth at Nagano in 1998. "I've landed that jump just three times," he admitted later. "I used it as my lucky shot at a medal."

Luck was on his side, and Valenta gained the lead. Deciding he could not afford to be conservative on his final jump, Bergoust took a step back from his starting position, starting higher to gain more air. But then, something went wrong. He accelerated too quickly and while his jump was strong, Bergoust slapped his back on the landing. The fans gasped. As the scores appeared, they gasped again: Air Bergy had earned just 218.5 points, tumbling from first to 12th place.

"I wanted to get gold or last," said Bergoust. "And I got last."

In a heartbeat, the pendulum of attention had swung to Valenta, who won not only gold but the same awe and admiration bestowed on Bergoust in 1998. "He's psycho, and he makes it look really easy," said Pack, who had earned the silver while Grichin won the bronze. "It's technique and confidence. Now, we're going to have to build bigger jumps and make it safer. Aleš is ahead of his time. I'm proud of him."

Champion, Deer Valley Resort's moguls course, stretched more than two football fields from top to bottom. Rippled with hundreds of moguls and two sets of kickers, it was easily one of the longest and most difficult courses in international competition. From where more than 13,600 fans sat for the women's competition on February 9, it looked daunting. From the start house, where the athletes tried to stay warm on the cold morning, prepped and pumped their fists, it looked like the future.

And it also looked like a whole lot of fun to the 29 women who bounced through the course during the qualifying round, heated by the climbing sun, the growing cheers of the crowd and the fluttering, colorful flags from around the world. In the ever-evolving sport—scored for turns, speed and maneuvers—the women pulled off more difficult moves from those displayed at the 1998 Games: triple position jumps and rotational spins with positions, which were rare at Nagano. By the end of the

run, Norway's Kari Traa, the 1998 bronze medalist and reigning world moguls champion, was in first place, with Americans Ann Battelle and Hannah Hardaway in second and third, respectively. There were big expectations for newcomer Hardaway and for Battelle, who had competed in the first Olympic moguls competition in 1992 and nearly quit after a 10th place finish at Nagano. But she had come back to earn respectable finishes, and was giving a medal another shot. "I'm putting a lot of pressure on myself," she had admitted before the competition.

The pressure would prove too much for Battelle and Hardaway, who slipped to seventh and fifth place, respectively, in the finals. Then there was fellow American Shannon Bahrke, who was in fifth place after the qualifying round. Overcome by a severe back infection in 1999, Bahrke was told by doctors that she'd never ski at a world-class level again. Recovered and having climbed the international rankings, she would prove them wrong. Looking down the course and listening to the crowd, she did something unusual for an athlete about to begin the most important run of her life: She smiled. "I knew something great was going to come," she said later. "And I just stood at the top smiling, and the smile hasn't left yet."

Her performance—including a spectacular heli-iron cross—landed Bahrke in the lead, temporarily. And even when she was pushed to silver by Traa's superior run, with her own heli-iron cross and triple twister, Bahrke was overjoyed to have won America's first medal of the Games. In third was Tae Satoya, the surprise Nagano 1998 gold medalist who surprised the world again with her bronze. She had traded places with Traa, who had given up chocolate in 1999, lost 20 pounds and soon dominated the sport. Though she was expected to win gold, Traa spoke with the amazement of a rising star. "I was so nervous while I was waiting for my score," she said. "I'm just so happy that I made it."

For three days, the Champion course underwent a slight metamorphosis, softening under the sunshine and freezing at night. The bumps were now even tougher for the men, who competed on February 12. "This is a really long course," said spectator Glen Plake, a pioneer of freestyle skiing in the 1980s. "This is going to be crazy. It's hard to tell what's going to happen. There are a lot of aces here and a few new tricks. Who knows?"

Among the new tricks expected was American Jonny Moseley's dinner roll, a controversial off-axis, horizontal 720-degree spin in which a skier rotates twice with his body parallel to the ground. Moseley, the Nagano 1998 gold medalist, had been practicing and performing the maneuver over and over, delighting spectators but earning few points from the judges. Inverted moves, where skis are above the athlete's head, are prohibited in moguls competition, and the dinner roll, to some, came dangerously close to breaking the rules.

But freestyle skiing began by breaking the rules, and in the qualifying round, the crowd of 14,300 chanting his name in unison, Moseley pulled off what he called a perfect dinner roll, and then jumped over a fence to embrace a group of fans. He had made the final round, earning an 11th place berth. Later, Sam Temple of Great Britain earned equally loud cheers when he fell halfway through the run and hiked back up the hill to gain more air off the second kicker. He had no chance at medaling, but there was still some room for fun. "I wanted to jump for the crowd, really," he said. Spectators were treated to sportsmanship and showmanship: Teppei Noda of Japan also clambered up the hill after a fall to retrieve his ski and complete the run, while 1994 gold medalist Jean-Luc Brassard wore bright yellow sleeves on his legs to draw attention to his bouncing knees.

American Travis Mayer was in first position after the first run, followed by four-time Olympian and Nagano 1998 silver medalist Janne Lahtela of Norway and then Finland's Mikko Ronkainen. In the finals, Lahtela, who had won nearly every major competition in the two years before the Games,

bumped Mayer from the lead with the fastest time and a quad twister followed by a triple twister spread. Mayer, who had told his family not to buy tickets to the event because he didn't expect to make the team, would earn the silver, while Richard Gay of France took the bronze and Lahtela won the gold. "You don't go to the Olympics to try something new," Lahtela said. "So I just did what I can do. All I can say is that it takes more than one good jump to win."

But two good jumps seemed just fine to Moseley, who threw another dinner roll and landed in fourth place. "I wanted to go big and go fast," Moseley said. "I think I stuck two sweet dinner rolls, and that was my goal. I feel like the people who really know the sport will consider what I did today as very bold and legendary."

Maybe they would. By day's end, the future of moguls skiing seemed wide open for all but a handful of skiers. A disappointed Brassard, who had been competing for 12 years, declared he would probably not return in four years. And it was also a career-ending day for American Evan Dybvig, 27, who blew out his knee while performing a 360-mute-grab—the move that won Moseley the gold in 1998—in the qualifying round. "There will be no more Olympics," said his wife, Sarah Ireland. "He's putting on a brave face. But it just breaks your heart." Icing his knee and watching his teammates during the final run, Dybvig turned to his five-month-old son and said softly, "I'm coming home, Owen."



Despite a shoulder injury, 1998 bronze medalist Dmitri Dashinski of Belarus placed seventh in aerals.

JOHN HUET



Aerialist Deidra Dionne of Canada won bronze in the women's competition. "I just went for it. I knew I could land it, I knew I could do it well," she said.

JOHN HUET



Gold medalist Ales Valenta of the Czech Republic slides to a stop. No other jumper attempted his trick, a quint-twisting triple backflip. "I don't think I can really believe what I've really done, what I achieved," he said.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



"In our sport, things change rapidly. A small mistake, a change of weather condition and in the wind can mean a change in the result." — Bronze medalist Alexei Gricbin, Belarus.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



Aerialist Stanislav Kravchuk of the Ukraine placed fifth on February 19, scoring a personal best of 246 points.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



More than 13,000 fans filled the stands at Deer Valley Resort for aerials finals. "Unbelievable," said silver medalist Joe Pack of the United States of America. "To hear the crowd yell when I landed pushed me back probably 10 feet."

IAN LOGAN



With sunny skies, music blasting and stands full of spectators who had been camped in their seats since the early morning, Deer Valley Resort's freestyle arena was part sporting venue, part rock concert.

C H A D H O L D E R



*"If you make the U.S. Olympic team, that's a life achievement. No one can ever take that away from you."
— Silver medalist Joe Pack, United States of America*

J O H N H U E T



"I am scared to do a triple here. This hill, it scares me." – Aerialist Alla Tsuper of Belarus, above

DAVID BURNETT



Aerialists must measure their takeoff from the kickers precisely or risk disaster. "You can take a half-meter step up and you can miss everything and land on your back," said bronze medalist Alexei Gricbin of Belarus. "The wind changes every time, and it's so difficult to land the right way."

I A N L O G A N



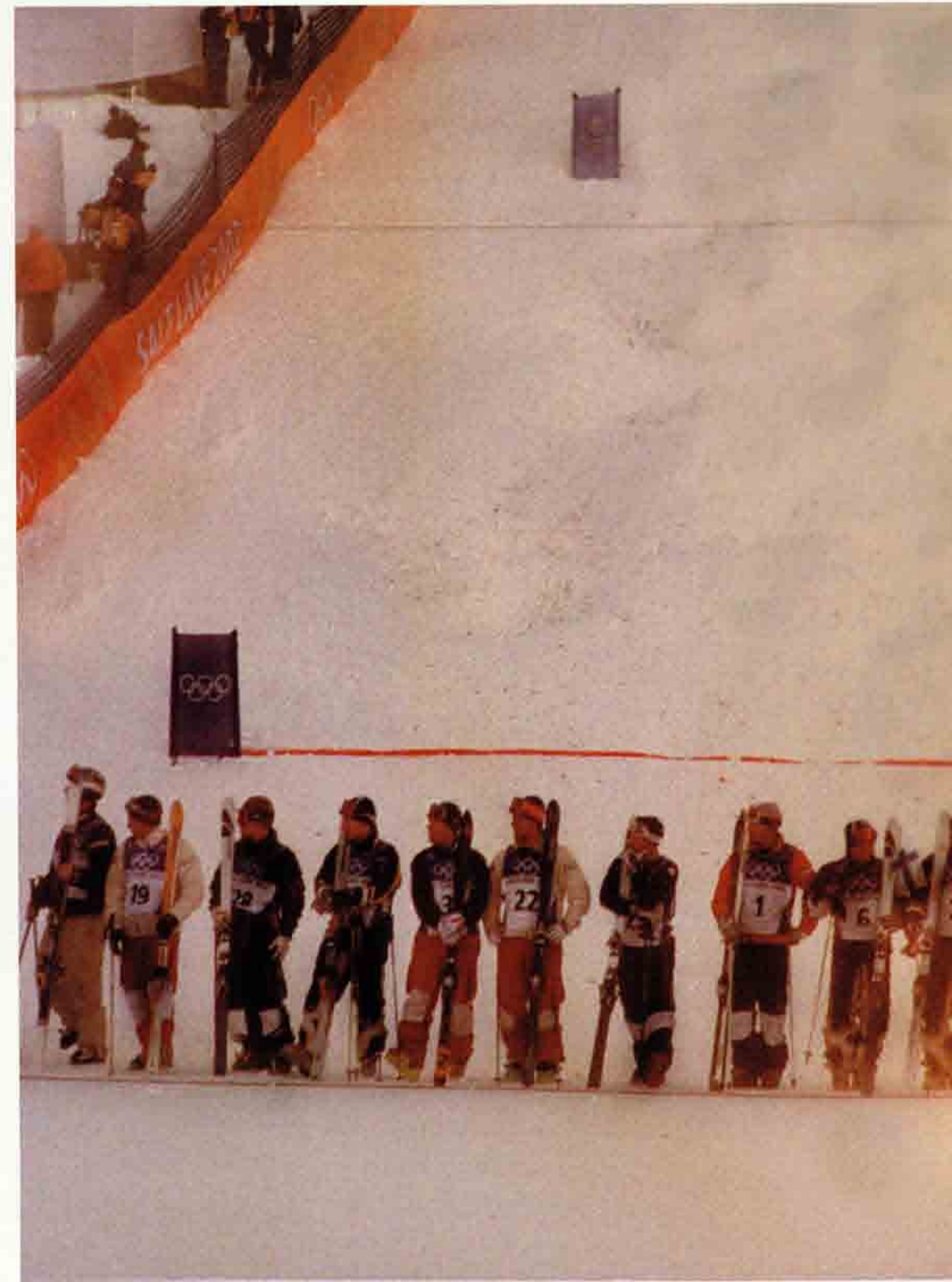
Russian mogul skier Marina Cherkasova does a doffy at Deer Valley Resort.
 "The course is very long and difficult," she said. "You have to be strong."

A N D Y A N D E R S O N



"When you compete, you don't feel the pain." — Gold medalist Kari Traa of Norway, on the payoff of exhaustive hours of training on knee-pounding mogul fields

Y I B O R N E M E T H



The men's moguls finalists are announced after qualifying for the medal round.

J O H N H U E T



"I heard the crowds cheering. It gave me such an energy boost. They spurred me on at the end, and it was an immense feeling." — Laura Donaldson of Great Britain (above), despite having placed last in the women's moguls event.

TIBOR NEMETH (ABOVE)

Deer Valley Resort's Champion course (right) measured 537 feet long, with a 25-degree pitch.

ALBERT COLANTONIO (RIGHT)





American Jonny Moseley's dinner roll—an off-axis, horizontal 720-degree spin, above—won him adoration from the crowd. After pulling off the tricky maneuver, he jumped into a group of cheering fans at the finish line. "I just went and jumped into them and got so much love," he said. "It felt great."

J O H N H U E T



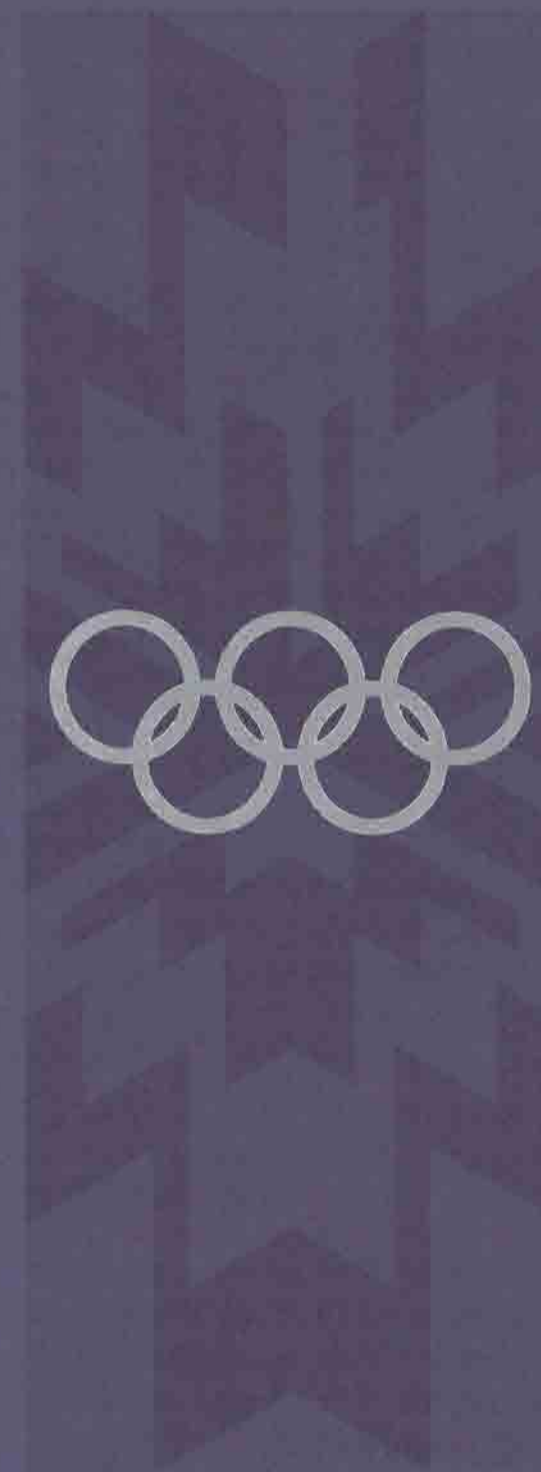
"In 1992, I was 9 years old and I started dreaming about the Olympics then."—Men's moguls silver medalist Travis Mayer, United States of America

I A N L O G A N



The helicopter, an upright aerial spin of 180 degrees, was one of several maneuvers displayed by 59 mogulists at Deer Valley Resort.

TIBOR NEMETH





S N O W B O A R D I N G • THE SPORT'S FIRST STEPS INTO THE OLYMPIC MOVEMENT WERE SHAKY. AT ITS DEBUT AT THE NAGANO 1998 GAMES, SNOWBOARDERS' ATTITUDES, FIERCE INDIVIDUALISM AND EVER-CHANGING MANEUVERS SEEMED TO CONFLICT WITH AGE-OLD OLYMPIC TRADITIONS. "THIS SPORT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT YOUTH AND PROGRESSION," SAID JAKE BURTON, A SNOWBOARDING PIONEER WHO POPULARIZED THE SPORT, BEFORE THE GAMES. "SNOWBOARDERS DON'T NEED THE OLYMPICS." • BUT AT THE SALT LAKE 2002 GAMES, SNOWBOARDING GREW UP.



Park City Mountain Resort's halfpipe venue elicited praise from nearly every competitor. "This is completely different from anything I've ever seen before," said bronze medalist J.J. Thomas of the United States of America. "It sets the standard for snowboarding."

T I B O R N E M E T H

Athletes were impressed by Park City Mountain Resort's high-tech halfpipe and challenged by the new parallel format of the giant slalom. Inspired by the sold-out crowds, they threw down new tricks and flew down the course at record speeds. And the snowboarders, in turn, inspired spectators with their struggles, successes and genuine smiles. It was about youth and progression, but it was also about having fun, with the whole world watching.

The halfpipe event at Park City Mountain Resort often seemed more like a party than a competition. Just below the finish area and judges' tower, rock bands played in between rounds, the music blasting into the bleachers from giant speakers. Impromptu mosh pits formed. Some spectators surfed the crowd, others stripped down to T-shirts, smearing on sunblock while they danced under the bright blue skies.

But at the top of the course, there was no mistaking the intensity of this competition. As athletes strapped onto their boards, they peered down into their proving ground: the enormous halfpipe. At one time, riders made the best of snow-covered drainage ditches. But the halfpipe at the Salt Lake 2002 Games was a beast. Nearly 15 feet high and 55 feet wide, it was sculpted from 175,000 cubic feet of snow and stretched 200 feet longer than most halfpipes. The height allowed for tricks three-stories high, and the length allowed for seven tricks per run, with more air time than in any previous competition.

On February 10, the women took to the pipe. After the qualifying round, 12 riders advanced to the final two runs. As the athletes dropped into the course, having selected their own music, the sounds of Aretha Franklin, Madonna and Britney Spears spilled over the mountain. During the first final run, France's Doriane Vidal earned a score of 43.0 for her smooth riding and massive air, becoming the first woman of the day to break 40. She was soon followed by American Kelly Clark, who scored 40.8 points and landed in second. Switzerland's Fabienne Reuteler was in third with 39.7.

At the beginning of the last run, it appeared that Vidal, who had hitchhiked to the event after waiting fruitlessly for a cab that morning, would win the gold. It would be difficult to top her impressive score. One by one, the top riders reached scores in the mid-to-high 30s, but nothing near Vidal's 43. Even Vidal failed to surpass her mark, earning a 36.5 on the second run of the finals.

"IT'S GREAT TO HAVE ALL THE PEOPLE HERE, ESPECIALLY THE YOUNG GIRLS. HOPEFULLY, I CAN BE A HERO FOR THEM."

The last to compete was Clark, a quiet teenager who had just graduated from high school. Riding with a mini-disc player blasting Blink 182's "This Is Growing Up," Clark tried to concentrate, drowning out the noise of 16,500 screaming fans. "The crowd was going wild," she said later. "I could hear it even over my headphones."

Clark's run was nearly flawless, a mix of seven difficult tricks that she pulled off with style and big air. After several tense seconds, her score popped up on the board. A 47.9; she had won the gold. The largely American crowd went even wilder.

"It's great to have all the people here today, and especially the young girls," said Clark. "Hopefully, I can be somewhat of a hero or a role model for them."

While the women's competition had thrilled snowboarding fans, nothing could prepare them for what would happen the following day. The men's halfpipe competition had a rough start, with several athletes crashing halfway down the pipe. But with the party atmosphere and energy of the huge crowd, even the athletes who fell began having fun. While waiting for his score—which he knew would be low—Japan's Kentaro Miyawaki fanned himself with a traditional Japanese fan and waved a Japanese flag.

The most fun, however, belonged to the Americans, who were riding higher and harder than ever before. In his first final run, Ross Powers expertly delivered tricks and what he called "the biggest airs in my life" earned him a score of 46.1. With a 1080—three complete spins in the air—Danny Kass was in second place with 42.5 points, and Tommy Czeschin, with 40.6 points, held third.

During the second final run, J.J. Thomas pulled into third place, earning a 42.1, just 0.4 points behind Kass. It seemed as if an American medal sweep—a feat not accomplished in any Olympic Winter Games sport since 1956—might be possible. The other riders came close, Japan's Takaharu Nakai missed the podium by 1.4 points and Italy's Giacomo Kratter was off by 0.1 point. The last competitor and biggest threat to the Americans, Finland's Heikki Sorsa, who had used an entire bottle of hair spray to style his mohawk, dropped into the halfpipe. When his run was over, the scoreboard flashed 40.4, and the crowd erupted.

The Americans had swept the event.

"I couldn't ask for anything more," said gold medalist Powers, who had turned 23 the day before. "It's the best birthday present ever. These guys beside me are huge. Today was the perfect day."

For most Olympians, winning an Olympic medal is the achievement of a lifetime. But for American Chris Klug, simply being alive to compete at the Salt Lake 2002 Games was miraculous. In April 2000, he was diagnosed with a rare liver disease, and a transplant was his only hope. For three months, the snowboarder suffered from immense pain and waited to see if a donor might be found, knowing he would die if one wasn't.

Klug's hopes were answered by members of the Flood family of Denver, Colorado. Their 13-year-old son, Billy, had been killed in an accidental shooting, and Billy's mother Leisa wanted to donate his organs. Klug underwent the surgery, and seven weeks later was snowboarding again. "I thank you every day of my life," Klug wrote in a letter to the Floods. "I am forever grateful and humbled by your decision. It is impossible to express with words my gratitude to you."

His appreciation would be expressed in actions. First, Klug made the Olympic team. When Leisa heard the news, she visited Billy's grave. "Son," she said, "We're going to the Olympics."

On February 15, Klug had advanced from the qualifying round and competed against 15 other riders in the men's parallel giant slalom finals at Park City Mountain Resort. Among the favorites were Slovenia's Dejan Kosir, France's Mathieu Bozzetto and Austrian Alexander Maier, brother of legendary alpine skier Hermann Maier.

While snowboarding giant slalom was an event at Nagano in 1998, the parallel format was entirely new for 2002. Competitors glided from the start house in synchronized elegance, often just feet from one another as they leaned in and out of gates. Some riders lost control—by gaining too much speed or losing their fall line—cut each other off, shot out of the course and were disqualified. After the elimination and quarterfinal rounds, the field had narrowed to four: France's Nicolas Huet, Richard Richardsson of Sweden, Switzerland's Philipp Schoch and American Chris Klug. The results were a surprise: Schoch had been in 15th place from the qualifying round, and Klug had been trailing in several of the day's races, holding on tenaciously.

WOMEN'S PARALLEL
GIANT SLALOM •

98

Then, as Klug raced against Schoch, the buckle on his five-year-old boots broke. Thinking quickly, he fixed the problem temporarily with a piece of scrap metal and some duct tape. "What I rigged up wasn't perfect or ideal," Klug said later. "But I just said to hell with it. If this buckle was going to decide whether I get third or fourth, to hell with it. If it works out it works out."

It worked out just enough for Klug to win the bronze, beating Huet in a photo finish. The gold would go to underdog Schoch, while Richard Richardsson won the silver.

"It's a miracle," said Klug. "I'm so lucky to be here today, and for it to have turned out like this is pretty special." The moment was also special for Leisa Flood, unable to attend the Games but supporting Klug from home. "They both won," said Flood of the snowboarder with the bronze medal and her son, who gave Klug the gift of life.

Maybe it was her singing that helped. Or perhaps the guitar she took with her on the road. Either way, French snowboarder Isabelle Blanc said her music helped grab the gold in the women's parallel giant slalom. Blanc had begun taking singing lessons while training for the Games, and found that they helped her to become stronger, and to express her emotions. "I can put all of those feelings into singing," she said. "I can get out all of those things and be Zen at competitions."

During the Games, Blanc was often seen playing her guitar at the CoffeeHouse in the Olympic Village. She dedicated one song, "Elle Glisse (She Slides)," to French alpine skier Régine Cavagnoud, who was killed earlier that season when she collided with a ski coach.

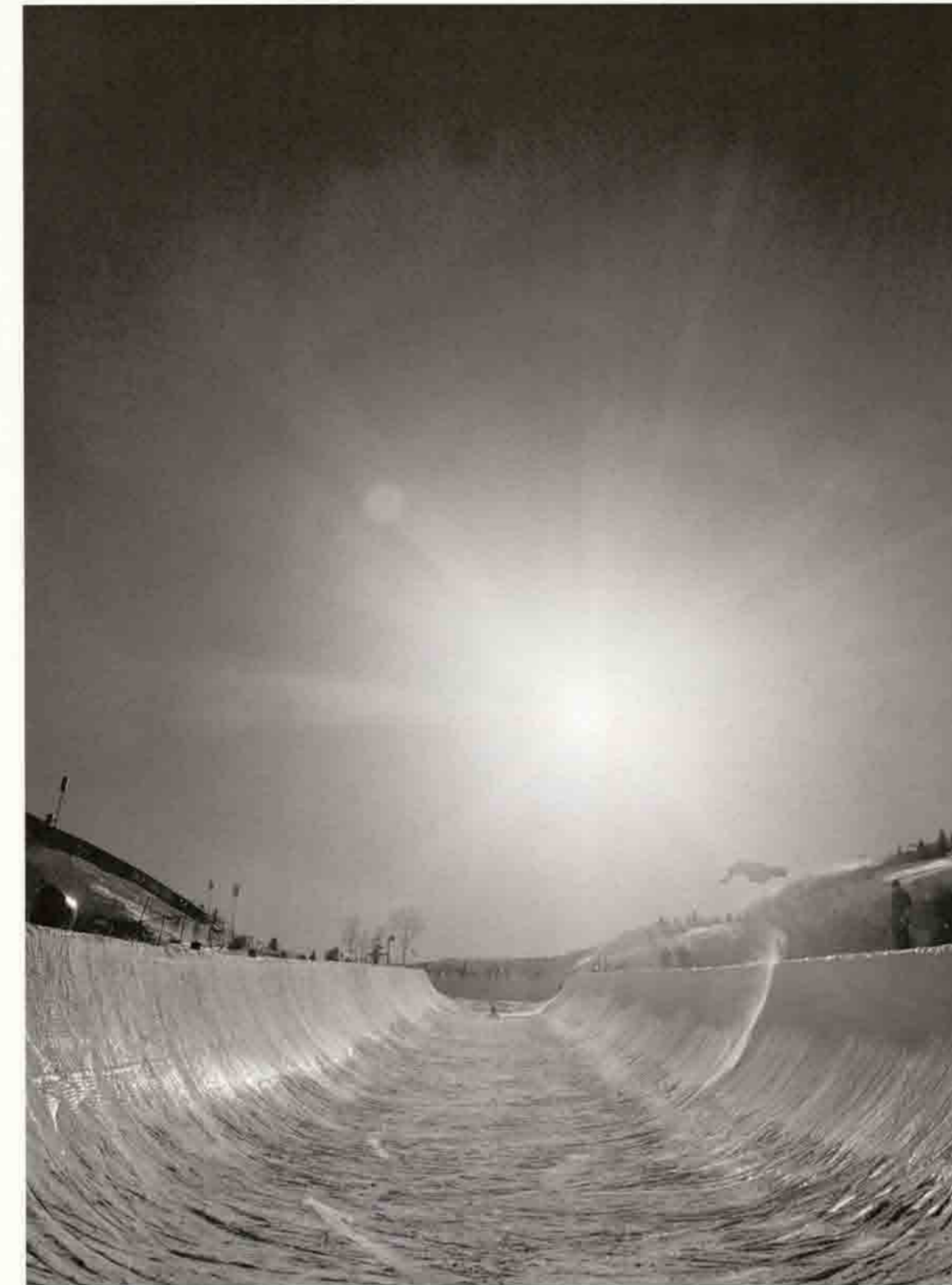
"My dream is to sing, and my sport is to go fast," she said. "So, I have to do both. I've been taking singing lessons, and I really think that's helped me as an athlete. It helps me believe in what I'm doing and the people around me."

On February 15, the people around her were the 15 other snowboarders who had advanced to the finals. Alternating heats with the men, the women raced head-to-head in eight races each. Isabelle Blanc's teammate Karine Ruby, who edged Blanc out for the gold medal at Nagano in 1998, was heavily favored to win again.

While other riders fell in the competition, Blanc managed to stay on her feet, blowing past Switzerland's Steffi Von Siebenthal in the first round and France's Julie Pomagalski in the quarterfinals. Poland's Jagna Marczulajtis nearly ended Blanc's streak in a neck-and-neck race in the semifinals, but was disqualified in her second run, allowing Blanc to move to the finals.

Meanwhile, Ruby, ill with a fever, had also advanced to the finals. But she faltered in the first of the two runs, giving Blanc the lead by nearly 2 seconds. It was a lead that Ruby could not recover. Blanc took the gold medal, Ruby the silver and Italy's Lidia Trettel captured the bronze.

The moment, Blanc would say, was pure Zen.



99

Park City Mountain Resor's halfpipe was 525 feet long with walls of 14.8 feet.

"I just dropped in and tried to get as much speed as I could," said American gold medalist Ross Powers.

"Those are probably some of the biggest airs I've ever done in a halfpipe, if not the biggest."

JOHN HUET



Halfpipe silver medalist Danny Kass delivered just about every rotational trick in the book: an inverted 720, a corked 900 and a cab 1080, in which he did three complete spins in the air.

I A N L O G A N



"There's a certain fear factor. You really have to let go and be confident in yourself. You have to be really confident in the air because you're up there a long time." – Women's halfpipe gold medalist Kelly Clark, United States of America

I A N L O G A N

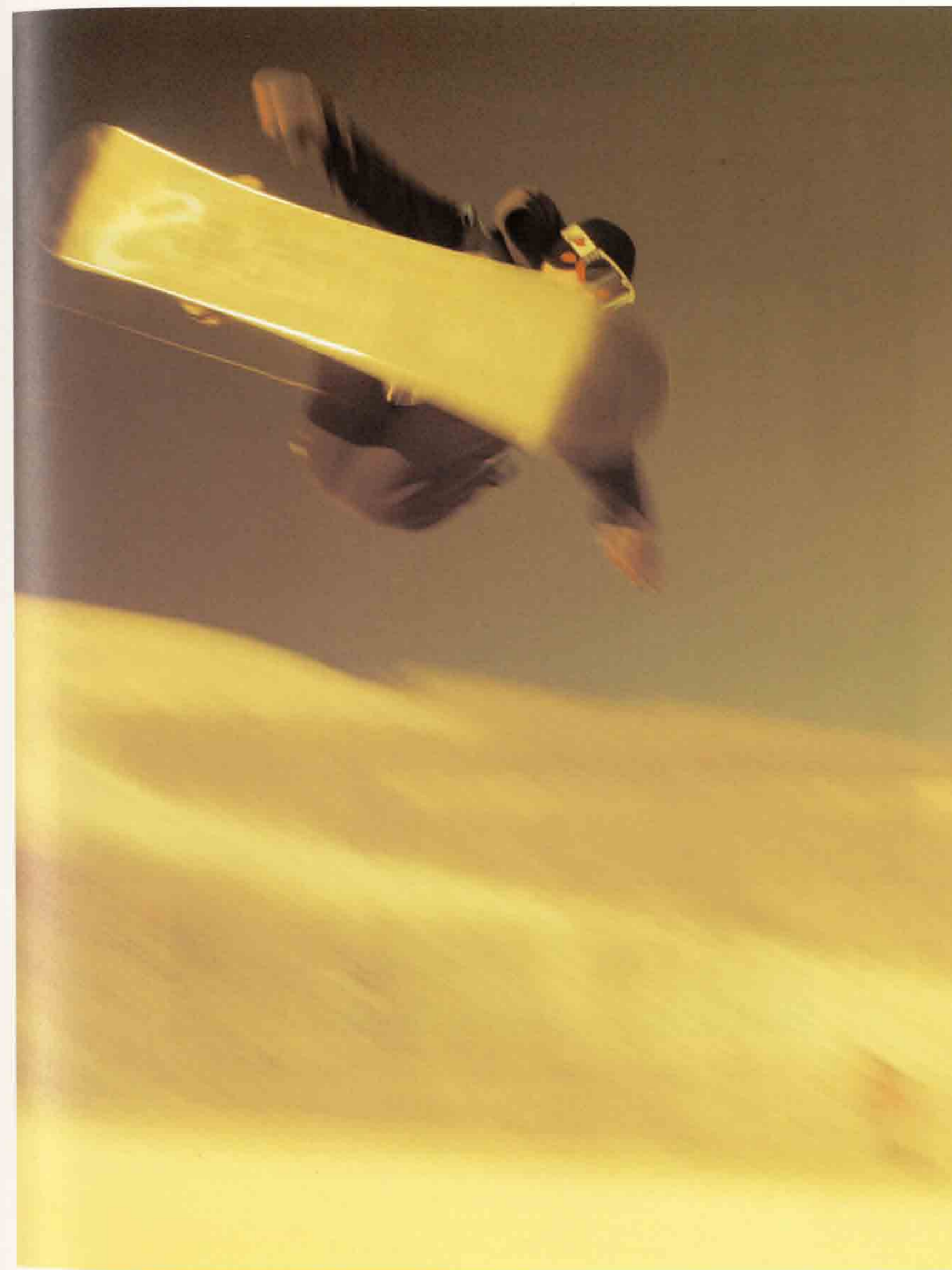


Riders compete in the women's qualification round at Park City Mountain Resort.

T I B O R N E M E T H (A B O V E)

"I'm aiming for some big air." — Tommy Czeschin, United States of America

I A N L O G A N (R I G H T)





Ross Powers displays his gold-medal moves over the historic town of Park City.

T I B O R N E M E T H



"The whole thing has been great. The Opening Ceremony, the crowd here—the Olympics are huge. When you're at the top, and can hear the crowd cheer and know that they're behind us. It's just awesome."
 — Men's halfpipe gold medalist Ross Powers, United States of America

E L I S A B E T H O ' D O N N E L L



"I've competed there before, and I've seen maybe 50 people, and here there were 20,000. It was sold out. I thought it would be distracting, but it was like taking snowboarding and putting it in an arena."

—Parallel giant slalom racer Lisa Kosglou, United States of America

SHEILA METZNER



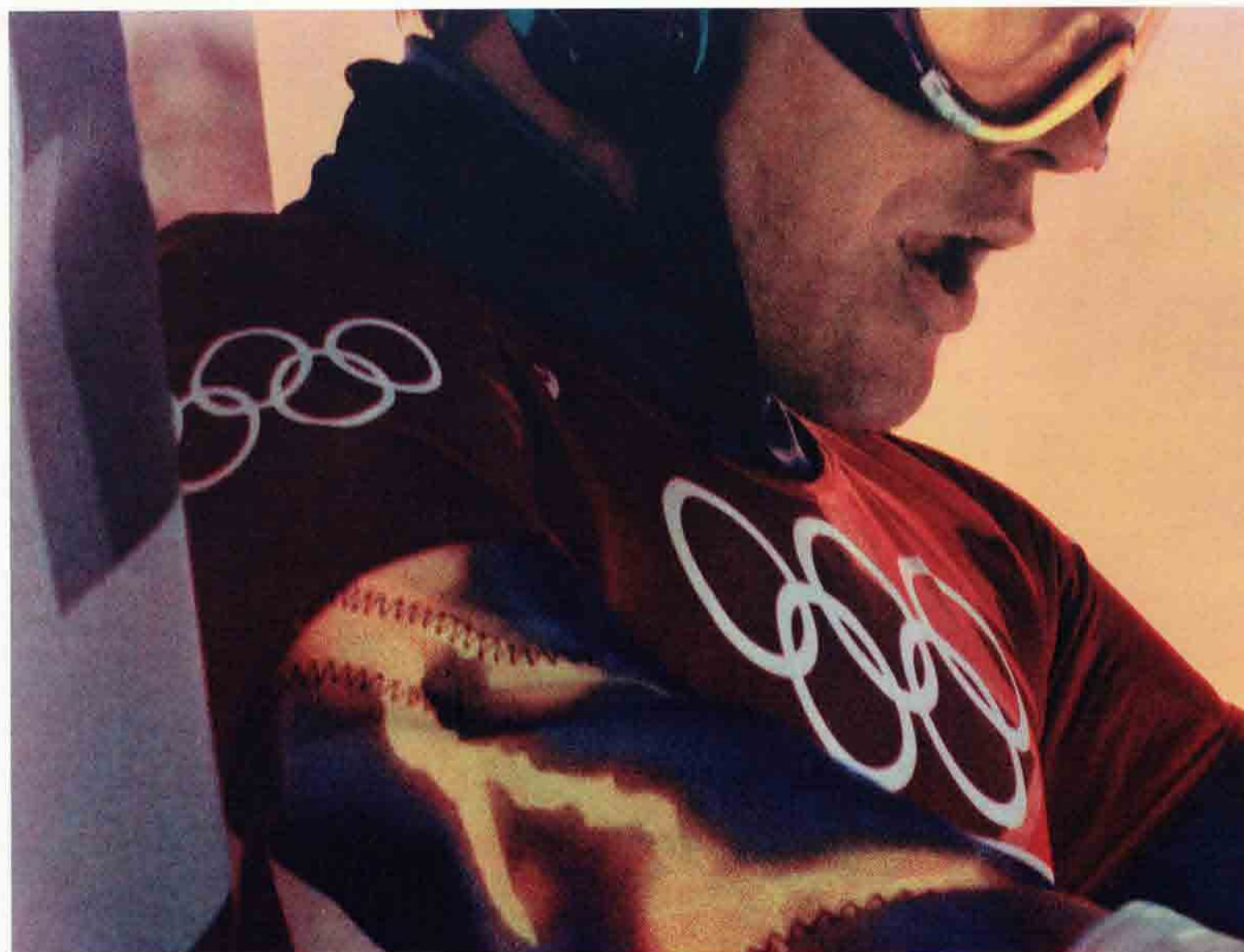
"Once you're in the Olympics, everything is really different. But once you're in the race, it's the same as you do every other day." — Parallel giant slalom silver medalist Richard Richardson of Sweden (above)

I A N L O G A N



While snowboarding giant slalom was featured at Nagano in 1998, the parallel format was entirely new for 2002. The result was a nonstop, action-packed morning of head-to-head racing, with athletes often flying off the course.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



"Usually I'm pretty good at handling the pressure. I think I just want to do well so badly that it can almost be counterproductive sometimes. I just need to focus on relaxing and doing what I know how to do best." – Liver transplant survivor Chris Klug, United States of America, one day before he won the bronze medal in snowboarding parallel giant slalom

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



"I'm not one who can do a really safe run. When my coach says to do 80 percent I say 'OK, I'll try,' but then I can't do it." – Gilles Jaquet of Switzerland

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R



Swiss snowboarder Simon Schoch (above) was defeated in the elimination round of parallel giant slalom. His brother Philipp, however, won the gold.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



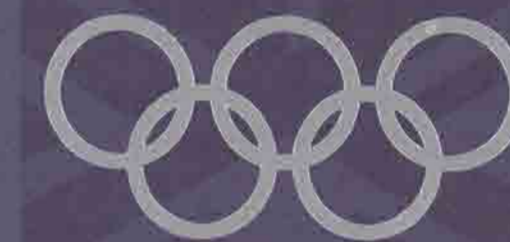
Lidia Trettel of Italy, the fourth-place finisher at Nagano in 1998, and Jagna Marczulajtis of Poland competed against each other for third place in the women's parallel giant slalom. "When I was running for third or fourth, I thought that I cannot have another fourth place. So I pushed harder," said Trettel, who won the bronze.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



*"Snowboarders are athletes like any other athletes. I really feel the Olympic Spirit. I feel like I train hard all year.
We've proven that people should respect our sport." —Karine Ruby, France*

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R





SKI JUMPING • FLIGHT HAS LONG FASCINATED HUMANS. FROM THE MYTH OF ICARUS TO THE WRIGHT BROTHERS' 1903 AIRPLANE, THERE HAS BEEN A QUEST TO SOAR WITH THE BIRDS, TO SEE THE WORLD FROM ABOVE, TO FLOAT FREELY IN THE SKY. IN 1860, A NORWEGIAN BY THE NAME OF SONDRÉ NORHEIM DECIDED THAT SKIS, NOT WINGS, COULD GRANT HIM THE POWER TO FLY. HE LAUNCHED OFF A SNOW-COVERED ROCK AND FLEW 30 METERS, BECOMING THE WORLD'S FIRST-KNOWN SKI JUMPER. SOON, MORE DAREDEVILS BEGAN COMPETING FOR



Just two days after jumping to gold on the K90 hill, Switzerland's Simon Ammann (number 58) looks down at 20,000 who gathered to see the K120 competition—and to see him soar once again.

DAVID BURNETT

distance while the masses gathered to watch from below: Some 150,000 spectators gathered for ski jumping at the Oslo 1952 Games. Fifty years later, we assembled again, at Utah Olympic Park, to gaze upward as a few brave took flight through the thin air. We stargazers were treated not only to an athletic event, but to an amazing spectacle of men in silver and orange suits, of German electricians and Finnish students and Austrian soldiers laying down their tools, weapons and books to compete as equals. And we were bedazzled by a young Swiss jumper who resembled a flying wizard. His humility, good humor and gentility made our own hearts soar.

On the eve of Salt Lake 2002 Games, several names swirled in the air as K90 medal contenders. There was Adam Malysz of Poland, who had been competing since he was 6, and won back-to-back overall season titles in 2000–01 and 2001–02. Germany's Sven Hannawald was a two-time Olympic medalist who had just swept the prestigious Four Hills Tournament in Germany and Austria, the first jumper to do so in the 50-year history of the event. Strong showings were also expected from Finland and Austria, whose team featured four-time Olympic medalist Martin Hoellwarth. Missing from the buzz was Switzerland's Simon Ammann, a 20-year-old who had never won a World Cup event in his career. He had taken a terrible fall just one month before the Games, which left him with a concussion, a back injury and several cuts and contusions to his face.

But Ammann's bruises healed, and on February 10, it appeared that his confidence had never suffered. The field of ski jumpers had been whittled down from 60 to 50 in the qualification round on February 9. With clear blue skies, only a whisper of wind and the stands packed with 20,000 spectators, the athletes were ready to soar. In the first of two jumps, Ammann flew 98 meters and landed atop the leader board, ahead of Malysz, Hannawald and the others. For the second jump, athletes competed in order of scores from lowest to highest, so Ammann was slated to jump last. With three jumpers left, Finns held the top three spots. Malysz's jump of 98 meters was good enough to propel him past the Finnish athletes and into the top spot. Malysz had guaranteed himself a medal; the first Pole to do so in the Olympic Winter Games since Wojciech Fortuna won ski jumping gold in 1972.

Hannawald was next, and his 99-meter leap knocked Malysz down to second place with one jumper left. Ammann began his descent down the in-run—knees bent, leaning forward, hands clasped behind his back. Launching from the take-off point, his skis splayed in a perfect V position, Ammann soared through the crisp, thin air for 98.5 meters. Sliding to a stop, he knew that in order to best Hannawald, he needed near-perfect style points. Scarcely able to wait for the results, Ammann peered anxiously through his skis at the scoreboard, as if somehow hiding would lessen the impact of what he was about to see. But what he saw overjoyed him. A second-jump score of 135.5 points (based on distance and style) won him Olympic gold. It was the first ski jumping medal for Switzerland since Walter Steiner took silver in 1972. Ammann's teammates and coaches mobbed him in the snow.

Later, atop the podium at the Olympic Medals Plaza, he was ecstatic. In the shimmering silver cape of the Swiss uniform, with his tousled hair and eyeglasses, he bore more than a passing resemblance to Harry Potter, the immensely popular children's literature character who also shared Ammann's ability to fly. "I always thought, 'Go ahead and do your dreams,'" he said. "But the gold medal...I never expected. Never."

If Ammann was bewildered by his K90 win, nothing could have prepared him for the events of February 13, and the weeks following. Along with Hannawald and Malysz (who took silver and bronze, respectively, in the K90) and 11 more athletes, Ammann had already qualified for the K120 finals and thus took a few practice jumps during the qualifier on February 12. Thirty-six others jumped

well enough to advance, including Japan's Noriaki Kasai, who proclaimed, "Tomorrow, I will perform a miracle."

But as the competition unfolded, it was clear the miracle had been bestowed elsewhere. Once again, the quest for gold came down to the last three jumpers. Malysz leaped 128 meters, good enough for the top of the list and another medal, guaranteed. Tied with Hannawald for the lead coming into the final round, Ammann skied next, his 133-meter jump topping his previous effort by half a meter. As he skidded to a stop in the outrun area, all eyes moved to the top of the in-run, where Hannawald sat on the starting bar. He needed to equal or surpass Ammann's score to claim gold. He shoved off and gained speed. As he jumped, things looked up for Hannawald—plenty of distance, good form. But then he touched ground and couldn't hold the telemark landing, falling back onto his skis and out of medal contention. It would be fourth for the German soldier and electrician. Finland's Matti Hautamäki took the bronze, aware that his medal was the result of a simple twist of fate. "I was lucky because Sven was unlucky," he said.

Malysz took second place, inflating his already considerable popularity in his homeland of Poland with a second podium appearance. "I can't find words to express how happy I am," Malysz gushed after the race. "My dream was to win a medal, and now I have two!"

"TO CARRY ON QUIETLY," SAID SIMON AMMANN. "THAT'S ABOUT THE ONLY WAY TO GO ABOUT SKI JUMPING."

Simon Ammann, meanwhile, had soared into Olympic history. Against the odds, he became the first ski jumper since Finland's Matti Nykaenen at the Calgary 1988 Games to win both the K90 and K120 events. "I am trembling," he said, his voice cracking. "It's been a crazy day and a crazy week. I never would have believed that this could be possible."

Soon, Ammann took flight again—on a plane to his native Switzerland, where he was greeted as a national hero. Thousands of fans had been waiting for him at the Zurich Airport, and traveled with him on a specially decorated train toward the village of Unterwasser, where he was raised. There were breads, cakes, pizzas and two songs created in his honor, while admirers showered him with love letters, wedding proposals and such gifts as a car, a golden cell phone, even a live pig. (Having grown up on a farm, Ammann proclaimed he liked the pig best.) It was a magical ending to a magical tale, but the boy wonder remained grounded by his remarkable accomplishments and instant celebrity. "To carry on quietly," the Olympian said. "That's about the only way to go about ski jumping."

The extraordinary happenings would only continue as the final ski jumping event unfolded. With four athletes per nation jumping just two times each in the K120 team, one poor jump threatened to damage a team's overall standing. So with Germany, Austria and Finland claiming nine of the top 11 jumpers in the world, the three medal positions seemed a near certainty. Japan, composed of the athletes who won four medals at the Nagano 1998 Games, including team gold, also hoped to be jumping into medal contention.

Throughout the competition, the leaderboard was in a constant state of change. After all the athletes had completed one jump, Germany and Finland sat in the first and second positions, respectively, less than 10 points apart. But it was not Austria in third, nor was it Japan. Thanks to Robert

Kranjec's jump of 133 meters—the longest jump of the day—it was Slovenia. In only its fourth Olympic Winter Games appearance, with only two jumpers in the top 20 World Cup standings, the tiny Baltic nation held a surprising 11.5-point lead over Austria heading into the final round of jumping.

As the second round progressed, strong jumps from Kranjec and teammates Damjan Fras, Peter Zonta and two-time World Cup champion Primož Peterka widened the scoring gap with Austria, solidifying Slovenia's third-place standing. The gold medal, though, still hung in the balance. After three jumpers each, the margin between Germany and Finland had narrowed to just under six points. There were just two jumps left. Finland's Janne Ahonen went first, flying 125.5 meters to a score of 126.9 points. Germany's gold-medal hopes rested on Martin Schmitt, a student and four-time World Cup champion. Schmitt needed 121.3 points or more to capture gold for Germany. After gliding down the in-run and launching skyward, he stopped and waited for his score. Suddenly, the numbers on the board shifted.

In first: Schmitt and his teammates, with 974.1 points. They had edged out Finland by just one-tenth of a point for the gold, the closest Olympic team competition ever. Celebrating with the Germans at the base of the hill, Schmitt performed one more jump, a backflip. "They [the Finns] also deserve the gold medal," he said. "This is the kind of competition where one day you win, and one day you lose." Added teammate Michael Uhrmann, "Today, we were not better, we were the luckier ones."

The bronze was Slovenia's only medal of the Games, and Kranjec accepted third place with unbridled joy. "I knew we would do well, maybe as high as top six, but we were surprised to get the bronze," he said. "I'm going to sleep with my medal. Not just tonight, every night, always."



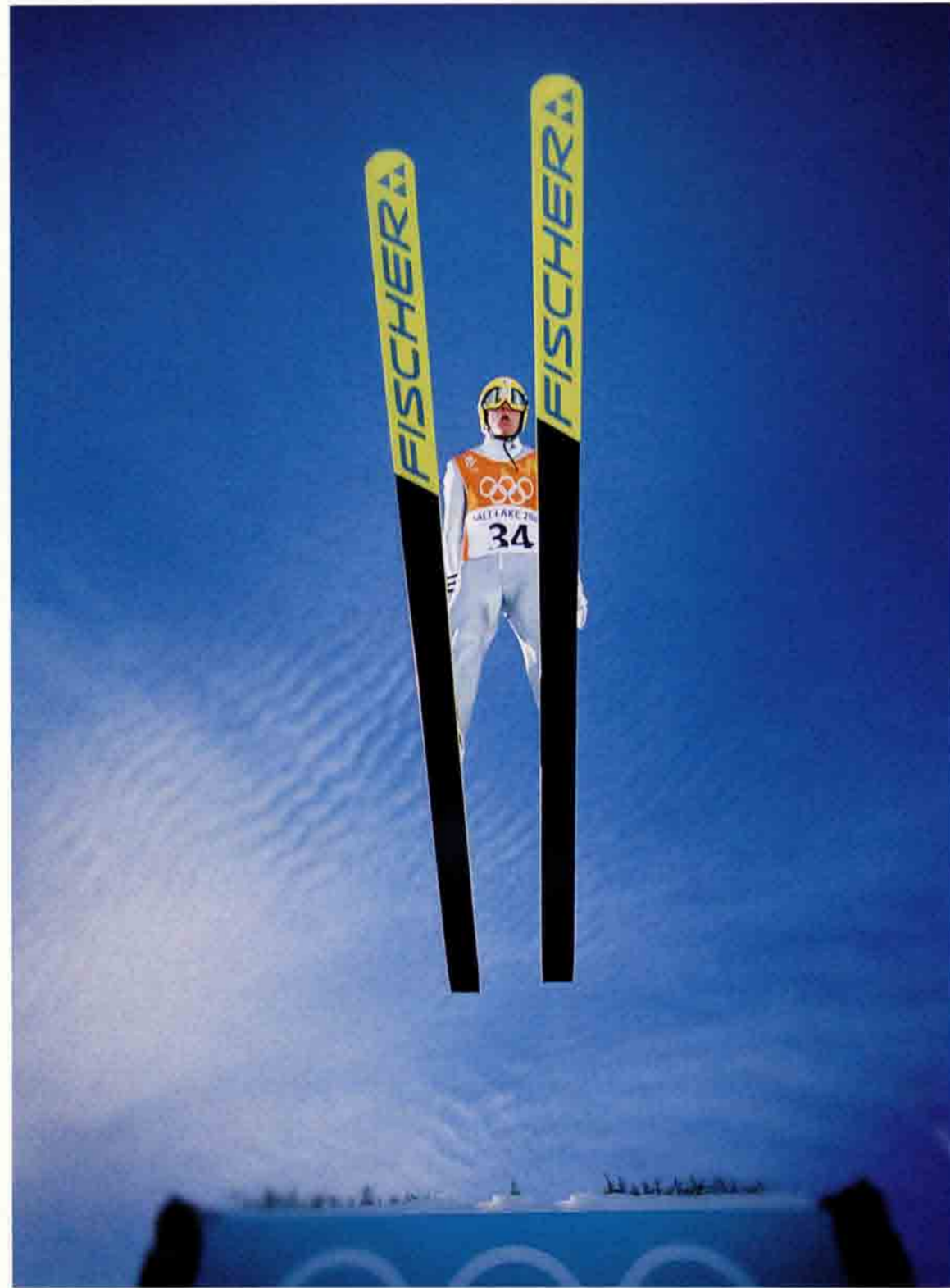
Pine boughs spread across the landing hill provide athletes a sense of depth perception. Set five meters apart, the boughs also aid officials with the manual measurement of a jump should the electronic system fail.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



"You tell us, without words but through your actions, that life is a beautiful thing, exciting and dramatic and full of the potential for joy." - Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney

RAYMOND MEEKS



Finland's Veli-Matti Lindström soars off the K120 on February 13.

STEVEN CURRIE



Roar Ljøkelsøy of Norway trains on the K120 hill in the early morning.

DAVID BURNETT



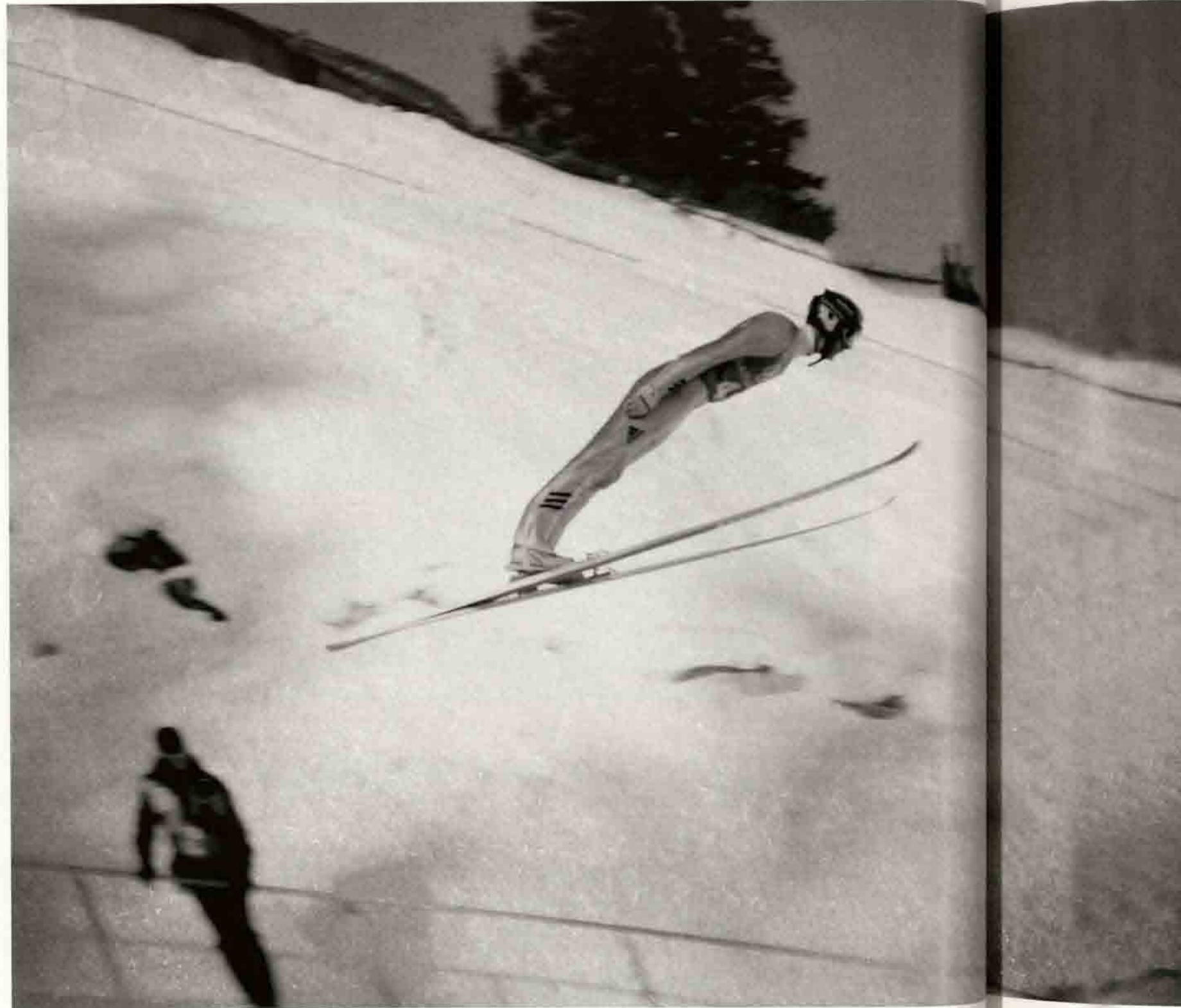
"From the outside it probably looks like I am very relaxed and cool. But inside it is completely different." – Gold medalist Steen Hannawald, Germany

JOHN HUET



After reaching speeds of 55 miles per hour on the in-run, ski jumpers launched off the highest-altitude jumps in the world and covered distances of 2.5 football fields.

JOHN HUET



"The idea of flying is extraordinary. You don't need any extra assistance, any parachute. It's just taking off, and it's an extraordinary feeling." – Simon Ammann of Switzerland, gold medalist in the K90 and K120 events

ANDY ANDERSON



A Korean ski jumper gathers the immense focus required for the task ahead.

ANDY ANDERSON



Unlike other ski jumping hills, Utah Olympic Park's K90 and K120 sites were carved into the natural contours of the land, providing a stunning backdrop for competitors and spectators.

JOHN HUET



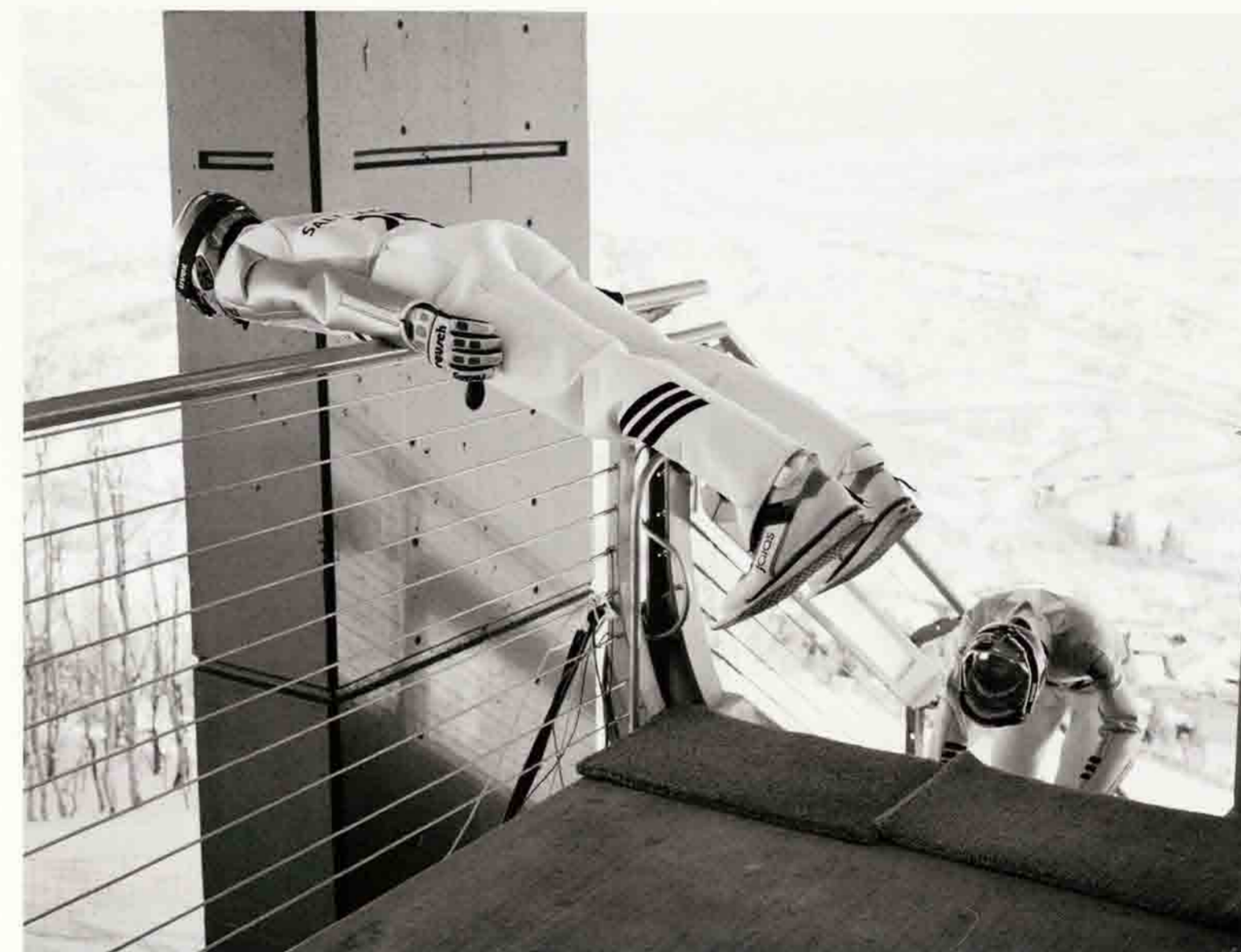
Finland's Matti Hautamäki, bronze medalist in the K120 individual event, takes his turn in the team jump. It would be the closest such competition in Olympic history, with Germany winning by just one-tenth of a point.

JOHN HUET



"A champion is someone who surpasses personal limits. This means that all of you can be champions, regardless of your final ranking." — IOC President Jacques Rogge

DAVID BURNETT



Michael Uhrmann of Germany prepares for the K120 individual event, in which he would place 10th, a disappointing finish after struggling through the season prior to the Salt Lake 2002 Games. But Uhrmann was soon elated by Germany's narrow defeat of Finland in the team competition. "I would like to thank my coaches for trusting me," he said after the victory.

DAVID BURNETT



In the early 1990s, the aerodynamically superior V style of jumping replaced the traditional method of keeping one's skis parallel in flight.

STEVEN CURRIE (ABOVE)

"You don't hear anything, in terms of little noises or people talking. All you do hear is the sound of your skis sliding on the snow, the air moving around your helmet. When you actually jump, all you hear is the air noise, and once you stop at the bottom of the hill, then everything comes back, the sound of people." — Alan Alborn, United States of America

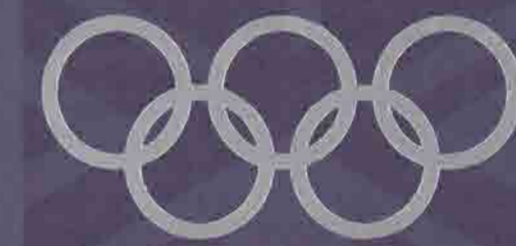
DAVID BURNETT (RIGHT)





A Finnish jumper steadies himself after landing during the K120 team event. "Germany was a little better today, that's all" - Janne Ahonen, Finland.

A N D Y A N D E R S O N





N O R D I C C O M B I N E D • HIS PERCH: A STEEL BAR ATOP A STEEP, SNOW-COVERED RAMP AT UTAH OLYMPIC PARK. HE IS MORE THAN 7000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL AND HUNDREDS OF FEET ABOVE A WALL OF FANS. HE PAUSES A MOMENT AND CATCHES HIS BREATH. HE CHECKS HIS GEAR ONE LAST TIME, THEN LETS GO. WHERE THE RAMP ENDS, HE PUSHES OFF WITH MASSIVE FORCE. IN THE THIN AIR, HE SHIFTS HIS SKIS INTO A V SHAPE AND PRESSES HIS TORSO FORWARD, FLOATING ELEGANTLY UNTIL HIS SKIS SLAP THE PACKED SNOW. HE DROPS A KNEE IN THE TRADITIONAL,



In the ski jumping portion of nordic combined, jumpers are scored on not just the distance but the style—during flight, landing and runout—with which the jump is executed.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S

telemark landing, a courtier bowing to the crowd. He spreads his arms and legs to slow down, spraying a fine mist of snow through the air.

But his job is only half done. His battlefield, the following day: Soldier Hollow, a beguiling land of meadows and aspens, and an infamous high-altitude cross-country course dreaded for its steep, unrelenting climbs and slick, sharp curves. Here, he assumes a new identity and turns his legs into powerful weapons. The gentleman has become a warrior, fighting for the finish.

Nordic combined athletes must have the precision and grace of a ski jumper, the power and endurance of a cross-country skier and nerves of steel. It is a delicate balance, and the competitors at the Salt Lake 2002 Games brought their own balancing acts. Finland's Sampa Lajunen played guitar in a rock band. Felix Gottwald of Austria and German Ronny Ackermann were soldiers. Ackermann was so focused on maintaining his balance, he had sworn off dating for a year before the Games. With Finn Jaakko Tallus, American Todd Lodwick and Japan's Daito Takahashi, these were the top contenders in three challenges: a K90 jump with a 15 km cross-country race, the team K90 and 4 x 5 km event, and the brand-new sprint event, a K120 jump with a 7.5 km race.

INDIVIDUAL K90/15 KM •

On February 9, nordic combined competition began. Forty-five athletes jumped three times each from Utah Olympic Park's K90 hill. Lajunen's performances landed him in third place, while his teammate Tallus was first and Austrian Mario Stecher was second. Ackermann earned a fifth place spot, Lodwick was just behind in seventh, Gottwald trailed in eleventh. Less than 24 hours later, at Soldier Hollow, the racers lined up for the 15 km race, consisting of three, 5-kilometer laps. According to the rules of nordic combined, each racer started a certain amount of time after the leader (Tallus) based on their scores from the jumping hill. Tallus started first, Stecher had a 48-second delay, Lajunen had a 53-second delay, and Gottwald was 2 minutes and 43 seconds behind.

Well before the 5-kilometer mark, Lajunen overtook Stecher to move into second place, 13.8 seconds behind Tallus. By the end of the second lap, he had taken a decisive lead, legs and arms pumping rhythmically with no signs of fatigue as he passed the stadium, head down, steady and unrelenting.

While Tallus clung stubbornly to second place, excitement built behind him. Gottwald, the World Cup leader from Austria, was making an incredible push from his 11th place start. By the second lap, he was closing in on the leaders—Finland's Lajunen and Tallus, German rival Ackermann and Austria's Stecher. By the last lap, he had a solid hold on third place behind Finns Lajunen and Tallus.

Lajunen, however, would not be overtaken. As he approached the finish line, he led Tallus by some 24 seconds—enough time to accept a Finnish flag from a fan and wave it as he skied the final meters, its vibrant blue cross matching not only the cloudless sky at Soldier Hollow, but also his hair, dyed blue for the Games. Lajunen took the gold, Tallus the silver and Gottwald the bronze. "That was one of the best competitions I have ever skied," Lajunen said. "This day was perfect."

TEAM K90/4 X 5 KM
RELAY •

Nordic combined is often considered the toughest of winter sports, and the team event was tough even before it began. Jumps were postponed two days because of bad weather. When the event finally began on February 16, Finland—Lajunen and Tallus with Jari Mantila and Hannu Manninen—earned the top combined jump score. The Austrian team was second, thanks to Stecher's outstanding jumps. The Austrians would start 44 seconds behind Finland in the next day's race. The American team, led by Lodwick, would begin the race third (1:34 behind Finland) with high hopes for a first-ever nordic combined medal. Japan and Germany followed, respectively, in a close fourth and fifth.

The race started fast—so fast that Lodwick and several others collapsed, exhausted, just inches past the exchange line. Lodwick even needed an oxygen mask to recover. Finland held the lead, with

Austria in second, and Germany's Björn Kircheisen skied impressively, passing Lodwick and Japan's Gen Tomii to move into third. In the third leg, German skier Marcel Hoehlig passed Austria's Stecher and claimed second place. The last lap was a matchup between Finland's Lajunen, Germany's Ackermann and Austria's Gottwald. Lajunen kept Finland's lead and won the gold, but Ackermann was breathing down his neck: Thanks to skiing at an all-out sprint pace, the German finished just 7.5 seconds behind Lajunen, claiming the silver medal for his team. Gottwald clinched the bronze for Austria, finishing 11 seconds behind dominant Finland.

And so for Lajunen, another perfect day.

INDIVIDUAL K120/7.5
KM SPRINT •

With a cross-country distance of only 7.5 km, the K120 sprint demands more aggressive jumps and more furious racing than the K90 individual event. After the jumping on February 21, the 7.5 km course at Soldier Hollow became a showdown among Finland's Lajunen, Austria's Gottwald and Germany's Ackermann. Gottwald's jumping on the K120, or large hill, had again placed him in 11th at the race's start, 51 seconds—a considerable gap in a race this short—behind first-place Lajunen. Ackermann, who had dominated sprint events throughout the season, started 15 seconds after Lajunen, with Finland's Tallus, Japan's Takahashi and Austrians Mario Stecher and Christoph Bieler on his heels. "There was only one way for me to go," Ackermann would later recall, "and that was attack."

The strategy was apparently the same for Gottwald. Within the first lap, he had skied from 11th into fourth place, fighting to overcome Tallus, who had begun third, and Lodwick, who was skiing tenaciously from his 12th place start toward the front of the pack, even holding third place briefly. By the third lap, Gottwald's challengers for the bronze had fallen away. Lodwick finished fifth, the highest place ever for an American in the nordic combined.

"THAT WAS ONE OF THE BEST COMPETITIONS I HAVE EVER SKIED," SAID SAMPPA LAJUNEN. "TODAY WAS PERFECT."

The event, however, and the six days of nordic combined competition, belonged to Lajunen. His head shaved of its Finnish-blue locks for the final day of racing, Lajunen displayed the confidence of a rock star and the physical power of a truly accomplished athlete. He maintained his lead to win yet another gold, nine seconds ahead of silver medalist Ackermann and a full 40 seconds ahead of bronze medalist Gottwald.

Asked if he was shocked by sweeping all three events, Lajunen shook his head. "When I was 17, I won a World Cup title," he said. "That was the year I was surprised."



"This sport is at its pinnacle. The best jumpers are skiing the best times right now, and they do it every time." — Todd Lodwick, whose 5th place finish in the individual K120/7.5 km earned him the highest spot ever for an American nordic combined athlete.

I A N L O G A N



"There was only one way for me to go, and that was attack." — Silver medalist Ronny Ackermann of Germany

D A V I D B U R N E T T



"You cannot win without being great at both sports." — Gold medalist Samppa Lajunen of Finland

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



Milan Kucera of the Czech Republic tests his limits against the cross-country course at Soldier Hollow in the fast-paced 7.5 km sprint.

SHEILA METZNER



At 7350 feet, Utah Olympic Park offered nordic combined athletes the highest world-class ski jumping venue in the world.

C H A D H O L D E R



Nordic combined athletes hope for head winds, which help lift them higher and carry them farther.

DAVID BURNETT



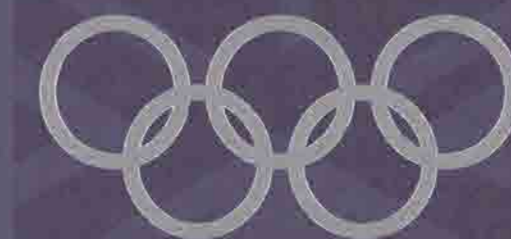
Norihito Kobayashi of Japan, Sverre Rotevatn of Norway and Pavel Churavý of the Czech Republic vie for position on one of the 7.5 km sprint's climbs, above.

SHEILA METZNER



"I won't forget the surroundings here anytime soon. It's just beautiful" – Björn Kircheisen, Germany

ELISABETH O'DONNELL





CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING IS THE OLDEST OF WINTER SPORTS AND DECEPTIVELY BEAUTIFUL. FROM A DISTANCE, THERE IS THE ELEGANCE OF THE RACERS, AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF SNOW-LADEN FIELDS, PINES AND ASPENS. LEGS AND ARMS STRIDE IN PURPOSEFUL, SYMMETRICAL ANGLES, THIN SKIS SKIMMING ACROSS THE SNOW. THE ONLY SOUND IS THE SWOOSH OF THE POLES. • OR IS IT? MOVE CLOSER, AND THERE ARE THE GASPS FOR BREATH AND THE GRUNTS OF EXHAUSTION AS THE ATHLETES SUMMON THE VERY LAST OF THEIR ENDURANCE FOR THE PUSH TO THE



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*"Everything is wonderful. It's like being in a fantasy.
I'm happy to represent my country."—Isaac Menyoli, Cameroon*

RAYMOND MEEKS

finish. Sweat is frozen to their cheeks, fear in their eyes as they glance over their shoulders to see a competitor approaching fast.

These were the cross-country skiers of the Salt Lake 2002 Games, who competed in 12 events ranging from the brand-new 1.5 km sprint to the arduous 50 km classical. At Soldier Hollow, they tested their lungs at high altitude and their legs on twisting, climbing trails. Each had a vision: to bring home another gold, to earn a first medal, to just finish at all. Their surprising performances embodied the Salt Lake 2002 theme of *Light the Fire Within*, as crowds packed into the stadium and lined the course, witnessing the power to inspire. From a distance or up close, it was simply beautiful.

WOMEN'S 15 KM
FREESTYLE *

Thirty-nine minutes and 54 seconds after the gun sounded in the women's 15 km freestyle, the first gold medal of the Salt Lake 2002 Games was earned on February 9. Italy's Stefania Belmondo, 33, and called the "Tiny Tornado" because of her 5-foot 3-inch stature and 101-pound weight, led the pack for the first 10.5 kilometers. For a woman whose coach says she skis 10,000 kilometers each year, 4.5 kilometers must have seemed a short distance to victory. But suddenly, she collided with another racer and looked down to see half her ski pole dangling from her wrist. She fell back to seventh place.

"At the moment when I broke my pole, I cried from the bottom of my heart," she later recalled. "I thought my Olympic race was over. Then a French coach handed me a pole, but since I am very short, the pole was too long. I again cried out." One of her coaches appeared and handed her the correct pole, and, skiing through her tears, she regained her stride and caught up to the front pack. In the final sprint, Belmondo surged past Russia's Larissa Lazutina to win the race. At the finish, she cried once more. "I am very, very happy," she said. "It's incredible."

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MEN'S 30 KM FREESTYLE *

Mass-start races leave little room for guessing: the leaders, and the trailers, are easy to pick out from the beginning. And in the first men's cross-country race of the Games, it was clear that Johann Muehlepp was the dominant force among the 78 athletes. The German-born Spaniard, who switched nationalities after a fallout with the German Ski Federation, led a breakaway group of five racers, and then pushed even farther ahead at the 6.2 kilometer mark. He finished more than two minutes ahead of his two Austrian pursuers, silver medalist Christian Hoffmann and teammate Mikhail Botvinov, who would win the bronze. Soldier Hollow's high altitude and terrain punished many favorites, including Sweden's Per Elofsson. He dropped out of the race at the 15-kilometer mark and would leave the Games placing no higher than fifth.

Far behind Muehlepp, a 43-year-old professor from Thailand who learned to ski while on breaks from school, had already won his own race. Prawat Nagvajara was the first athlete to represent Thailand at the Olympic Winter Games, and simply arriving at the Olympic Village was a victory. "I still can't believe it," he said. "I never imagined I'd be an Olympian." When the other racers bolted from the start, Nagvajara was already trailing by hundreds of yards, and midrace, he suffered a fall that would force him to drop out. No matter. "Marching in the Opening Ceremony was one of the best moments of my life," he said afterward. "But racing today is even better."

WOMEN'S 10 KM
CLASSICAL *

Three days later, on February 12, Norway won its first cross-country gold of the Games when Bente Skari crossed the finish line in the women's 10 km classical race. Known as the "Classical Queen" for her kick-and-glide skills, Skari finished just 2.5 seconds ahead of two Russians: Olga Danilova and bronze medalist Julija Tchevalova. For the 29-year-old Skari, Olympic glory ran in the family. Growing up in Oslo, she was inspired by her father, Odd Martinsen, who won a gold medal as a member of the Norwegian relay team at the Grenoble 1968 Games. "Tonight, I will tell my father I am a lot

better than him," she joked, "because he won a relay gold but no individual competitions! And now we have two gold medals in our family."

MEN'S 15 KM CLASSICAL *

Andrus Veerpalu won Estonia's first-ever Olympic Winter Games medal on February 12 as he took first place in the men's 15 km classical. Forty-three seconds later, his teammate Jaak Mae won the bronze. Norway's Frode Estil was the silver medalist. At the finish area, Veerpalu was busy receiving congratulations when his cell phone rang. It was the Prime Minister of Estonia. "He said people were cheering all around the country as the results flashed across the television," said Veerpalu. "Today is a great success for my country and the people of Estonia. I feel very proud."

MEN'S 10 KM + 10 KM
PURSUIT *

For the first time at the Olympic Winter Games, both legs of the 10 km + 10 km pursuit were raced on the same day, which meant little rest for the athletes between the classical and freestyle portion. But Muehlepp apparently didn't need rest as he cruised to his second straight Olympic gold. Not even an early slipup in the first kilometer could derail the Spaniard, who continued to ski aggressively, only slowing down when a spectator handed him the Spanish flag to carry across the finish line.

Even as the crowd cheered for Muehlepp, a new drama was rapidly unfolding. After battling each other over the entire course, Norwegian teammates Frode Estil and Thomas Alsgaard entered the stadium in a head-on duel. The two skiers blasted around the final corner and dove across the line in a spectacular photo finish. The scoreboard went blank. Would it be Alsgaard or Estil for the silver? The race jury finally ruled the finish was too close to call and awarded both athletes the silver medal. Not since the 1982 Oslo World Championships had a major cross-country race ended in an outright tie. Joked Estil, "I need to work on my flexibility so I can reach for the finish line."

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WOMEN'S 5 KM + 5 KM
PURSUIT *

The day following the men's pursuit, Russia's top female skiers, 11-time world championship medalist Olga Danilova and her teammate Larissa Lazutina swept the two top spots on the podium of the women's 5 km + 5 km pursuit.

Beckie Scott from Vegreville, Alberta, skied the race of her life and won Canada's first-ever cross-country medal, a bronze. It was also the first North American medal in the sport since Bill Koch won the 30 km classical silver at the Innsbruck 1976 Games. Koch, who popularized the freestyle technique, had inspired Scott to pursue the sport. "It is a dream come true," she said. "This has been the best race of my life, and to have a race like this at the Olympics, it's incredible."

MEN'S 4 X 10 KM
RELAY *

Every sport has its main event, the one defining competition that everyone dreams of winning. Soccer has the World Cup, baseball the World Series and for cross-country, it's the Olympic team relay, in which winners have been decided by mere inches. In 1994, Italy's Silvio Fauner stunned 100,000 spectators along the Lillehammer course when he beat Norway's Bjørn Dæhlie by a ski length; in 1998, Norway narrowly edged out Italy by half a ski length.

On February 17 the rivals faced off at Soldier Hollow. As the race progressed, an early Norwegian lead was broken on the third leg as Italy surged back to the front. When Thomas Alsgaard took the handoff on the final round, he was in a dead tie with his Italian foe, sprinting phenom Cristian Zorzi. Only 10 kilometers stood between the two skiers and a gold medal. Each, hoping to save strength by drafting, beckoned to the other to take the lead. Alsgaard reluctantly took it and was soon passed by Zorzi. But on the final corner, Alsgaard slingshotted around Zorzi to take gold by the second-smallest margin in men's Olympic relay history. "A sprint between Italy and Norway is a tradition," said Alsgaard at the finish. "But today shows we are the fastest team in the world."

MEN'S & WOMEN'S
1.5 KM SPRINT •

Wildly popular throughout Europe, sprint racing made its Olympic debut at Soldier Hollow in a short but thrilling show of athleticism. "It's three minutes of absolute adrenaline," said American Kikkan Randall. "You need to go all out and push your limits."

And push they did. As the four skiers in each heat jockeyed for the fastest angles, they bumped shoulders and dodged each other right down to the wire. After the qualifying round, 16 skiers advanced to the elimination heats and then the four fastest competed in the final. In the women's competition, Russia's Julija Tchevalova, using an old pair of skis she hadn't worn in two years, surged ahead from the field at the 500-meter mark and won her first gold of the Games. Anita Moen of Norway was edged out by Evi Sachenbacher of Germany, as she took the silver at the line.

In the men's race, Italy's Cristian Zorzi faced off against the world champion, Norwegian Tor Arne Hetland. The two other finalists, Björn Lind of Sweden and first-time Olympian Peter Schlickerieder from Germany hoped to unseat the two favorites. (Schlickerieder obviously liked to

"WHEN I BROKE MY POLE, I CRIED FROM THE BOTTOM OF
MY HEART. I THOUGHT MY OLYMPIC RACE WAS OVER."

drive even faster than he skied, later complaining about America, "I don't enjoy driving 65 miles per hour on the highways.") As the pack blasted into the stadium for the final 100 meters, Zorzi and Hetland squared off for the dash to the finish. Hetland appeared to be fading, but hung in there. Schlickerieder and Zorzi made their move. With arms flailing and legs pumping the three blazed to the line, and the Norwegian fans erupted in applause when the announcer gave the results. Hetland had rallied and struck gold. He finished just one tenth of a second ahead of Schlickerieder, who took silver, and less than a third of a second ahead of Zorzi, who won the bronze medal.

WOMEN'S 4 X 5
KM RELAY •

At the start of the women's 4 x 5 km relay, two lanes were empty. Both the Russian and Ukrainian women were unmistakably absent: Some of their skiers had failed a prerace blood doping test and were disqualified from the event. With the Russian favorites out of the picture, Norway and Germany were left to race for the gold. The two country's skiers traded the lead throughout the legs, with Norway leading after the third. Then, Germany's Evi Sachenbacher pulled ahead of Norway's Anita Moen, who then retook the lead. In the final 100 meters, Sachenbacher surged forward, passing Moen for the gold.

The Swiss team pulled off the surprise performance of the day and finished third. It was the country's first-ever women's Olympic medal in cross-country.

MEN'S 50 KM CLASSICAL
& WOMEN'S 30 KM
CLASSICAL •

Weary and battered from two weeks of fierce racing, the cross-country athletes faced their toughest challenge yet on the closing weekend of the Games: the ski marathon. The men would ski 50 km, and on the following and final day of competition, the women would ski 30 km. Starting at 30-second intervals, each skier had little company in the two or more hours of sheer pain and exertion.

For more than 40 kilometers of the men's race, Russia's Mikhail Ivanov cruised through the fields and hills, his splits indicating he was the clear leader. Muehleleg was chasing him the entire way. "I knew I was in the lead," Ivanov recalled, "but then the snow became damp, and I felt my speed decrease." His lead had been cut to just 3.3 seconds. In the final four kilometers, Muehleleg maintained

a torrid pace, the pain clearly visible in his eyes, until he crossed the finish line first. Usually boisterous, Muehleleg appeared too exhausted to celebrate. "This was the most difficult race of my life," he said, trembling, almost unable to stand upright. It would prove to be even more difficult: The following day, he was stripped of this gold medal after testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

On February 24, the women's field faced the tough 30 km classical. Russia's Larissa Lazutina, who had been disqualified from the relay after a blood test deemed her unhealthy to compete, was permitted to race. She skied with a fervor that no one could equal, and crossed the line almost two minutes ahead of her nearest competitors, Italians Gabriella Paruzzi and Stefania Belmondo, both skiing their last Olympic race. Skari, finishing fourth, saw her hopes for one more medal slip away. "Right now, I am just really tired," she said. "I am hoping for a better position next year."

Shortly after the finish, Lazutina and fellow Russian Olga Danilova were disqualified after it was revealed that they, like Muehleleg, had tested positive for performance-enhancing drugs. Lazutina was stripped of her 30 km gold—the 10th medal of her career and the most ever for a woman. The decision meant that Paruzzi won the gold, Belmondo the silver and Skari, the bronze. "I hope it will be remembered as my medal," said Paruzzi. "I have won it with my craft and with my hard work."



"The Olympics are a wonderful coming together. Even though I am not a gold medalist, it's good to be here." — Paul O'Connor of Ireland, after placing 70th in the men's 1.5 km sprint at Soldier Hollow

RAYMOND MEEKS



Heber Valley, and Salt Lake 2002 decorations, created a spectacular backdrop for nordic events.

DAVID BURNETT



Spain's Haritz Zanzonigui battles through the men's 30 km on February 9.

DAVID BURNETT



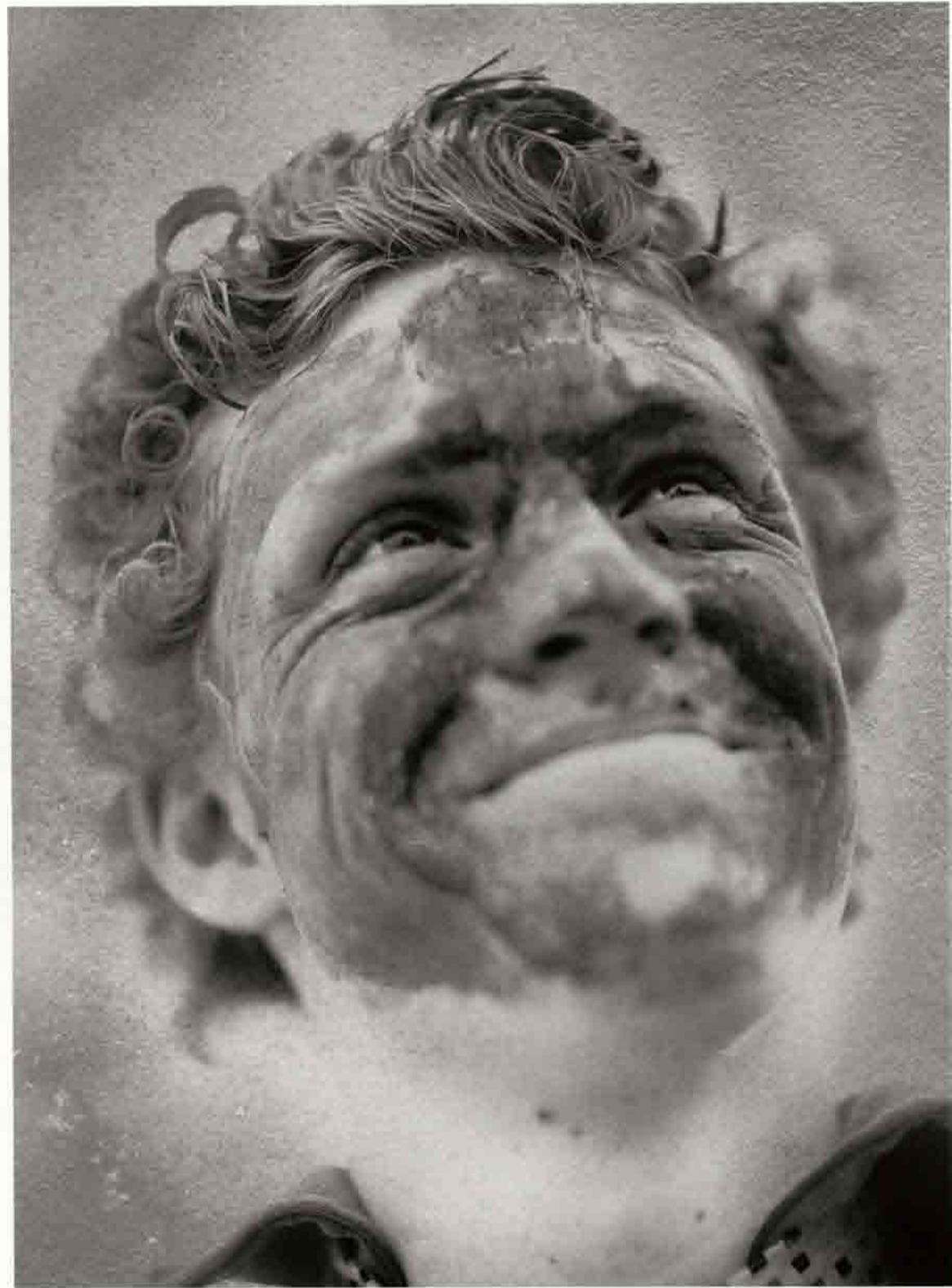
"I think the mass-start format opens the race up. They will start together and go together, almost like a cycling race. It will be interesting to see who wins."
 — Norwegian cross-country legend Bjørn Dæhlie

STEVEN CURRIE



A skier trains at Soldier Hollow on February 10. The venue offered a brand-new experience to Olympic spectators: the ability to wander along the course as cross-country athletes competed.

IAN LOGAN



A Norwegian fan watches the men's 50 km race on February 23.

A N D Y A N D E R S O N



Andreas Sjöblätt helps his team toward a bronze medal in the men's 4 x 10 km relay on February 17. It was Germany's first relay medal since the Innsbruck 1976 Games.

D A V I D B U R N E T T



"In Europe, the courses are more up and down. Here you've got long uphills, followed by long flat sections. You really have to fight after the uphills. I think the strong guys will really be able to open up the gap on the flat sections. That's where the races will be won." — Kristen Skjeldal, Norway

SHEILA METZNER



Cross-country skiers glide down one of Soldier Hollow's rolling hills. "This is a very hard course because you go one to two kilometers uphill with steep and fast downhills. You never have time to relax. And if you get tired, you are finished." — Markus Hasler, Liechtenstein

SHEILA METZNER



Athletes endure the exhausting men's 50 km event on February 23.

J O H N H U E T



"In cross-country, it's not the fastest skier that wins, it's the person with the freshest legs. And that was me today." — Thomas Alsgaard of Norway who anchored his team to an historic win over Italy in the men's 4 x 10 km relay.

J O H N H U E T



A team service member tests the Soldier Hollow course for Spanish athletes.

T I B O R N E M E T H



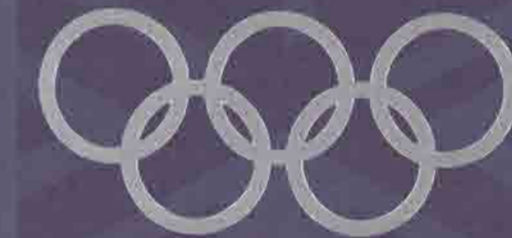
More of Spain's team service members examine the particulars of Soldier Hollow snow. Each cross-country team traveled with a substantial support crew, which skied courses and chose from hundreds of waxes the perfect application for that day's conditions.

T I B O R N E M E T H



On the last day of competition at Soldier Hollow, Italy's Stefania Belmondo ended a brilliant Olympic career. "These will be my last Olympics," said the 30 km silver medalist. "But I've learned that in life, you can also win outside of sport. So I will continue to find gold—with my family."

ALBERT COLANTONIO





BIATHLON IS A GRUELING COMBINATION OF CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING AND PRECISION SHARP SHOOTING. TO SUCCEED, ITS CHAMPIONS MUST PUSH THEIR BODIES TO THE LIMIT OF HUMAN ENDURANCE, AND IN AN INSTANT, BRING THEM BACK FROM THE BRINK. THEY NEED MASSIVE LUNGS TO POWER UP MOUNTAINS, AND ICE-COLD NERVES TO TRAIN THEIR RIFLES ON FIVE COIN-SIZED TARGETS HALF A FOOTBALL FIELD AWAY. AND ALL OF THIS IN THE HEAT OF COMPETITION. WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF BIATHLON. IF THERE WAS ONE MAN STANDING ON TOP OF THIS WORLD



Norway's Ann-Elen Skjelbreid takes aim in the women's 7.5 km sprint on February 13. Five days later, she would help her teammates, including her sister Liv Grete Poirée, win silver in the women's relay.

SHEILA METZNER

WOMEN'S 15 KM
INDIVIDUAL & MEN'S
20 KM INDIVIDUAL •

in 2002, it was Norway's Ole Einar Bjørndalen. The 28-year-old biathlete came to Soldier Hollow looking to win all four of his events, a feat achieved only twice before, in 1964 by Russian speed skater Lydia Skoblikova and in 1980 by American speed skater Eric Heiden. A place in history awaited him.

Meanwhile, Sweden's Magdalena Forsberg had won practically every major biathlon title except one, an Olympic medal. On the verge of retirement, she had one final chance to face down her Olympic demons. The German women, captained by the veteran Uschi Disl, planned to defend their title as the strongest team in the world, a title that would be fiercely contested. Soldier Hollow, once an encampment for the American military, would once again host rifle-toting pioneers: some real soldiers, some civilians, all with their eyes set on glory.

On February 11, the 10-year anniversary of women's biathlon debut in Olympic competition, Germany's Andrea Henkel shot a near flawless race to eclipse Norway's Liv Grete Poirée by only 7.9 seconds. At the finish, the gold medalist received an emotional bear hug from her sister Manuela, who was competing in the cross-country events. "I didn't know whether I had won bronze, silver or gold," Henkel said with tears in her eyes. "I was just so unbelievably happy to have my sister there with me."

Magdalena Forsberg recorded the fastest ski time of the day, blazing the course in slightly more than 46 minutes. But skiing alone wouldn't win her a medal; she had to survive the shooting range. The pressure mounted. And it almost got the best of her.

Forsberg stepped to the range with the bronze medal on the line. (Poirée won the silver.) The stadium fell silent. One miss. Then another. With each mistake, she incurred a 1-minute penalty added to her race time. Would she hold on? Forsberg hit her last shot and attacked the final three kilometers of the course, poling harder and pushing faster with each stride. At the finish, she held on to third place, just 6 seconds ahead of fourth-place finisher Olga Pyleva of Russia. Her quest for an Olympic medal was complete. "Today means so much," she said. "I feel the pressure is finally over."

That afternoon in the men's 20 km race, Bjørndalen also had a double miss at the range. He hoped his time of 51:03 would be enough to overcome the 2-minute penalty. With the final challengers still out on the course, all he could do was wait. As each skier crossed the line, the Norwegian remained in the lead. It would all depend on his teammate Frode Andresen, the only one left who could take away the gold. Andresen had led the race and shot perfectly through the first three shooting rounds. Just four shots remained.

Bjørndalen waited in suspense. "When I was watching Frode, my pulse was higher than in the race," he later said. But disaster soon struck for Andresen. Three straight misses added a 3-minute penalty to his time, ending any hopes for a medal. He finished the day in seventh. Bjørndalen won the gold and Germany's Frank Luck barely edged out Russia's Victor Maigourov by 1.2 seconds for silver.

Two days later, the men's field faced the intensity of the 10 km sprint competition, an event that penalizes skiers with a 150-meter lap for each missed shot. In the physically taxing, yet relatively short event, penalty laps on the course would be a deciding factor. There was bound to be a shuffle on the scoreboard.

Bjørndalen shot flawlessly in both rounds, continuing his gold medal streak with a winning time of 24:51.3. With one missed shot, German veteran Sven Fischer finished 28.9 seconds behind for silver. The astonishing Austrian team placed three skiers in the top 10, including bronze medalist Wolfgang Perner. "It was the biggest surprise of my career," Perner said. "Today I concentrated."

The women's 7.5 km sprint was promoted as a battle between Sweden's Forsberg and Norway's Poirée, a strong sprinter whose husband Raphaël was the French World Cup biathlon champion. But

MEN'S 10 KM SPRINT &
WOMEN'S 7.5 KM SPRINT •

MEN'S 12.5 KM PURSUIT
& WOMEN'S 10 KM
PURSUIT •

Germany's Kati Wilhelm, a former cross-country skier who began biathlon in 1999, soon took control of the race. She skied well and hit every target to win her first Olympic gold medal. Her teammate Uschi Disl joined her on the podium in second position after an amazing recovery from a missed shot.

Forsberg had fallen behind and when she missed a first-round shot, Poirée was poised to take the bronze. Both skiers approached the range for the final round. Poirée faltered. Forsberg shot cleanly, skied aggressively to the finish and earned her second medal of the 2002 Games, a bronze. "No matter what else happens, I'll go home satisfied," she said. "I have finally achieved Olympic success."

Can you make it any harder? That's what the rest of the field was asking as it started a full 29 seconds behind Bjørndalen in the Olympic debut event of men's pursuit. In the new format, racers started at intervals based on the results from the sprint competition. With the sprint winner starting first and the rest of the field chasing for gold, it was a thrilling addition to the lineup of events at Soldier Hollow.

Bjørndalen was relentless. Although he missed a pair of shots and skied two 150-meter penalty loops, his superior endurance pulled him to a 32:34 victory, 43 seconds ahead of Raphaël Poirée. With this third consecutive victory, Bjørndalen became the first biathlete in Olympic history to win three golds in one Games. "I didn't set out thinking about the record," he said. "Today, I had fun, and that is what is most important to me."

Silver medalist Raphaël Poirée had secured his first-ever place on the Olympic podium by hitting every target on the final round while his German challenger Ricco Gross lost his focus and missed twice. "When you want an Olympic medal," said Poirée, "You have to give your maximum." Thirteen seconds behind, Gross finished for the bronze.

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER I HAD WON BRONZE, SILVER OR GOLD. I WAS JUST SO HAPPY TO HAVE MY SISTER THERE."

In the women's race several hours later, all of the prerace favorites, including medalists Wilhelm, Liv Grete Poirée and Forsberg, made critical shooting mistakes that opened up the race. Starting more than one minute behind race leader Kati Wilhelm, Russia's Olga Pyleva seized the moment. She shot a nearly perfect race and caught up to Wilhelm, holding on during the final sprint to win by 5.3 seconds. "When I approached the last shooting, I realized I had a real chance to win this race," she said. Crying, she spoke with her mother in Siberia with the news. Wilhelm took the silver. Liv Grete Poirée made a strong push to come back from four penalty loops, but lost the bronze to Bulgaria's Irina Nikoulchina by 2.5 seconds.

Biathlon challenged these athletes in every way possible. Skiing taxed their bodies. Shooting was a battle of the mind. And the relay threw national pride into the mix. For the German women, it would be their chance to prove their continued dominance in biathlon as they defended their 1998 relay gold. But Norway, captained by double medalist Liv Grete Poirée, had its own agenda. So did the Russians. A fast and furious fight was inevitable.

At the sound of the gun, the pack of 15 skiers charged out of the stadium. The first round at the range was next. When Germany's lead-off skier Katrin Apel took aim from the standing position,

WOMEN'S 4 X 7.5 KM
RELAY •

the team's medal chances nearly vanished. The early race leader missed four shots on the opening round and plummeted back to 12th position. The German fans fell silent in disbelief. "When I missed those targets, I thought we lost the gold because of me," Apel said later. It was now up to her teammate and captain Disl, who took the handoff on the second leg. She shot brilliantly and skied into the lead. What looked like ruin was fast becoming a possible victory. In the final stretch, anchor skier Wilhelm overcame two missed shots and held on for the win. "When I missed twice," she said, "I realized Liv Grete was right there next to me, and she would do anything in her power to catch up with me on the shooting. It was a tough moment."

Norway stayed in contention most of the race, but a valiant effort in the final stretch by Liv Grete Poirée fell short. The team ended the day 30 seconds behind Germany for silver. The Russians, still riding high from Pyleva's gold in the pursuit event, took home the bronze.

MEN'S 4 X 7.5 KM RELAY •

If Bjørndalen was going to win a record fourth gold medal, he needed his teammates to pull through with their best performance yet. Besides Bjørndalen, no other Norwegian had medaled in biathlon at the Salt Lake 2002 Games. It would be a tough fight to unseat the formidable German team, the winner of the past three Olympic biathlon relays.

But when the gun went off and the pack surged, Germany's athletes realized they faced a serious challenge. The pack stayed bunched together through the first portion of the race. On the second lap, Norway's Andresen skied into the lead. Germany lagged behind with France in close pursuit. Fans rose to their feet. Norway's final dash for gold was on.

Bjørndalen took the handoff on the last lap and skied into history. Although a fall and broken pole caused him momentary panic, he recovered quickly when his coach handed him a replacement pole only seconds later. Twenty minutes and 30 seconds after he started, he crossed the finish line in victory. The historic fourth medal was his, along with Norway's first-ever relay gold in biathlon. Germany trailed in second. The French just missed the silver, when Raphaël Poirée finished the sprint seven seconds behind Germany's powerful anchor skier Luck.

Afterward, Bjørndalen's elated teammates piled on top of their captain. "The last gold was the most important," he said, "because it was the whole team—something we did together as a team."



Irina Nikoulitchina of Bulgaria won her first-ever Olympic medal when she finished third in the 10 km pursuit. "After my first two races, I was so disappointed," she said. "But then I thought to myself, I have no more pressure, so I just tried to ski and shoot my best."

SHEILA METZNER



"In Salt Lake City, there is so much color and flags. The people are so welcoming, I feel like I am finally racing in the Olympic Games." – Raphaël Poirée, France.

JOHN HUET



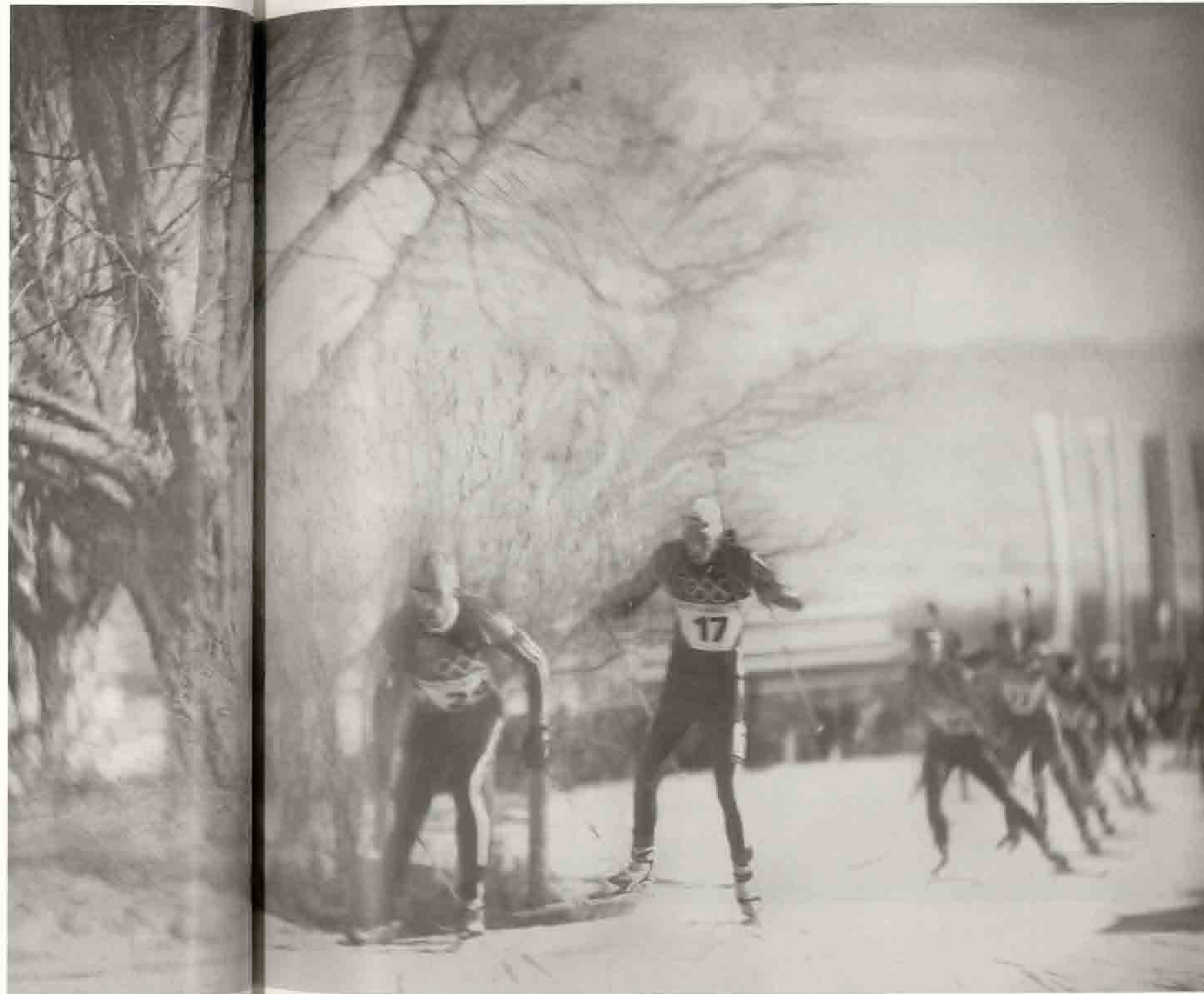
Competitors line up at the range to shoot from the standing position. Since 1978, biathletes have used standard 0.22 caliber rifles in international events.

JOHN HUET



"I was so exhausted, I had nothing left in the last part of the race. I have never been this tired before, but it is the Olympics, and you need to try your hardest." — Magalena Forsberg of Sweden, a five-time world champion who finally won her first Olympic medal at Soldier Hollow.

RAYMOND MEEKS



In a Scandinavian duel, Sweden's Björn Ferry chases Norway's Egil Gjelland during the men's 12.5 km pursuit. Ferry finished the race 24th, Gjelland, 15th.

RAYMOND MEEKS



A racer slides under the spectator bridge. Soldier Hollow's unique design allowed fans to traverse the course with outstanding views of the action.

JOHN HUET



Soldier Hollow's stunning beauty was deceptive. "This venue is very difficult. We did several high-altitude training sessions before coming to Salt Lake, but today proved challenging. The trails here are very demanding" - Julien Robert of France after the men's 10 km sprint on February 13.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



*Biathlon has been compared to sprinting up 23 flights of stairs
—and then trying to thread a needle at the top.*

SHEILA METZNER



A racer crests one of Soldier Hollow's relentless hills in the women's 4 x 7.5 km relay.

SHEILA METZNER



Oleksander Bilanenko of Ukraine races the men's 4 x 7.5 km relay, above

Right: "This is the finest biathlon venue I've ever seen. It's a unique setting. There are no others like it. Environmentally, it's absolutely fabulous."

— IOC President Jacques Rogge

TIBOR NEMETH





A German athlete trains on Valentine's Day, 2002. That day, France's Raphaël Poirée and Norway's Liv Grete Poirée celebrated becoming the first married couple from different nations to win Olympic biathlon medals.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



Vyacheslav Derkach of Ukraine skates across a meadow in the men's 20 km.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



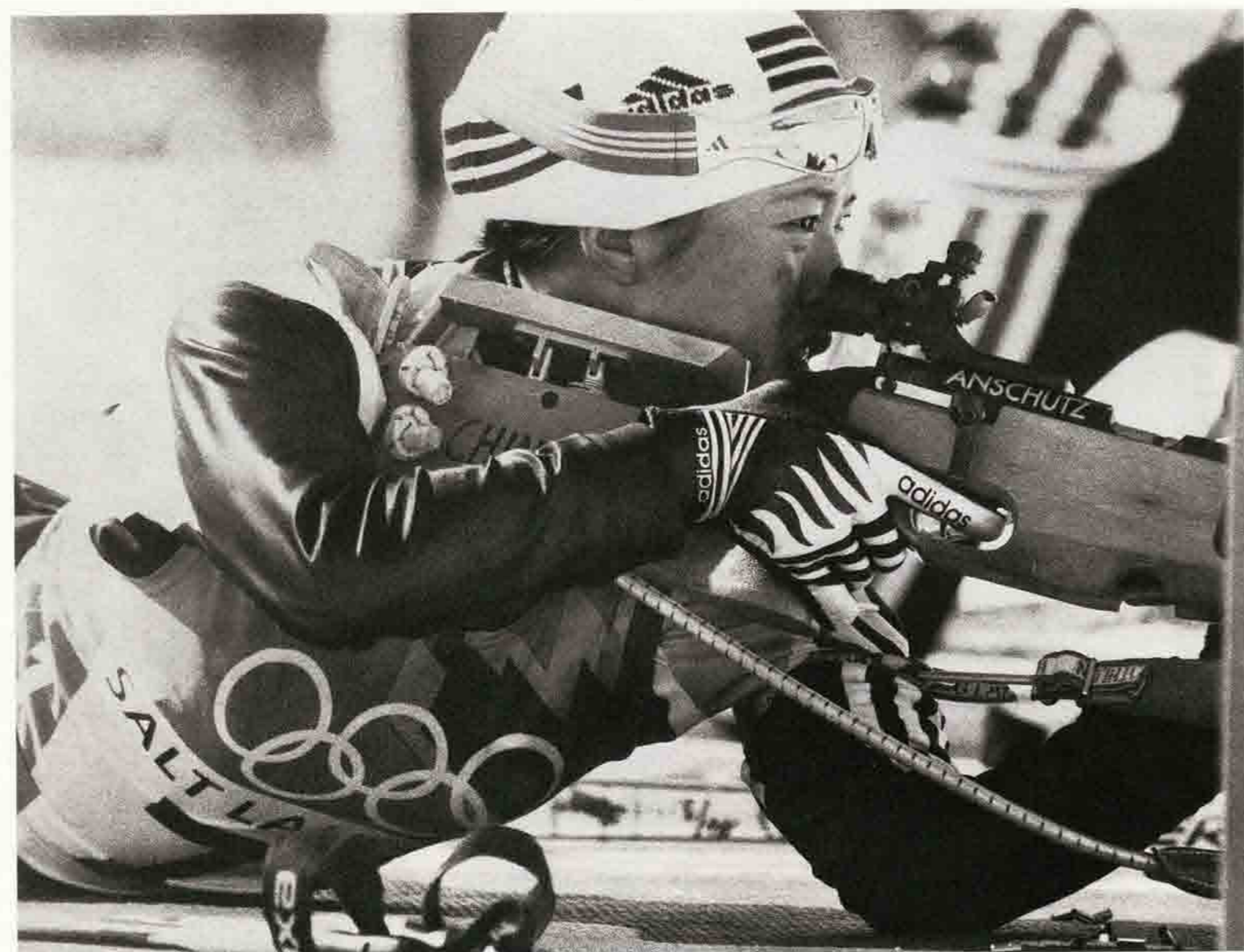
*Nearly 6000 spectators journeyed to Soldier Hollow on the "Heber Creeper,"
a historic steam train that once carried pioneers through the valley.*

DAVID BURNETT



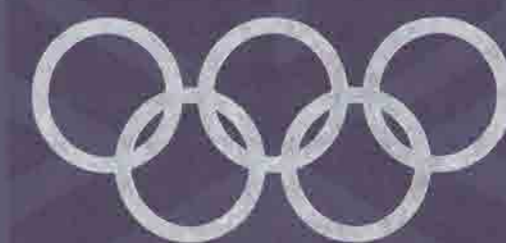
*On February 20, Michael Dixon of Great Britain closed a biathlon career that
spanned a record six Olympic Winter Games. While he never medaled,
Dixon hoped his dedication would inspire others. "After so many Games, I've realized
that when you believe in your dreams," he said, "anything can work out."*

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



Some 10,000 rounds were shot at Soldier Hollow. All were recycled, and the brass shell casings were collected to make commemorative cheering bells.

SHEILA METZNER





B O B S L E I G H • HOW DOES IT FEEL TO ROCKET DOWN THE ICE IN A 1200 POUND SLED? FOR TWO 39-YEAR-OLDS ENDING THEIR CAREERS AT THE SALT LAKE 2002 GAMES, IT FELT LIKE A LAST CHANCE AT GLORY. FOR 30 WOMEN, COMPETING IN THE DEBUT WOMEN'S OLYMPIC BOBSLEIGH EVENT, IT FELT LIKE A FIRST CHANCE AT GREATNESS IN THE SPORT. FOR YUGOSLAVIA'S BORIS RADJENOVIĆ, A FORMER POLITICAL PRISONER WHO HAD RETURNED TO COMPETE WITH HIS SON, IT FELT LIKE FREEDOM. AND FOR TWO-TIME BREAST-CANCER SURVIVOR ILDIKO STREHLI,



The Norwegian two-man team of Arnfinn Kristiansen and Bjørn Royland trans at Utah Olympic Park on February 15.

T I B O R N E M E T H

piloting a bright-pink sled that symbolized the struggle against the disease, it felt like hope.

Most of all, there was the feeling of adrenaline, a concoction of joy and fear. Riding in machines built with race-car technology, enduring gravitational forces of four Gs, timed to the 100th of a second, is like a roller-coaster ride with no safety bars. Prince Albert of Monaco, who crashed in the second heat of the four-man, knew the risks. But he had returned for his fifth Olympic Winter Games, he said, because "I've never wanted that feeling to go away. I still long to go faster."

After winning three Olympic medals and nine world championships, Germany's Christoph Langen was still a perfectionist. His exacting nature explains why, at age 39, training for his last Games, he still built his own sleds. The combination of his precise knowledge of his sled and his unsurpassed driving skills made Langen and teammate Markus Zimmermann a favorite to win in the Salt Lake 2002 Games. It did not, however, guarantee anything. Two U.S. teams had trained long and hard to end the country's 46-year bobsleigh medal drought. Nobody knew the course better than drivers Todd Hays and Brian Shimer, who had navigated the twisting Utah Olympic Park track hundreds of times. Hays would compete with Garrett Hines, while Shimer would race with Darin Steele. Each team hoped to turn its experience into gold in front of the home crowd. Then there was Christian Reich, a welder from Switzerland and a three-time Olympian. Distraught with his fourth-place finish in Nagano, Reich was out for revenge with brakeman Steve Anderhub. And Reich's countryman, cheesemaker Martin Annen, in the sled with Beat Hefti, was also a medal contender, having burst into bobsleigh in 2000 by earning seven medals and landing in first place overall in the two-man standings.

After the first run, Reich was in the lead over Langen, but only by 0.02 seconds. Another 0.02 seconds separated the third-place Annen from Langen, while the USA-1 sled piloted by Hays sat in the fourth position. As the race progressed, Langen and Reich slowly pulled away from the field, but not from each other. During the third heat, Langen drove his sled to a track-record time of 47.44 seconds, besting the record of 47.52 set the day before by Reich. Going into the final heat, there was not just one but two ties (a remarkable occurrence in bobsleigh): between Langen and Reich in first and between Hays and the Canadian team of Pierre Lueders and Giulio Zardo in fourth. Annen was in third.

Despite a strong final run in which he beat Lueders, Hays could not best Annen's combined time. "I thought we had a chance," he said, having missed the medal by 0.03 seconds. "But Annen rose to the occasion, and that's why he's the bronze medalist."

In the gold-medal runoff, Reich's sled went first and he crossed the finish line in 47.70 seconds. As Langen raced down the course, a lucky pig charm attached to his uniform, his split times indicated he was trailing Reich by fractions of a second. But navigating a sled built with his own hands and using 16 years of bobsleigh experience to his advantage, Langen made up time on the final portion of the course and clocked in at 47.61, winning the gold by less than one tenth of a second.

Reflecting on making up fractions of a second on his way to victory, Langen said, "In curves six to eleven the ride was superb. In curve eleven I thought, 'Oh my gosh, we might be able to make it,' and we did. Basically, I wanted Christian [Reich] and I to finish with the same time. We have fought like tigers, and this is a highlight of the whole program here."

The first-ever women's Olympic bobsleigh competition began with letters. Long, passionate letters from five teams who dreamed of competing in 2002. In 1997, they were told that due to a lack of international interest in the sport, not to mention the dearth of teams, even inclusion at the 2006 Games was far-fetched. The year 2010 seemed a more reasonable goal. So athletes from Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Canada and the United States began a letter-writing campaign to the sport's

international federation, the IOC and the Salt Lake Organizing Committee. These athletes recruited women from other nations to form their own teams. The movement grew, far exceeding anyone's expectations. Olympic status was granted to women's bobsleigh on October 2, 1999, for inclusion in the Salt Lake 2002 Games. A victory was won even before the 15 sleds from 11 nations took to the Olympic track on February 19, 2002.

Germany's team hoped for more victories on the Utah Olympic Park track. A soldier in her homeland of Germany and former luge athlete who won bronze in 1992 and silver in 1994, Susi-Lisa Erdmann was the overall World Cup champion for the 2001-02 season. With brakewoman Nicole Herschmann, she was a favorite for first place. Also favored to medal was Sandra Prokoff, another German soldier, who finished second to Erdmann in the World Cup standings and rode in with Ulrike Holzner in a sled painted as a hammerhead shark. Between these two sleds, Germany had won every World Cup race of the season.

"I'VE NEVER WANTED THAT FEELING TO GO AWAY," SAID PRINCE ALBERT. "I STILL LONG TO GO FASTER."

American Jean Racine was ready for a comeback. She and brakewoman Jen Davidson had won overall World Cup titles in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 but began slipping in the standings in 2001-02. In a controversial move, Racine dumped Davidson and began competing with Gea Johnson, a top-ranked heptathlete from 1989-95. During their second race together, the duo set the track record in Park City. Said Racine before the race: "I'm going for the gold."

But winning gold in the two-heat event would require strong starts and early domination, and both would elude Racine. Johnson had pulled her hamstring three days before competition and struggled in pain during the first run push. She and Racine were in fifth place, 0.50 seconds off the lead. Erdmann and Herschmann sat in the third spot while Prokoff and Holzner were in second place. In the lead were Americans Jill Bakken and Vonetta Flowers, in a candy-apple red sled flecked with white snowflakes. With much of the attention paid to Racine, Davidson and Johnson, Bakken and Flowers had trained obscurely and exhaustively.

So it was a surprise when Bakken, the youngest member of the American team, and Flowers, a seven-time All-American track and field star from Alabama, set a new track record time of 48.81 seconds. Suddenly, the attention turned to what had come to be known as the "other" U.S. team for the second run. Could they hold on to first place?

Indeed, the Germans could not make up the lost time—0.29 seconds—in only one run. After their runs, Erdmann and Prokoff could only hope that Bakken would make a mistake. But the quiet driver negotiated the track quickly and cleanly, finishing in 48.95 seconds for the gold. Prokoff and Holzner took silver, 0.30 seconds behind the Americans, and Erdmann and Herschmann finished 0.53 seconds behind for the bronze.

At Olympic Medals Plaza the next night, Flowers cried silently. Two years earlier, she made it to the 2000 Olympic trials for track and field, but did not qualify. Her Olympic dreams temporarily shattered, she had responded on a whim to a flier seeking potential bobsled athletes. Now she was a gold medalist, the first African-American athlete ever to win gold at an Olympic Winter Games. And with their victory, Bakken and Flowers claimed the first U.S. Olympic medal in bobsleigh in 46 years.

"We feel honored to be the first ones to break the streak," she said. "Hopefully, this will encourage other African-American boys and girls to give winter sports a try."

The American men—specifically Todd Hays and Brian Shimer—were determined to break the medal drought in their own right. The 39-year-old Shimer, the veteran and five-time Olympian of the U.S. squad, had one last shot at an Olympic medal, a medal that had eluded him through four straight Olympic Winter Games. He had come close in the past, extremely close, missing a bronze in Nagano by just 0.02 seconds. But close wasn't good enough for Shimer, so he set his sights on Salt Lake. Hobbled by injuries throughout his career—he missed most of the 2000 season after two knee operations—Shimer was not even a sure bet to make the team for the 2002 Games.

But make it he did. After the first two runs he sat in fifth place, a relative long shot for a medal at 0.39 seconds behind the leader, teammate Hays. The fellow American had outraced stiff competition from the German sled driven by first-time Olympian André Lange and the two Swiss sleds, piloted by two-man bronze medalist Annen and two-man silver medalist Reich, respectively.

Warm temperatures slowed the track on the second day of competition and Hays, the first driver down, clocked a third heat time of 47.22, more than half a second slower than either of his runs the day before. But if the other sleds suffered the same fate, the top spot would remain his. And then Lange took to the course. A blistering run of 46.84 propelled his sled into the lead, by a hefty margin of 0.29 seconds. Minutes later, Annen moved into second, dropping Hays to third. Shimer, in the meantime, had gained ground and moved into fourth place. Would he suffer the same heartbreak as he did four years earlier?

It came down to the final heat, the excitement building as the top four teams raced from slowest to fastest. The day before, after the second run, Shimer was asked what it would take to make up time on the leader board on the final day. "This is my track," he declared. "Nobody is going to beat me down driving."

Shimer was right; he was the fastest in that final heat. In the last run of his career, he crossed the line in 47.23 and temporarily grabbed the lead. Hays came down next, fast enough to move into the top spot. Annen, who had struggled with his sled on the third run, faltered again on the final run. When the Swiss sled failed to crack the top two spots, the eight American athletes knocked one another down in exuberance. Even if Lange and the Germans won gold (which they did), there would still be two medals for the United States: silver for Todd Hays and his team of Garrett Hines, Randy Jones and Bill Schuffenhauer and bronze for Shimer, Mike Kohn, Doug Sharp and Dan Steele.

"I'm numb," said Shimer, smiling through his tears. "For 16 years this is all I ever dreamed for. To go out here, in the United States, in my last Olympic Winter Games, in my last race, in the last run of my career, it's a fairy-tale ending. As far as I'm concerned, that bronze is as shiny as gold."



"I know that this is the most important race of any athlete's career. There's so much riding on it. Sometimes it gets a little overwhelming, but I wouldn't change it for the world." — Bronze medalist Brian Shimer, United States of America

ANDY ANDERSON



Driver Daw Janjigian and Jyorgos Alexandrou of Armenia take a training run on the track. Prior to the Games, the pair had faced financial setbacks and practiced with a wheeled sled on the streets of San Jose, California.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



"What can I say? This is a dream come true for me." — Vonetta Flowers of the United States of America, above, on winning the first-ever women's Olympic bobsleigh gold with driver Jill Bakken on February 19.

SHEILA METZNER



The Czech Republic team prepares for the push on February 23.

ALBERT COLANTONIO



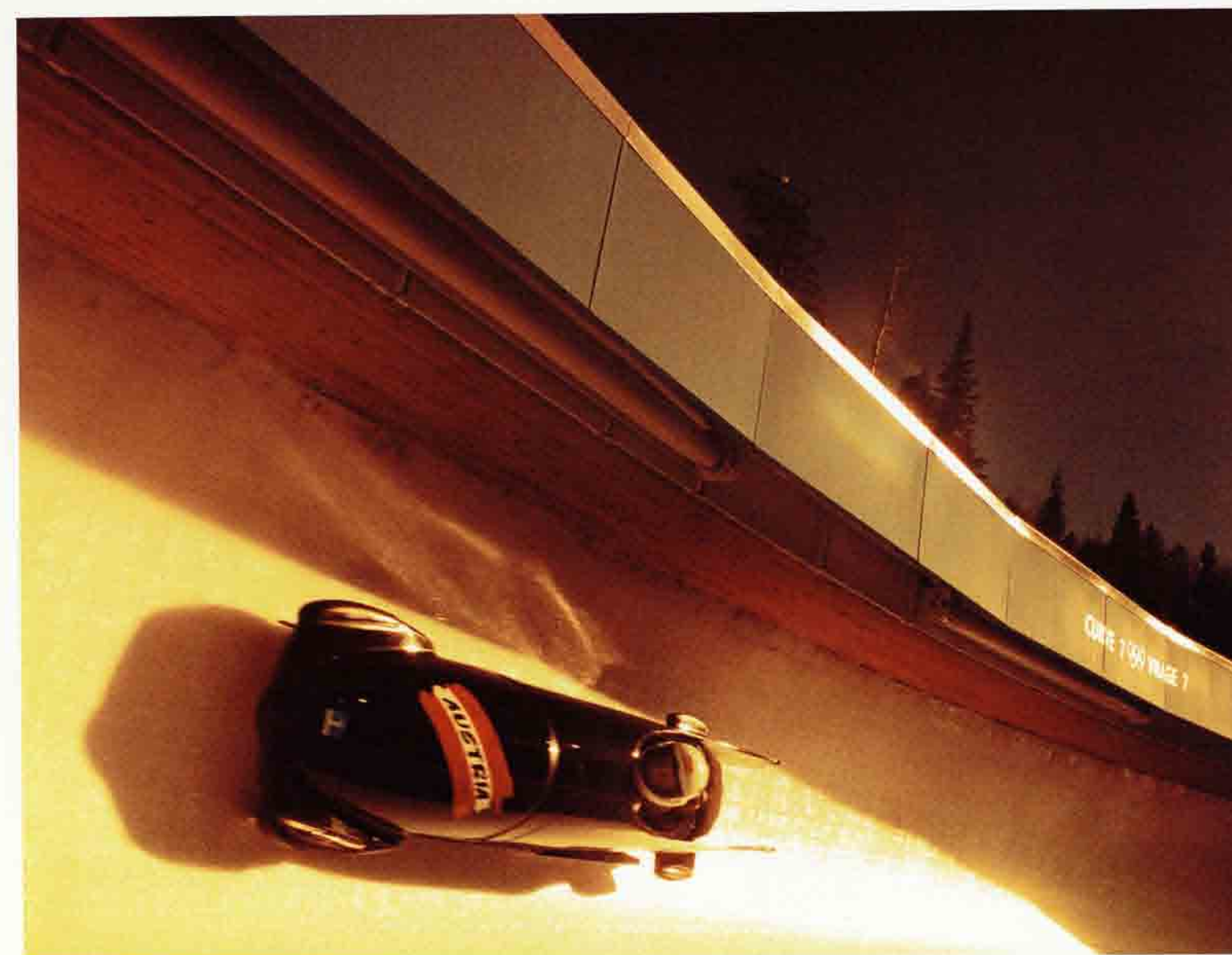
Austria's Wolfgang Stampfer and Martin Schützenauer navigate a turn during the two-man competition. Salt Lake 2002 marked the fourth Olympic Winter Games for the 39-year-old Schützenauer, who also competed in track and field's 4 x 100 m relay at the Atlanta 1996 Olympic Games.

DAVID BURNETT



"I got goose bumps at the start. The atmosphere is just excellent. It's a lot of fun to compete here." — Susi-Lisa Erdmann, Germany

STEVEN CURRIE



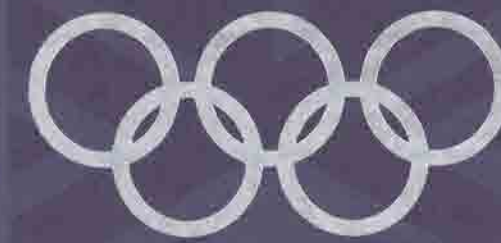
An Austrian team rockets through the track. In 2002, a remarkable number of warm-weather delegations joined the traditional European powerhouses in bobsleigh. "This sport is not only for people who live in the cold," said Winston Watt, a driver and member of Jamaica's team since 1993.

TIBOR NEMETH



A newcomer and a veteran pose at Utah Olympic Park just one day before winning the gold. "I've been blessed to come into this sport and pick it up so quickly," said American Vonetta Flowers (left). Said Jill Bakken, "It's such an amazing feeling...It's been eight years of hard work, and it's come down to this—the gold medal."

JOHN HUET





S K E L E T O N • IT WAS A UNIQUE AND UNLIKELY CAMARADERIE, THE SKELETON COMMUNITY. IT WAS A FIRE-FIGHTER FROM OHIO AND AN AIR-TRAFFIC CONTROLLER FROM AUSTRIA. A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT FROM CALGARY AND AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER WITH THE BRITISH ROYAL AIR FORCE. THEY CAME TOGETHER OUT OF A PURE LOVE FOR THE SPORT, FOR THE RUSH OF HURLING HEADFIRST DOWN A FROZEN TRACK AT NEARLY 80 MILES PER HOUR, CHINS SCANT INCHES FROM THE ICE. THEY TRAINED TOGETHER. THEY BECAME A FAMILY. IN FEBRUARY 2002,



Kazuhiro Koshi of Japan gets ready to ride at Utah Olympic Park.

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R

skeleton returned to Olympic Winter Games competition after a 54-year absence. And so, on a snowy day at Utah Olympic Park, the skeleton family stepped onto the sporting world's grandest stage.

Jim Shea Jr. wasn't supposed to win the gold medal. He wasn't even the top-ranked slider competing for the United States. He was good, no doubt, but he wasn't Gregor Stähli, the slider from Switzerland who won four of the five races during the 2001–02 season. Shea didn't even have a major recent win, like teammate Chris Soule, who won the last World Cup race of the 2001–02 season in St. Moritz, Switzerland—the one race that Stähli didn't—and finished the season ranked second overall. And he wasn't the hometown favorite: That honor belonged to fellow American Lincoln DeWitt.

Shea, a third-generation Olympian, carried something with him on his sled, though, that the other athletes were missing: the spirit of his grandfather. Jim's father, Jim Sr., competed in nordic combined and cross-country skiing events at the Innsbruck 1964 Games. His grandfather, Jack, won two gold medals in speed skating at the Lake Placid 1932 Games. Ninety-one years old and America's oldest living winter Olympian, Jack was proud to see his grandson earn a spot on the Olympic team, and excited to travel to Utah to watch him compete at the Salt Lake 2002 Games. But on January 22, a tragic car accident—just blocks from Jack's Lake Placid, New York, home—claimed his life. Shea returned to Utah after the funeral, inspired to honor the memory of his grandfather with a victory.

On February 20, competition day, snow began to fall. This was a rare sight at the Games. For two weeks the sun had shined steadily, and some racers were nervous. Snow made the sliding tricky and slow, but the race—an event of two heats—was on. The effects of the weather were felt by the first competitor, the top-ranked Stähli. He navigated the course in 51.16 seconds, two seconds slower than normal for the sport's best athletes. Martin Retzl of Austria then slid in 51.02 seconds, a bit quicker than Stähli, but still much slower than his track-record run of 48.60 seconds from a year earlier.

At the start line, Shea jumped up and down. He ran in place. And then, with a photograph of his grandfather tucked inside his helmet, Jim Shea Jr. took off on the ride of his life. He blazed through the course, the spectators' cheers growing louder as each of his split times were posted. He was on a pace to take over the lead from Retzl. Shea slid flawlessly, given the conditions of the track, and when his final time of 50.89 seconds flashed on the video board, he pumped his fist triumphantly. He was 0.13 seconds ahead of the pack, a lead that would hold up throughout the remainder of the first run.

SHEA REMOVED HIS HELMET, PULLED OUT A PHOTOGRAPH AND HELD IT HIGH. AND THEN HE LOOKED SKYWARD.

The snow continued through the second round. Soon, only the final three sliders remained. Clifton Wrottesley, in position to secure a first-ever Olympic Winter Games medal for Ireland, could not duplicate his strong first run and wound up finishing the race in fourth place. Retzl was next, putting up a 50.99. All Shea needed was a 51.12 or better for the gold. As he slid, it appeared that he wouldn't be able to pull it off. His split times showed that his lead had dwindled away to nothing. And then something incredible happened. He actually made up time at the end of the course—a feat rare at the track—as if a hand appeared out of nowhere and pushed him toward the finish. Shea crossed the line in 51.07, winning by just five hundredths of a second. The other sliders mobbed him. During the race they were his adversaries. Now, once again, they were a tight-knit skeleton family.

Pandemonium. Bittersweet euphoria. Dueling chants of "USA!" and "JIMMY SHEA!" merged into one. "U.S. SHEA! U.S. SHEA!" Shea removed his helmet, pulled out the photograph of a smiling Jack and held it high for all to see. And then he looked skyward. Near the finish line, Shea's mother, Judy, turned, her eyes overflowing with tears, and said to nobody in particular, "Grandpa would have loved it."

Thirteen athletes represented 10 nations in the first women's skeleton race in Olympic Winter Games history. Even in such a small group, a few sliders stood out from the rest. Great Britain's Alex Coomber, a lieutenant in the Royal Air Force, had dominated the sport, winning three straight overall World Cup titles. Maya Pedersen, a teacher in Switzerland, was the defending world champion, who ranked second in the 2001–02 World Cup standings. The best hope for a U.S. Olympic medal rested with Lea Ann Parsley, a 33-year-old firefighter from Ohio.

The first heat yielded some surprising results. Pedersen struggled on the snowy track and landed in seventh place. Michelle Kelly, a Canadian who set the Utah Olympic Park course record in February 2001, was in the 11th position. A solid run put Coomber, who had never practiced skeleton in the snow at Utah Olympic Park, in third place, 0.22 seconds out of the lead. Parsley, competing with a pulled hamstring, raced through the pain to a time of 52.27 seconds, fast enough for second place.

Sitting in the top spot after the first round was a small 21-year-old from Salt Lake City named Tristan Gale, just 5 feet 2 inches tall, 115 pounds, nicknamed "Twister" because she had accidentally spun in her sled while first trying the sport. Her performance was a surprise—Gale had never even heard of the sport until 1998, and had never finished higher than eighth place at a major event during her debut season in 2001–02. The snowy conditions on the track should have favored the heavier sliders. But there was Gale, waving to the fans and holding a precarious lead of 0.01 seconds.

With the excitement of Shea's gold medal-winning run minutes earlier still reverberating through Utah Olympic Park, one by one, the competitors for the final round slid down the course. It soon became clear that none of them would make up her time deficit. Showing more familiar form, Pedersen recorded the fastest time in the second run. It was not, however, enough to salvage her lackluster first-round performance, and she settled for fifth place. Coomber completed a second solid run and secured herself at least the bronze. The chants for USA grew louder.

The race came down to the final two athletes—teammates and friends, racing each other for Olympic gold. Parsley slid first, and her time of 52.94 seconds moved her into first place. Not for long. With her hair streaked red, white and blue and the letters USA painted on her left cheek, Gale stormed the course in 52.85 seconds, winning the gold by one tenth of a second over Parsley. Coomber claimed the bronze, the first medal of the Salt Lake 2002 Games for Great Britain. Eleven days after her medal-winning race, Coomber admitted she had competed with a broken left arm. She had hid the injury from her coaches for fear they would prohibit her from competing.

At the finish area, the mood was giddy. Parsley jumped on Gale, and the two fell onto the track. Somehow, the exuberance and the camaraderie of the skeleton community had spilled over from the track, and strangers hugged each other and exchanged jubilant high fives. On one snowy February day, the crowd was inspired by not just the courage, but by the enthusiasm and the raw Olympic Spirit of a few athletes. And perhaps no one was inspired—or surprised—more than Gale, who was one of the first residents to check into the Olympic Village and the last to leave. "I didn't know I could slide well with international competition," she said, after her gold-medal run. "I just went out and did my best."



"It's a dream come true. I have always said that the gold medal is possible for me. But even if I missed it by five-tenths of a second, I'm more than satisfied." — Silver medalist Martin Rettl, Austria

JOHN HUET



"If bobsleigh is the champagne of thrills, then skeleton is the moonshine of thrills." — Gold medalist Jim Shea Jr., United States of America

JOHN HUET

Christian Steger of Italy takes a training run.

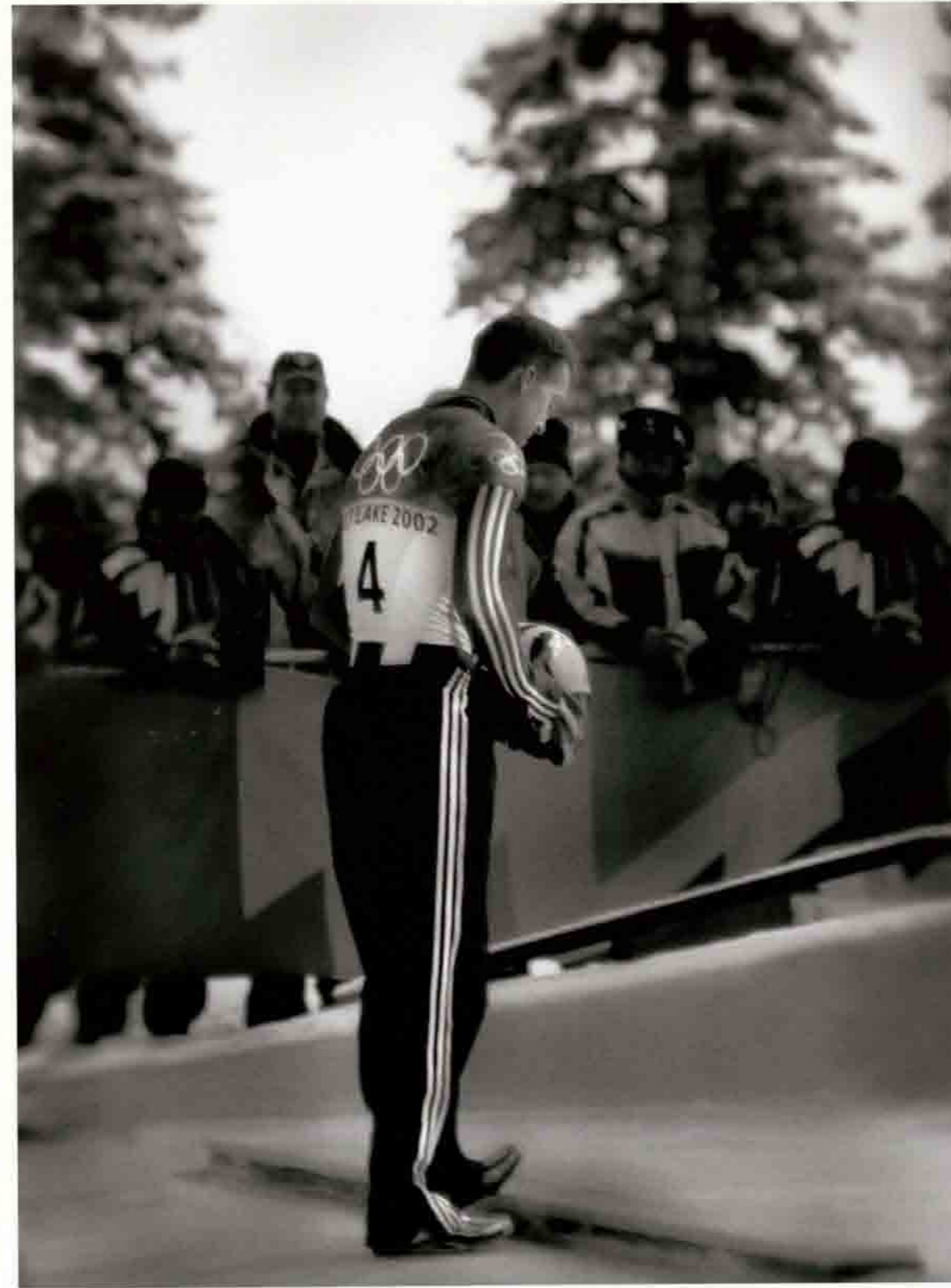
ELISABETH O'DONNELL





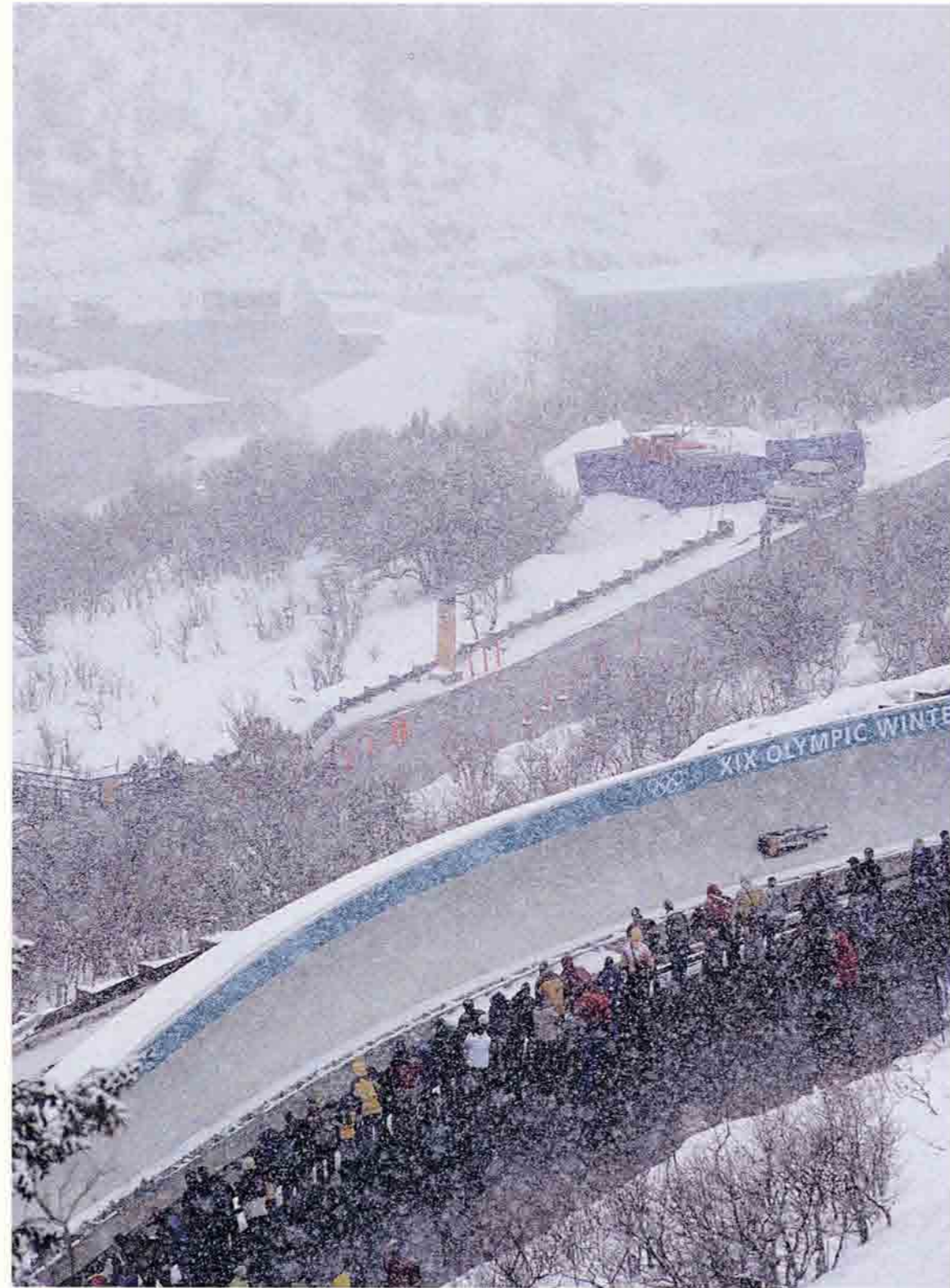
Jim Shea Sr. watched his son win gold with tears in his eyes, convinced that "Gramp" was behind the remarkable run.

JOHN HUET



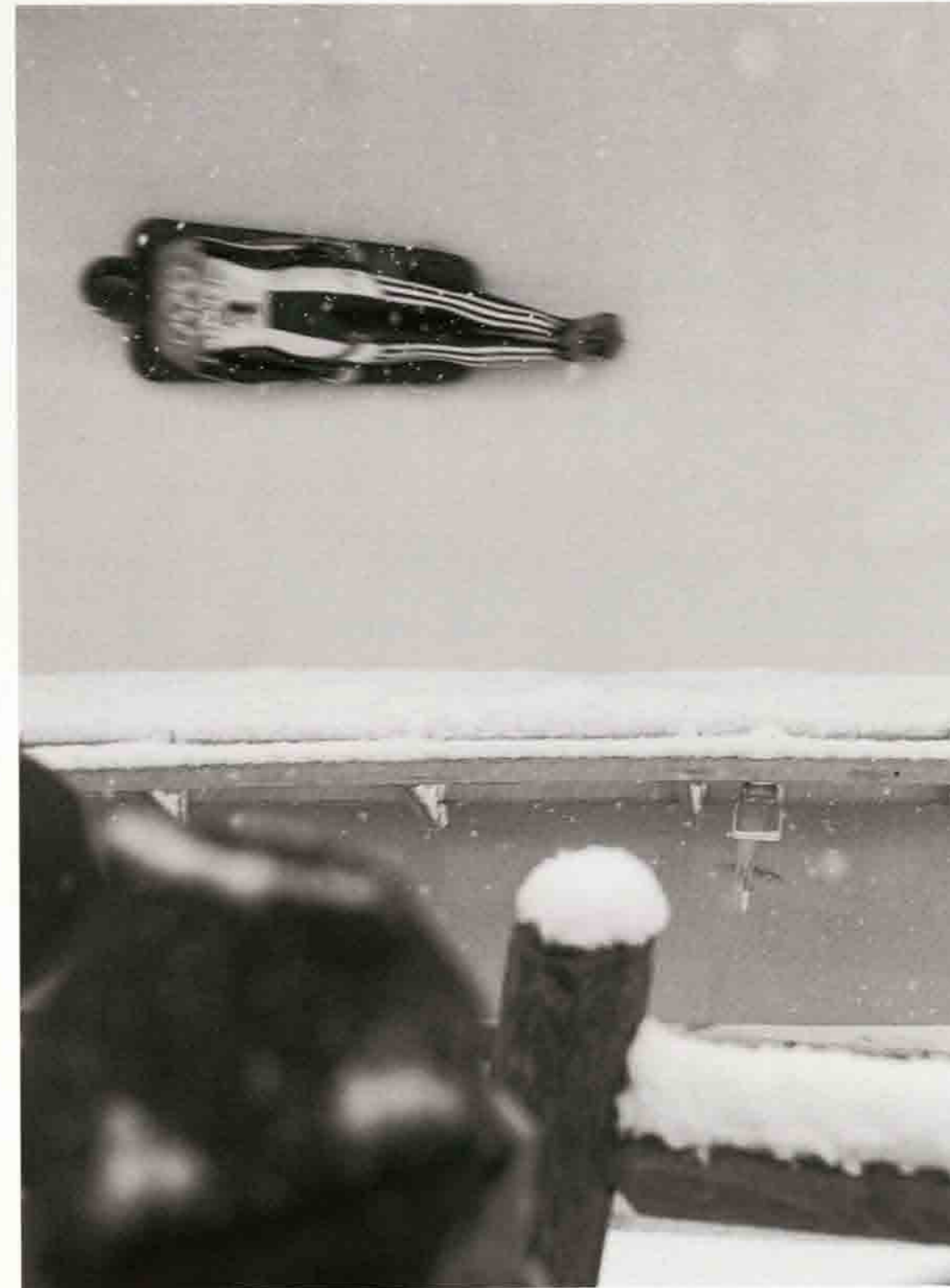
"I think he had some unfinished business before he went to heaven. Now I think he can go."
 — Gold medalist Jim Shea Jr., United States of America

JOHN HUET



A snowstorm on February 20 added a dreamlike quality to the skeleton events.

C H A D H O L D E R



Canada's Lindsay Alcock rides in the snow. "It's amazing to be a part of this—to be in the first-ever women's skeleton. I never expected to be here," she said.

I A N L O G A N



Several of the skeleton competitors were firefighters, including Canadian Duff Gibson, shown at left during a training session. The Calgary, Alberta, resident is also a two-time winner of the "Toughest Calgarian Alive" competition. Gibson placed 10th in the skeleton event.

YIBOR NEMETH (LEFT)

"This is going to be a blast. People don't know what they're going to see when they come to a skeleton race."
—Tristan Gale of the United States of America, just days before she won the gold.

ALBERT COLANTONIO (ABOVE)



"No one's heard of this sport, but everyone's done it. We've all had a Flexible Flyer that we hopped on at one time or another. When most people see the sport, it just takes them back to sled rides as a kid." – Silver medalist Lea Ann Parsley, United States of America

ANDY ANDERSON



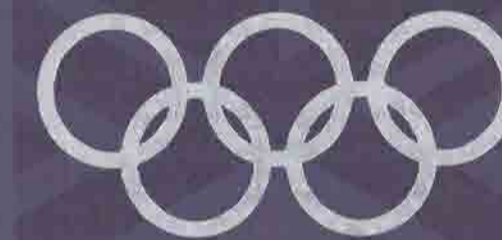
"You're the vehicle so you get to experience the whole thing." – Luis Carrasco, Mexico

ANDY ANDERSON



Troy Billington of the U.S. Virgin Islands, a schoolteacher, scraped together funds to buy a skeleton sled and often slept in his car to save money. Just 48 hours before the race, he was informed he could not compete because of a technicality in the qualification process. "I accept my fate, it wasn't my time. You snap back and you get to racing again," he said. Billington, who also runs an exchange program for kids, plans to compete in 2006.

T I B O R N E M E T H





LUGE • EVERY OLYMPIAN HAS A STORY. AND IN LUGE, THE MOST PRECISELY TIMED OLYMPIC SPORT OF ALL, MANY OF THOSE STORIES JUST SLIP BY IN FRACTIONS OF A SECOND. WE SEE THE TRIUMPH OF THE GIANTS AND MISS THE OTHER JOURNEYS, THE HUNDREDS OF SLOWER RIDES THAT ARE ALSO LINED WITH GUTS, PASSION AND NATIONAL PRIDE. BUT AT THE SALT LAKE 2002 GAMES, THE WORLD BEGAN TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE BACK OF THE PACK. YES, THERE WAS GLORY IN THE GIANT FEATS OF GEORG HACKL, ARMIN ZÖGgeler, THE GERMAN WOMEN AND THE AMERICAN



Melanie Ougier of France slides down the Utah Olympic Park track on February 12.

ANDY ANDERSON

men. For the nearly 70,000 spectators who stood by a mountainside to see a blur go by, however, there was also inspiration and humility in those who could not be defeated, no matter how far they fell behind. Athletes like 21-year-old Shiva Keshavan, who alone represented India in 1998 and 2002. Or Reto Gilly, who finished in 24th place, but beamed victoriously at the finish line because his wife had just given birth to a daughter back in Switzerland. Or the volunteer who courageously reached out to stop a runaway sled from injuring a fallen athlete and lost the tip of his finger. Or Anne Abernathy, who had survived cancer and was competing for the U.S. Virgin Islands. Why? "We all do it because we love the sport," said Abernathy. "That's the only reason you should be doing anything."

Georg Hackl of Germany is arguably the greatest slider in the history of luge. In 2002, he was attempting to become the first Olympic Winter Games athlete to win four consecutive gold medals in the same individual event. One man, though, had been gradually gaining ground on Hackl, trying to snap the streak. At Lillehammer in 1994, Hackl won his second consecutive gold medal while a 20-year-old rising star from Italy named Armin Zöggeler took the bronze. Four years later in Nagano, Hackl won again and Zöggeler claimed the silver. All Hackl had to do in Park City was to outrace Zöggeler to make history. But on February 10 and 11 at Utah Olympic Park, Zöggeler's time had come. The Italian slider and three-time world champion raced four solid runs to stake his claim of Olympic gold and to complete his multicolored collection of medals. Hackl finished 0.329 seconds behind Zöggeler to capture the silver, holding off Austria's Markus Prock—who took the bronze—by slightly more than a tenth of a second.

As Zöggeler crossed the finish line on his final run, Hackl stood next to the track, watching the scoreboard overhead. His reign as Olympic champion over, he smiled and clapped his hands together several times, cheering not for his silver but for another man's gold. At the flower ceremony a short time later, Hackl and Prock, the two elder statesmen of luge, hoisted the new champion onto their shoulders. "This second place is where I belong," said Hackl. "Armin is right behind me. And it's a pity that Markus Prock is once more behind me at the Olympics."

Prock, a 37-year-old corporal in the Austrian army, announced after the race that it had been his last, closing the door on an illustrious career—one that spanned six Olympic Winter Games and netted him three Olympic medals and 11 world championship medals. Hackl, who has designed and built all of his sleds since the age of 16, said he would race for one more year and then see how he felt about continuing. And then he tearfully dedicated the silver medal to his father, who died of a heart attack in December, 2001, just after watching his son win a race in Königssee, Germany, where Hackl fell in love with the sport at the age of 12.

There were others, of course, who had fallen in love with the sport, and missing a medal could hardly dampen their ardor or their courage. Patrick Singelton, the lone representative from Bermuda, crashed on his second run, ripping his suit, and had the tenacity to complete the race wearing a suit borrowed from the Latvian team. Werner Hoeger, 48, and Christopher Hoeger, 17, competed for Venezuela. A university professor and a high school honor student, they were the first father and son to compete in the same event in Olympic luge history. And American Adam Heidt thrilled the home crowd—and himself—with a surprising fourth-place finish, the best singles showing ever for an American. His response echoed the attitude of nearly every slider. Said Heidt: "I just had a great time."

When asked halfway through the competition if the German team could be toppled—a team that had won the previous 33 World Cup races—American slider Becky Wilczak proclaimed that "anything can happen. I've never slid on the track with a crowd like this." In that crowd, there was one

person Wilczak was trying especially hard for: her father, Tom. Awaiting a liver transplant—with no donor in sight—and weak with fatigue, he had ignored his doctor's order not to travel. He made the 1400-mile trip from Illinois to see his daughter compete and, hopefully, win a medal.

"A crowd like this," meanwhile, referred to the 15,000 spectators who supported any team that happened to be on the track. If they knew the Germans might sweep the event, they didn't show it, or at least they didn't care. Pockets of Americans, Swiss and Canadians attempted to outchant each other with national pride. And nearly as loud as the "USA!" yells for the American sliders were the thunderous calls of "Latvia!" each time one of Latvia's women sliders came racing across the finish line.

Angelika Neuner of Austria was not as optimistic as Wilczak. "Germany's girls are so strong," she said before the event. "All of the others are happy to get the fourth place."

Her words proved to be prescient. Sylke Otto, Barbara Niedernhuber and Silke Kraushaar made it clear from the first run that the gold would belong to Germany. It became a question of who would wear it. Kraushaar, who cried the entire way down her first luge run at age 9, eventually overcame her fear to become a three-time World Cup champion and gold medalist at the Nagano 1998 Games. She took the bronze at Utah Olympic Park. Niedernhuber, a police officer in Rosenheim, Germany, who won the silver medal in Nagano behind Kraushaar, won another silver in 2002. And Otto, who had failed to even make the 1994 and 1998 Olympic teams, proved in a big way that she finally earned her spot. She flew past "Sylke Otto Fan Club" banners, German flags and T-shirts bearing her likeness straight to the gold, her first Olympic medal. And to put an exclamation point on her achievement, she set the new track record on her third run at 42.940 seconds. The Germans had, as expected, swept the event, recalling the German sweep of ladies' alpine combined at Nagano in 1998.

HIS REIGN AS CHAMPION OVER, HACKL SMILED AND CLAPPED, NOT FOR HIS SILVER BUT FOR ANOTHER MAN'S GOLD.

But the unexpected moments proved equally as exciting and, at times, tense, as the race for the gold. Venezuelan Iginia Boccalandro, 41, lost control coming out of a turn during the first run and hit the wall hard. Knocked unconscious and thrown from her sled, she continued to slide, motionless, down the track. After 30 yards, she regained consciousness, and paramedics led her off the track. She was bruised, but otherwise was fine. She announced her retirement from the sport immediately after the race.

Another luge veteran, Anne Abernathy, drew some of the loudest cheers of the competition, even with a 26th—third to last—place finish. The 48-year-old crowd favorite from the U.S. Virgin Islands smiled and waved to shouts of "Grandma Luge!" Her teammate Dinah Browne, the first black woman to compete in Olympic luge, finished in last place, but you would never know from the look on her face afterward. "My first Olympics, and I can't stop smiling!" she said.

Angelika Neuner finished 1.297 seconds—an eternity in luge—behind the bronze medalist. Fourth place is a position of anguish for most athletes. But for Neuner, given the competition on this day, it was enough.

Wilczak finished fifth. But while her father didn't see her win a medal, a compatible donor was found shortly after the Games. He underwent a successful liver transplant, proving that as his daughter had said in February 2002, really, anything can happen.

In a sport that demands the ultimate precision, hurtling down an icy mountainside at 75 miles per hour with another person on board is a nerve-racking task. The athletes train together constantly and share together the thrill of the sport. Some even share the same name: At the Salt Lake 2002 Games, first cousins Tobias and Markus Schiegl of Austria raced on one sled, as did fellow Austrians Andreas and Wolfgang Linger, brothers.

But with nearly 500 pounds of mass trying to negotiate turns and looking for a few precious fractions of a second, doubles teams also share the inevitable crashes. Take Germany's Alexander Resch and Patric Leitner, both soldiers who were training happily—and fairly safely—as singles lugers when a nearby coach noticed them standing together. Their physical matchup seemed aerodynamically perfect: the smaller, lighter Resch could be in the back of the sled while Leitner, at 6 feet, 2 inches and 196 pounds, could provide the necessary momentum. But when they began practicing together, Resch and Leitner were so out of control, and crashed so often, they were nicknamed the Flying Bavarians.

On February 15, it proved to be an apt moniker, as the Germans flew to the doubles gold with a time of 1:26.082 after four runs. And even with the potential of crashing in front of 15,000 fans, the lugers hardly felt any jitters just before the race. Said Resch: "We thought like we always do in training and said, 'Let's hop on the luge and do our thing.'"

The Americans weren't quite so cavalier. "I have to admit to being a little nervous this morning," said Brian Martin after the race. He began racing after seeing a newspaper article on street luge and thinking it might be a fun thing to do for an afternoon. Fourteen years and many, many afternoons later, he found himself as the new Salt Lake 2002 doubles silver medalist, having earned a total time of 1:26.216 with teammate Mark Grimmette.

"I've never been more nervous in my life, and I don't think I could ever be that nervous again," said fellow American Chris Thorpe, who slid to the bronze with Clay Ives. The anxieties hit him during the second run. "In 17 years of sliding, I've never felt that much emotion or stimulus on the sled," he said. "Just bombing down the bottom part of the course, I felt like we could barely hold it together, I thought we might break apart."

In the brotherhood of doubles luge, that seemed nearly impossible.



Lubomir Mick and Walter Mraz of Slovakia compete in the doubles event.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



A solitary athlete prepares to propel himself down the track. One of the most solitary lugers may have been Shiva Keshavan, India's one representative at the Salt Lake 2002 Games. Keshavan began the sport after attending a "luge on wheels" camp when he was 15. "I remember laughing all the way down the track. Even more fun than that was the first time I crashed," he said.

J O H N H U E T



Cousins Tobias and Markus Schiegl of Austria train for the doubles competition. They would place sixth.

T I B O R N E M E T H



"I never believed that fools like us could win the gold medal at the Olympics." — Germany's Patric Leitner after he and Alexander Resch won the luge doubles gold.

TIBOR NEMETH (LEFT)

Accidents happen in luge. At Utah Olympic Park, Bermuda's Patrick Singleton crashed, ripped his suit and returned with a borrowed outfit from a Latvian friend. Two days later, Iginia Boccalandro of Venezuela was thrown from her sled and knocked unconscious after losing control during her first run.

JOHN HUÉT (ABOVE)



"I've seen athletes from Sarajevo dodge bullets to get on an airplane in order to go and train. The Olympics is a microcosm of the world. It brings the world together in the spirit of sportsmanship, competition and in games. Which is what this is. It's a game. It should be fun." —Five-time Olympian Anne Abernathy of the U.S. Virgin Islands, known as "Grandma Luge," above.

ANDY ANDERSON



Anders Söderberg and Bengt Walden of Sweden race in the doubles event.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL

"This is a very huge atmosphere with all the spectators shouting as we drive down the track."—Karsten Albert, Germany.

RAYMOND MEEKS





"I'm not looking to win medals. What I'm trying to do is encourage young kids from the islands to join the sport and to learn something from me." - U.S. Virgin Islands luger Dinah Browne, who placed last in the women's singles

T I B O R N E M E T H



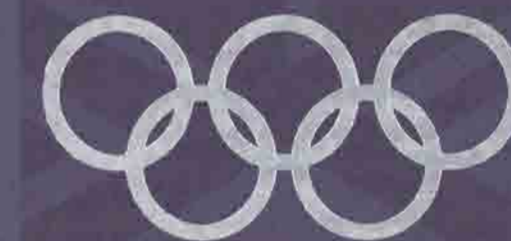
A Canadian team readies for the 17 curves and 4318 icy feet between this moment and the finish line.

T I B O R N E M E T H



Resembling giant beetles, luge sleds are strictly monitored. Because doing so would increase speed, heating the runners is prohibited. Officials check the weight of the sled and the temperature of the runners at the start of each race.

T I B O R N E M E T H





CURLING • IT WAS A SCHOOL NIGHT IN THE TINY VILLAGE OF DUNLOP, SCOTLAND, BUT ON FEBRUARY 21, 8-YEAR-OLD JENNIFER MARTIN AND HER 5-YEAR-OLD BROTHER ANDREW WERE ALLOWED TO STAY UP PAST MIDNIGHT. THEY WERE AMONG THE 5.6 MILLION VIEWERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WHO SAT TRANSFIXED BEFORE THEIR TELEVISIONS TO SEE IF JENNIFER AND ANDREW'S MOTHER, RHONA, AND HER CURLING TEAMMATES WOULD MAKE SPORTS HISTORY FOR GREAT BRITAIN. • FIVE THOUSAND MILES AWAY, AT THE ICE SHEET AT OGDEN, THE



247

"When you are playing in the Olympics, you are not allowed to think it's over. I just can't give up."
— Norway's skip, Pål Trulsen. Norway plays Canada for the gold medal, above.

I A N L O G A N

score was 3–3 in the women's gold-medal match between Great Britain and Switzerland. It was the last round, and Switzerland's Luzia Ebnoether had thrown her team's last stone. Rhona Martin's hammer shot would end the match and decide the gold. She stepped into the hack to push off for the delivery and swiped at the bottom of the 42-pound granite stone, like a ballplayer knocking mud from her cleats. Then, gliding along the pebbled ice in a prolonged genuflection, she deftly released the stone with a subtle twist of the wrist. The stands went quiet. Rhona's husband, sitting with their children in Dunlop, couldn't look.

Moments like these are what earn curling its spot alongside downhill and luge and speed skating at the Olympic Winter Games. Moments like these when victory is lost in a heartbeat, when skill and strategy count more than brawn or bravery. There were hundreds of such moments during the Salt Lake 2002 curling tournaments. Each was a thrilling progression of surprises and upsets; each was a showcase of grace and dignity.

Although a strong contender along with Switzerland, Great Britain almost didn't make it to the gold-medal match when it lost to Germany in an earlier game. And then there was heavily favored Canada, where curling champions approach royalty status. On February 11, the Ice Sheet at Ogden hosted a traditional opening ceremony, during which Canada's "Queen of Curling," Sandra Schmirler, was remembered. She had led her team to the first-ever Olympic gold in curling at Nagano 1998 and died of breast cancer two years later. Her countrywomen hoped to carry on her legacy with another victory. As Marcia Gudereit, one of Schmirler's former teammates, explained, "With curling, everyone expects Canada to win a gold medal."

The pressure on Canada helps explain why the team hired a psychologist, in addition to a nutritionist and personal trainers. But while the Canadian women were able to slide into the semifinals, thanks to winning eight of nine round-robin matches, they lost in a dramatic 6–5 upset by Great Britain. Kelley Law and teammates Julie Skinner, Georgina Wheatcroft and Diane Nelson, with Cheryl Noble as alternate, were stunned and subdued. The only hope was for third place—unthinkable.

But Law soon had a change of heart. "I talked to my 10-year-old son and he said, 'You know, it's just nice that you're at the Olympics, Mom. I lost all my soccer games this year, like every single one. So it's great just to be there. You don't need to bring a medal home.' And I just started to cry. I thought, I need to bring a bronze home for that little guy." Suddenly, a bronze Olympic medal looked pretty good to the team. And they went after it with a vengeance, defeating the U.S. women's team 9–5.

THOSE WHO HADN'T KNOWN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HOG LINE AND A HACK HELD THEIR HEADS HIGHER.

Great Britain, meanwhile, was equally stunned by its victory over Canada and its place in the gold-medal round. The team had struggled to stay strong in the standings, but here the women were, facing down Switzerland, with the shot of a lifetime, as their children watched from across the sea.

Rhona Martin's stone slowly slid into place, nudging a hair closer to the button (the bull's eye) than the stones played by Switzerland. It was enough. Great Britain had won the gold! Debbie Knox, Fiona MacDonald, Janice Rankin and alternate Margaret Morton jumped up and down while the fans shot from their seats. These Scottish women had earned the country's first winter gold in nearly 20

years. They were instant celebrities, congratulated by Prince Charles and Scotland's first minister, Jack McConnell, and invited to Edinburgh Castle. They inspired a country. Those who hadn't known the difference between a hog line and a hack held their heads a little higher because five women gave Great Britain international bragging rights. For Scotland, where the sport originated in the early 1500s, the victory by the all-Scottish team was especially sweet.

If the lingering image of the women's tournament is of a team that knew how to win, the highlight of the men's is of a team that knew how to lose. By February 22, Sweden's Peja Lindholm, Tomas Nordin, Magnus Swartling, Peter Narup and alternate Anders Kraupp had advanced to the bronze-medal match. They envisioned a place on the podium and were thrilled. As the match progressed, however, this vision began to fade. Switzerland, the defending champions who lost 7–6 to Norway in the semifinals, was equally determined to medal. In the eighth end, Swiss captain Andreas Schwaller knocked the Swedish stones out of the house. Lindholm had only one chance to score points: by landing his stone in the center of the house.

It didn't land there. The stone just kept going, past the button. And with it vanished Sweden's vision of victory.

Early in the next and final end, Lindholm was to deliver again. Focused on the other side of the ice sheet 146 feet away, Lindholm pushed off for the delivery. But instead of releasing the stone, he just kept going. In an unheard of and illegal move, he glided past the line, still clutching the stone. Spectators laughed and watched in amazement as, down the centerline, he slid all the way to the end of the ice sheet, never letting go of his grip.

The match was over. In this graceful and lighthearted moment, a classic moment of Olympic sportsmanship, Lindholm had conceded. He placed his stone in the center of the house and congratulated Switzerland. "I saw my sweepers," Lindholm said after the match. "They were very sad; they were almost crying. We will remember this Olympics. And it's not a great memory to cry at the end. It's better to have a good laugh. So I did it for the team."

Canada, too, was beginning to form its own great memory of the Games: a gold medal. The women had missed, but Kevin Martin, Carter Rycroft, Don Walchuk and Don Bartlett, with Ken Tralenberg as alternate, still had a shot. On February 22, the defending silver-medal winners faced Norway, the defending bronze medalists from the Nagano 1998 Olympic Winter Games, for the gold.

The mood inside the Ice Sheet at Ogden was intense. A hush had fallen over the crowd, and the only sounds were of the stones clicking and of the captain's orders to "sweep! sweep! sweep!" as Norway took the lead, 3–0, in the fourth end. Canada fought back, and by the ninth end, the score was tied, 5–5. Norway's last rock, thrown by Pål Trulsen, landed in the outer lip of the blue scoring area. So, it would be silver; it seemed, for Trulsen, Lars Vågberg, Flemming Davanger, Bent Ånund Ramsfjell and alternate Torger Nergård. No stones blocked the lane for Canada's Martin, who would throw the final stone of the game. He just had to deliver a clean shot to take the gold. And Martin had played this type of shot thousands of times.

The stone slid down the ice. It looked heavy, too fast. And as the stone slowed to a stop, it was too wide. Norway had won, 6–5.

It was a classic curling match. Sweden's Lindholm summed it up best. "The difference between disaster and success is very, very small," he said. "You have to be humble."



A curler warms up for a round-robin match on February 15.

DAVID BURNETT



"It's pool, it's a boxing match, it's chess. In pool, there are so many angles out there. We'll pick a spot, and we'll try to hit it just like a pool ball. [Like] chess, we're strategically playing rocks to hit later on. It's a battle, it's a fighting match." — Myles Brundage (left, with Mike Schmeberger), United States of America

DAVID BURNETT



Enthusiastic fans cheered curlers through 12 days of competition. "We've had the best time and we'll never, ever forget it," said Canadian bronze medalist Kelley Law. "The people of Salt Lake City have been wonderful."

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



France's Dominique DuPont Roc, skip, shouts encouragement to his teammates during a round-robin match against the United States of America on February 15.

DAVID BURNETT



Norway defeated Germany 10-5 on February 16. Germany's skip, an ailing Sebastian Stock, shown at right, left the match at the conclusion of the seventh end. Germany opted to play with three men instead of using an alternate.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



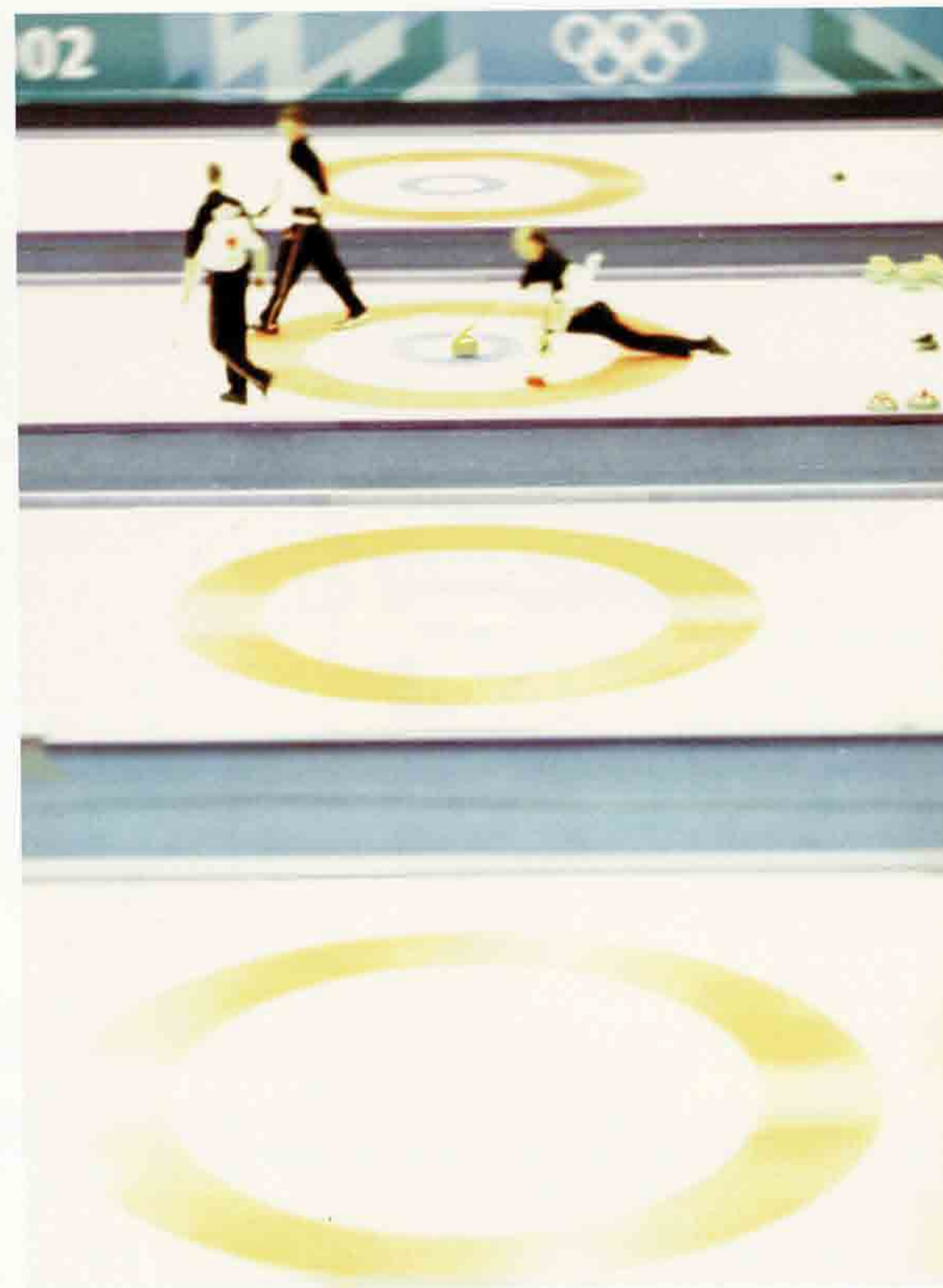
"A shot takes about 25 seconds. In that 25 seconds, you may have an average of 10 pieces of communication that you have to get across to each other. If you don't get it in those 25 seconds, then you can make the wrong decisions. It's those margins that make the difference between a winning and a losing team." — Lisa Richardson, Denmark

TIBOR NEMETH



Curlers compete in the semifinals of the men's tournament on February 20.

ALBERT COLANTONIO



Canada advanced to the gold medal match, but then was defeated by Norway. "We lost to a great team," said Canada's Don Walchuk. "I'm not going to hang my head."

ALBERT COLANTONIO



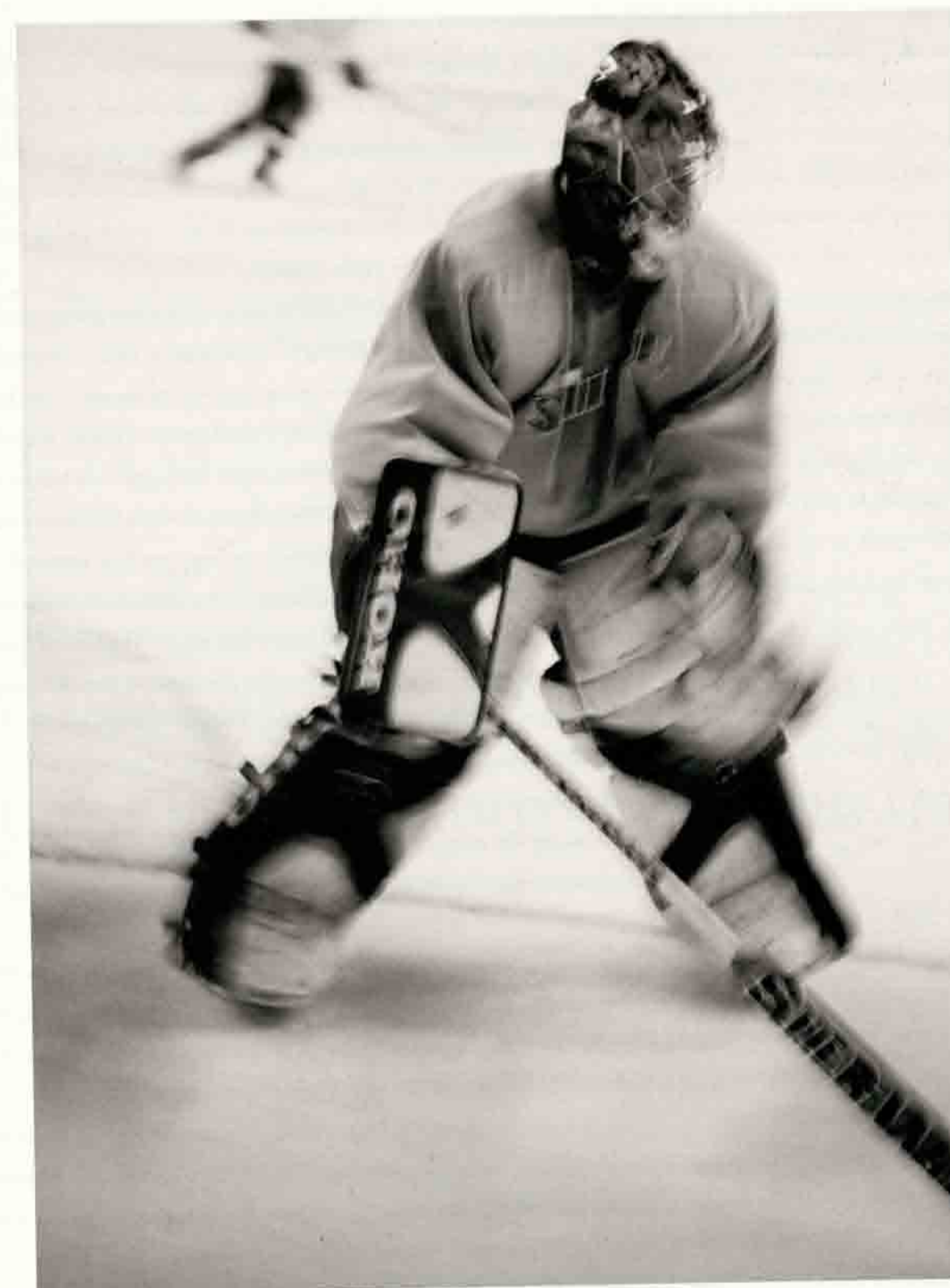
With a nod to curling's Scottish roots, the Salt Lake Scots bagpipers escorted in teams each day of competition at the Ice Sheet at Ogden.

ALBERT COLANTONIO





ICE HOCKEY • IT WAS A FAST, FURIOUS AND PHYSICAL GAME, AT TIMES OVERWHELMING EVEN THE MOST SEASONED PLAYERS IN TWO EMOTIONAL TOURNAMENTS. EVERY SECOND COUNTED; ONE MISTAKE COULD COST THE GAME. WINNING REQUIRED TRUST OF TEAMMATES, RESPECT FOR THE OPPONENT AND UNWAVERING PASSION. "THE TEAM WITH THE BIGGEST HEART WILL WIN," PREDICTED SWEDISH FORWARD ERIKA HOLST. • THE MEN'S TOURNAMENT WAS DOMINATED BY THE "BIG SIX" HOCKEY COUNTRIES, PACKED WITH NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE (NHL) PLAYERS; THE



Switzerland practices before the men's preliminary round

"No one knows what the next two weeks hold and that's the beauty of it. When everything's at stake, you see what you are made of and that's really what the Olympic Spirit is —athletes showing up when they have to." — Cammi Granato, United States of America

IAN LOGAN

women's by the undefeated forces of the United States and Canada. The rest of the pack, however, wasn't planning to hold back. "We've got nothing to lose," said German forward Jan Benda. "We can only make a good impression, and that's what we're here for." There were lopsided losses and unbelievable upsets, every moment packed with a pure love of hockey.

On February 8, Cammi Granato, captain of the U.S. women's team, climbed the steps at Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium, carrying the Olympic Flame toward the Cauldron at the Opening Ceremony. For her colleagues watching from the stands, it was an extraordinary moment that represented the progress of women's ice hockey. The sight transcended nationalism and even the bitter rivalry between the American and Canadian women's teams. "I was really happy for her," said Canadian Lori Dupuis. "It was really good for women's hockey."

It had not been an easy journey. Most of these women had grown up playing on boys' teams, changing in makeshift locker rooms, having to work twice as hard to prove themselves. Now here they were, competing in the second women's ice hockey tournament in the history of the Olympic Winter Games. Accustomed to playing before a small group of family and friends, they were now competing in arenas packed with up to 10,000 people, their games broadcast on national television back home. What every female player hoped was that a good performance would inspire young girls in their country to play hockey. Only then would the sport reach its potential.

During the preliminary round, the eight teams were divided into two groups of four and played a round-robin (teams in each group played each other once). The United States served up double-digit losses to Germany and China, as Canada did to Sweden. No team was able to score on Canada, and the U.S. team gave up only one goal, to China. The gap between the elite North American teams and the rest of the chasing pack reflected the wide disparity in funding, training time and most important, number of players. Canada had 50,000 girls and women playing hockey, China had 100.

But to assume this tournament was only about Canada, the United States and the gold medal was to miss the essence and some of the most exciting moments of women's ice hockey.

SEVENTH PLACE •

This was a final chance at redemption after a relentless tournament, a chance to avoid returning home with last place. The Kazakhstan team, making its Olympic debut, had lost every single game and scored only one goal. China had taken home fourth place from Nagano, had been on the road since January and hadn't won a game. The players were exhausted.

China protected a one-goal lead for almost the entire game, until Kazakhstan slipped one past goalkeeper Hong Guo, to tie the game 1-1. The final two minutes were intense as China received two successive penalties, giving Kazakhstan a two-player advantage and several scoring opportunities. But Guo, called the Great Wall of China, made great saves and sent the game into overtime. A minute and a half into overtime, Hongmei Liu, the team captain, scored the game-winning goal and secured the seventh-place win for China. "There was no way we could lose this game," said Guo. "The regret would have remained in our hearts forever."

FIFTH PLACE •

Russia's and Germany's teams were both playing in the Olympic Winter Games for the first time. The German players were excited to be playing for fifth, but the Russian team, having won the bronze in the 2001 world championship, had hoped for more. Russia's first game of the tournament was a disappointing 2-3 loss to Sweden, which dashed its medal hopes. "We are going to fight for fifth place as if it were first," said Russian goalie Irina Gachennikova. And they did. Forward Tatiana

Burina scored two goals less than eight minutes into the game, and forward Tatiana Tsareva scored one more in the second period.

Germany had earned this opportunity by edging out China in the preliminary round with an exciting three-goal comeback in the third period to tie the game 5-5. During the fifth-place game, the Germans again came alive in the third period, but against the more physical and determined Russians, it was too little, too late. The Russians scored two more goals to win 5-0. "We put all the effort we could. We were fighting our best," said Russia's Tsareva.

BRONZE MEDAL •

Finland had seven bronze medals—one from the Nagano Games and six more from world championships. At the Salt Lake 2002 Games, the players were determined to play in the gold-medal game. They came close. In the semifinal game against Canada, Finland led 3-2 early in the third period. But Canada came back and dominated, scoring five goals in the third period. Finland lost 3-7. The Finns would play Sweden, a team they had beaten seven times that season, for the bronze medal.

Sweden's preseason record, meanwhile, was so dismal (0-18 by mid-December 2001) that the Swedish Olympic Committee had publicly threatened to not send the team to Salt Lake City, and waited a month before officially giving the green light. Sweden also had one of the youngest and least experienced teams in the tournament (only five players were older than 25). But two of the team's youngest players became the stars of the bronze-medal game. Evelina Samuelsson, 17, knocked in two goals in the first period and 15-year-old rookie goaltender Kim Martin blocked 32 of Finland's

"THERE WAS NO WAY WE COULD LOSE THIS GAME. THE REGRET WOULD HAVE REMAINED IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER."

33 shots. In the final minutes, Finland, down 1-2, tried desperately to tie the game, peppering Martin with shots, but to no avail. When the clock ran out, the team piled on Martin, the youngest Swede ever to win an Olympic medal. Against tough odds, Sweden had won its first medal in women's hockey. "It's huge. I can't find the words ... I'm just so happy," said Anna Andersson. "And for women's hockey in Sweden, I think it means a lot. I just hope that some more girls will start playing."

GOLD MEDAL •

For Canada and the United States, it was gold or nothing and the rivalry was intense. "We're out to win the gold medal," said Canadian defender Cheryl Pounder. "There are no friends in that." Canada had won all seven world championships, but the 1-3 loss to the United States in Nagano had haunted the team for four years. Team USA, meanwhile, boasted an untouchable record of 35-0 from the season, including an unprecedented 8-0 record in exhibition games against Canada. The Americans were the overwhelming favorites, the defending gold-medal champions with the home-team advantage, and the Canadians hoped they would crack under all that pressure.

The first fissure appeared just two minutes into the game, when Canadian Caroline Ouellette scored. "We wanted to get the first goal and put them back on their heels, and we did that," Ouellette said later. The Canadians' relentless defense prevented the Americans from scoring until the second period, when American Katie King tied the game 1-1, only to be answered minutes later by Hayley Wickenheiser (known in Canada as the female Wayne Gretzky), who scored another for Canada. With one second left in the second period, Canadian Jayna Hefford grabbed a bouncing puck with

her glove, dropped it on the ice and scored. It turned out to be the back-breaking and game-winning goal, giving the Canadians a 3-1 lead and a psychological advantage, from which the Americans could never recover. "It was a huge goal," said Canada's Tammy Lee Shewchuk.

American Karyn Bye scored with less than four minutes left in the game, narrowing Canada's lead to one. The crowd cheered wildly as the Americans tried desperately to tie the game, but Canada's exceptional goaltending—Kim St. Pierre finished with 25 saves—and penalty killing had dominated the game. Thirteen penalties were called against the Canadians, eight of them in a row, yet they prevented the Americans from scoring on all but two of them.

"With five seconds to go, I actually had to look up at the clock, because I couldn't believe it was really happening. It was like a dream," said Canada's Lori Dupuis. Canada had won. The ice was soon littered with gloves, sticks and helmets as the Canadian players piled on St. Pierre and celebrated the win they had been working toward every day for the past four years.

The Americans quietly endured the celebration from their bench. "It's definitely heartbreaking," said Natalie Darwitz, an 18-year-old rookie, and one of the tournament's leading scorers. "But we're not hanging our heads. All 20 players gave it their all. We left everything out on the ice." They accepted the silver medals graciously, but many, especially the veterans, couldn't hold back tears of disappointment. "It's tough. I know what they're going through," said Canadian Vicky Sunohara, a Nagano veteran. "The medals are beautiful, but not the right color."

This time the medal was the right color for the Canadians. As the players lined up to receive Canada's first gold medal in Olympic hockey in 50 years, they embraced each other, laughed and cried. "I looked down the line and saw my teammates getting their gold medals," said Jennifer Botterill. "It felt like a moment I've dreamt about my whole life."

While many of the female ice hockey players saw the Salt Lake 2002 Games as a way to promote their sport, the tournament was yet another part of a busy hockey career for many of the men, who are paid—substantially—to play professional hockey. As the Games began, the top players were still competing in the NHL. Whether paid to play or not, however, all share a passion for the sport. "I love everything about hockey," said Martin Havlat of the Czech Republic. "It's my life, it's what I've been doing since I was 5. I love to compete, just go out there and compete against anybody."

The tournament began with a preliminary round. As the spotlight shined on the world's six best teams—the Czech Republic, Russia, Finland, Canada, Sweden and the United States, which had already qualified to play in the final round—eight other countries battled it out for one of two coveted spots in the finals. With many of these teams missing their top players, who were playing in the NHL until the season suspension on February 14, the odds of advancing were even tougher. Slovakia, for instance, was an early favorite to win pool A, but with fewer players per game struggled to pull together as a team. Germany, meanwhile, played almost-perfect defense, fending off competitors while taking advantage of opponents' mistakes to score. "Very low chances for us," said German defenseman Christian Ehrhoff before the tournament began. "But we will try our best. We are a well-balanced team and we are hard workers, and that's what our game is all about."

Their efforts paid off: Germany relied heavily on its defense and swept all three of its games, making the final round. In pool B, Belarus lost one game, to Switzerland, but managed to defeat the Ukraine (1-0) and France (3-1) for the spot in the finals. "I've got a feeling, maybe," foreshadowed Belarusian Alexander Zhurik. "We can do something more than just play."

FINAL ROUND /
QUARTERFINALS •

After enjoying success in the preliminary round, Belarus lost three times in the final round: 4-6 to Russia, 1-8 to Finland and 1-8 to the United States. But Belarus had one more chance at the semifinals, by defeating Sweden. "Sometimes even a gun without the bullet shoots," said Belarusian Andrei Mezin.

Sweden was undefeated after three games, beating Canada 5-2, the Czech Republic 2-1 and Germany 7-1. Many attributed these victories to the team's "big ice" strategy, which Swedish coach Hardy Nilsson described. "What we want to do is keep the puck in the team and create a lot of ice to play on," said Nilsson, "and that's why our forwards are going to the offensive blue line. We keep the puck in the team and have fun."

And it was precisely this strategy that almost guaranteed Sweden another win against Belarus. But Belarus was focused and broke up the Swedish offense. Taking shots whenever it had the chance, the team also had a bit of luck. Outshot 47-19, Belarus goalie Andrei Mezin made 44 saves. "This was the biggest game of my career for sure," he said. "How can it be bigger than the Olympics against all NHL players?" The game was tied 3-3, and it was late in the third period. Suddenly, Belarus' Vladimir Kopat flew down the right side and launched a blast from the neutral zone. The puck hit Swedish goalie Tommy Salo's glove and bobbed up and off of his head. Seemingly in slow motion, the puck dribbled over his shoulder. Salo leaned forward, desperately hoping it would come to rest on his back, but it was too late. The puck had already crossed the goal line, and Belarus won the game, 4-3.

The upset put every team, including Canada, on edge. Handpicked by executive director and hockey legend Wayne Gretzky, the team had not only lost to Sweden, but had barely squeaked past Germany, 3-2, and tied the Czech Republic, 3-3. In its quarterfinal game, the team came together to defeat Finland, 2-1.

In the other two quarterfinal games, Russia narrowly defeated the Czech Republic, defending gold medalists, 0-1, and the United States beat Germany, 5-0. Belarus, Canada, Russia and the United States would advance to the semifinals.

SEMIFINALS •

In the first semifinal game, Belarus faced Canada. The underdog with nothing to lose, the Belarus team members played with everything they had. They had hope when Canada was ahead only 2-1 after the first period. But the Canadians soon came back to dominate—with skillful puck control, fast skating and sharp shooting. Canada won, 7-1, and advanced to the gold-medal game, while the Belarusians turned their thoughts to bronze.

In the second semifinal, it was Russia and the United States. The game was played exactly 22 years to the day after the famed "Miracle on Ice" game at the Lake Placid 1980 Games, when the United States beat the Soviet Union, 4-3, and inspired many children to begin playing hockey. U.S. coach Herb Brooks, who had also coached the 1980 team, was now back behind the bench. But both sides were less concerned with history than they were with the future: the gold-medal game on February 24. "There's nothing ever going to be like that again," said U.S. forward Bill Guerin. "But to say that it's less important to us is crazy. We're all Olympic athletes, we all want to grab the gold."

To observers, the United States seemed to control the game in the first two periods, leading 3-0 while outshooting Russia 38-11. Russian coach Vyacheslav Fetisov, however, blamed the Canadian referee for favoring his fellow North Americans, a complaint dismissed by the International Ice Hockey Federation. During the third period, Russia came back to score two goals, but it was too late. When the clock ran out, the United States had won 3-2, and prepared to face Canada for the gold.

BRONZE MEDAL •

With 11 Olympic medals (some as the Soviet Union), including four straight golds from 1964 to 1976 and silver in 1998, Russia was still dragging from its loss to the United States. Once again,

there was a flicker of hope for Belarus, when the team tied the February 23 game at 2-2 early in the second period. Then, Russia's Oleg Tverdovsky and Pavel Datsyuk scored 23 seconds apart, followed by three more goals. Russia was determined to go home with something, and charged Belarus for a 7-2 victory to take the bronze. "We knew that we had to concentrate a lot to win this game," said Russian goalkeeper Nikolai Khabibulin. "Nobody gave us these bronze medals for free."

G O L D M E D A L •

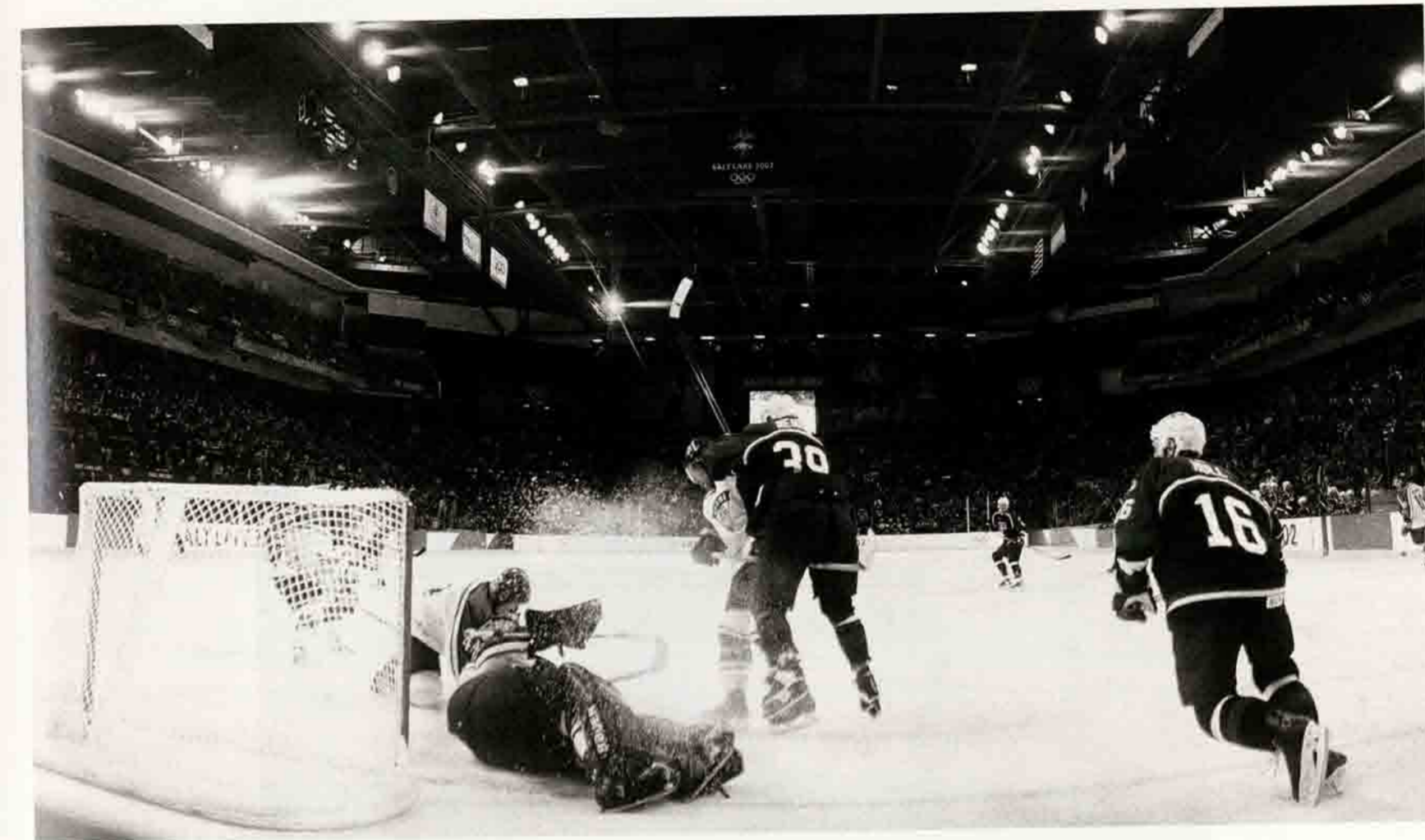
On February 24, the last day of the Games and just hours before the Closing Ceremony, Canada and USA played in one of the most anticipated hockey games of all time. Each team felt the weight of a nation on its back: Canada had not won Olympic gold in men's hockey since 1952, while the United States had not won a medal of any color for 22 years. USA had also not lost an Olympic hockey game on home ice in 70 years—at the Lake Placid 1932 Games. "As soon as we strapped on the skates when we were young kids, it's been a goal of ours to beat the Canadians," said American defenseman Tom Poti before the game. Both teams were aching to win. But for Canada, the stigma of losing would have been unbearable. And Canadian coach Pat Quinn knew that north of the border, millions of his countrymen were watching his players' every move on television. "Somehow in Canada they expect more," he said. "If you get anything but gold, you're a failure."

When the puck dropped on the ice, almost nobody knew what lay buried beneath: a golden Canadian dollar coin, hidden by ice specialists from the Edmonton Oilers for good luck as they prepared the rink. The United States scored the first goal, but soon after, fate seemed to work in favor of the Canadians. Eight minutes into the game, American Tony Amonte scored a goal, but Canada's Paul Kariya—assisted by Chris Pronger and Mario Lemieux—and Jarome Iginla each scored to end the first period at 2-1 for Canada. U.S. goalie Mike Richter later recalled Pronger's centering pass to Lemieux, who faked a shot and let the puck go to Kariya, who then blasted the puck into the net. "It was a beautiful play, a play you have to honor as a goalie. Obviously, I honored it a bit too much."

By the start of the second period, the game was still anyone's to win. Brian Rafalski scored for the United States to tie the game. But less than three minutes later, Canadian Joe Sakic scored what turned out to be the game-winning goal. USA might have tied it up again in the third, but Canadian goaltender Martin Brodeur, whose father Denis, a former goalie, had helped Canada win the bronze in 1956, made several improbable saves. Canada then scored two more to seal the victory.

Just three days before, the E Center had been filled with the sounds of the Canadian national anthem when the women's team won the gold. Now, "O, Canada" reverberated through the stands once again in the final minute of the game. "We took a lot of inspiration from how the women's team played," said defenseman Chris Pronger.

And that Canadian coin? Said Gretzky, still beaming, "I dug it up, and we're going to give it to the Hockey Hall of Fame."



The United States of America defeats Finland 6-0 in the men's final round.

I A N L O G A N



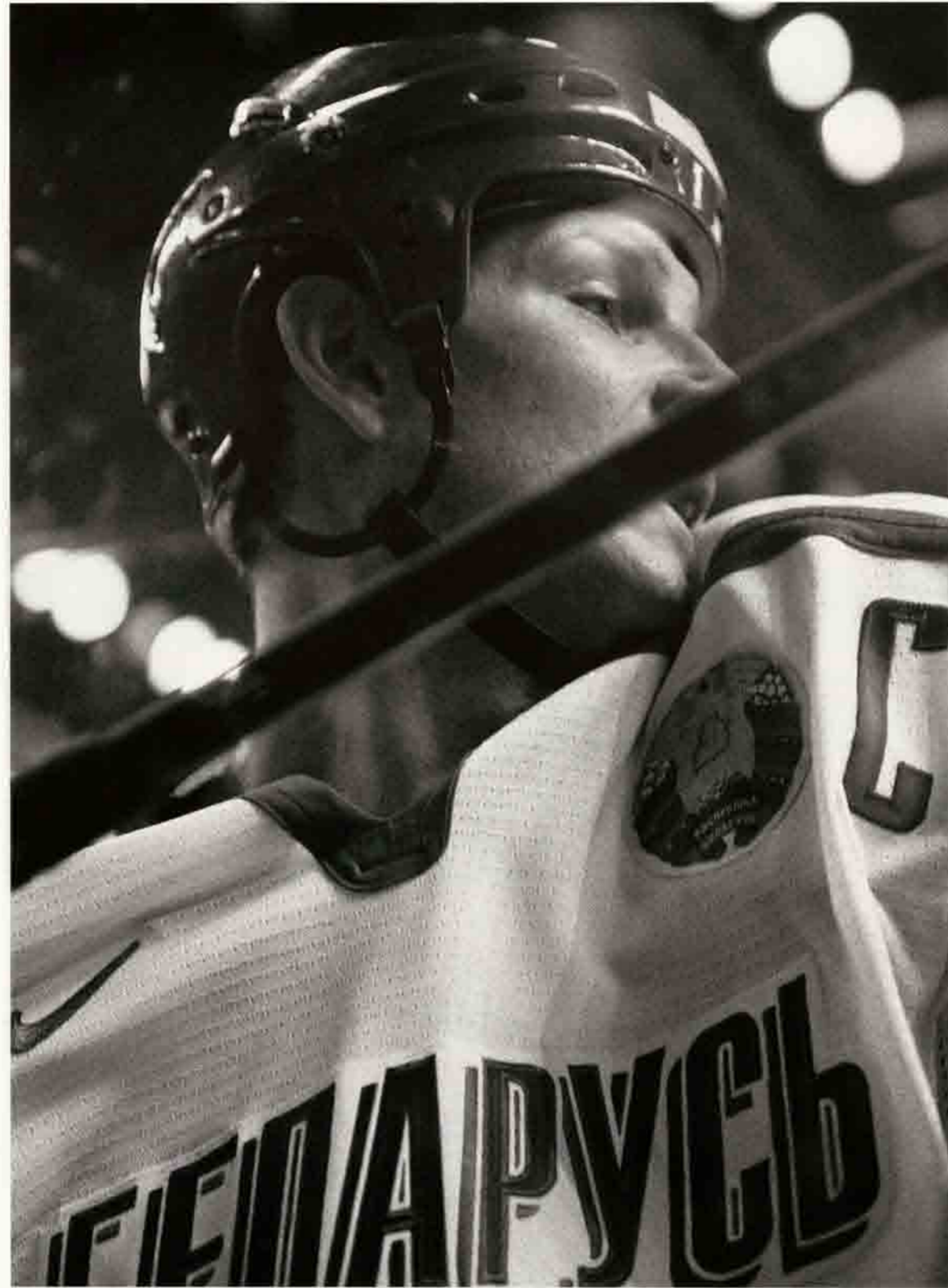
Russia lost 0-7 to the United States of America in a women's exhibition game.
"Obviously, the U.S. and Canada are way ahead of everyone else, but we are learning from them and the day will come when we will be able to compete with them." — Larisa Mishina, Russia

IAN LOGAN



"Nobody believed in us, and we came out as a whole team, we believed in each other, we proved it to the whole world. We're thrilled, especially now that we're going to play against the big boys." — Ian Bender, Germany.
Above: Germany faces the United States of America on February 20.

MICHAEL SEAMANS



"Everybody just goes nuts over there about hockey. No other sports interest people there, just hockey. The president of Belarus plays hockey twice a week, and for Belarus, hockey is everything."
 — Alexander Zburik, Belarus (Team captain Alexander Andrievski is shown above.)

I A N L O G A N



The crowd watches the United States of America play Germany on February 20.

S T E V E N C U R R I E



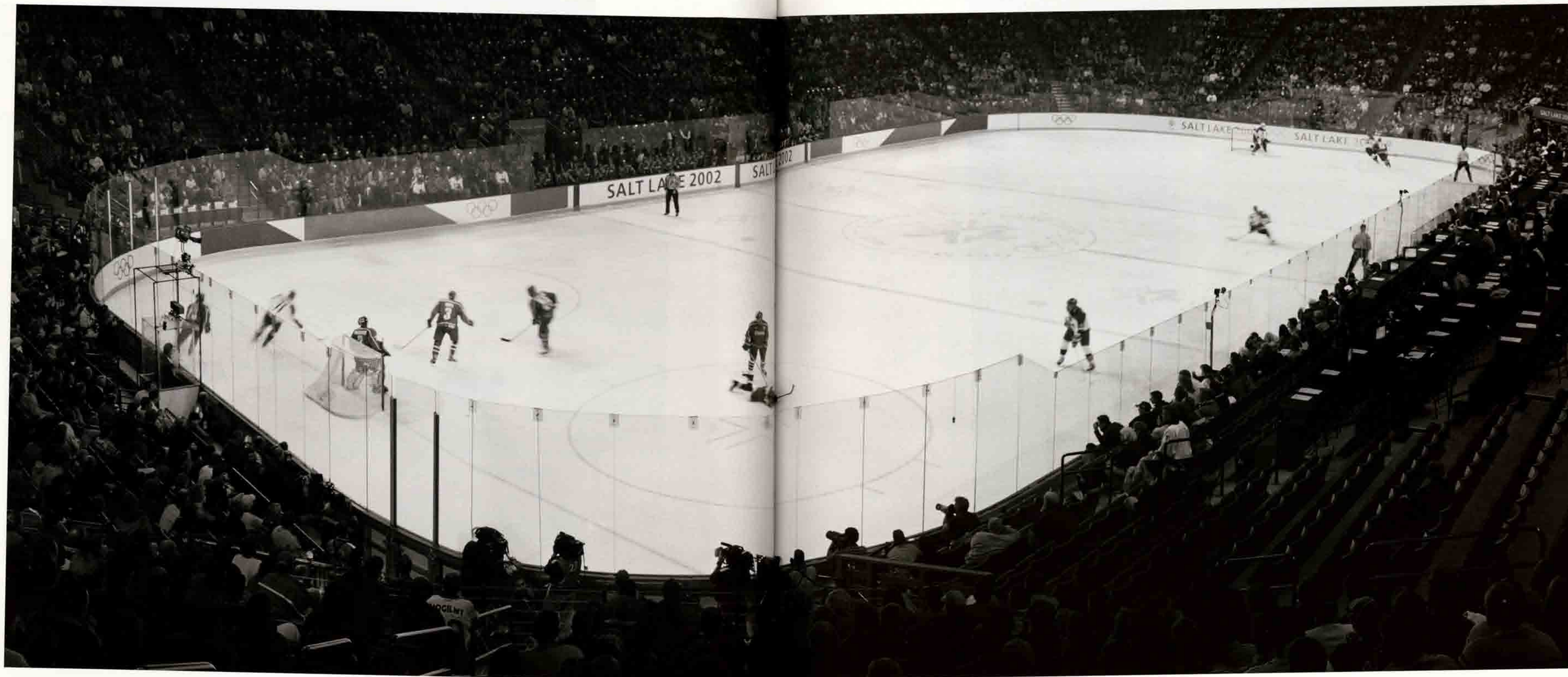
Finland's Tenna Selänne slips a goal past Sergei Shabanov of Belarus on February 16. Belarus lost 4-8.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Canada scores on Finland in the women's tournament, February 19.

I A N L O G A N



"The whole aura around the Olympics is something special. To get here and experience that with other athletes who have dedicated themselves and their whole lives to reaching this level is something very special."

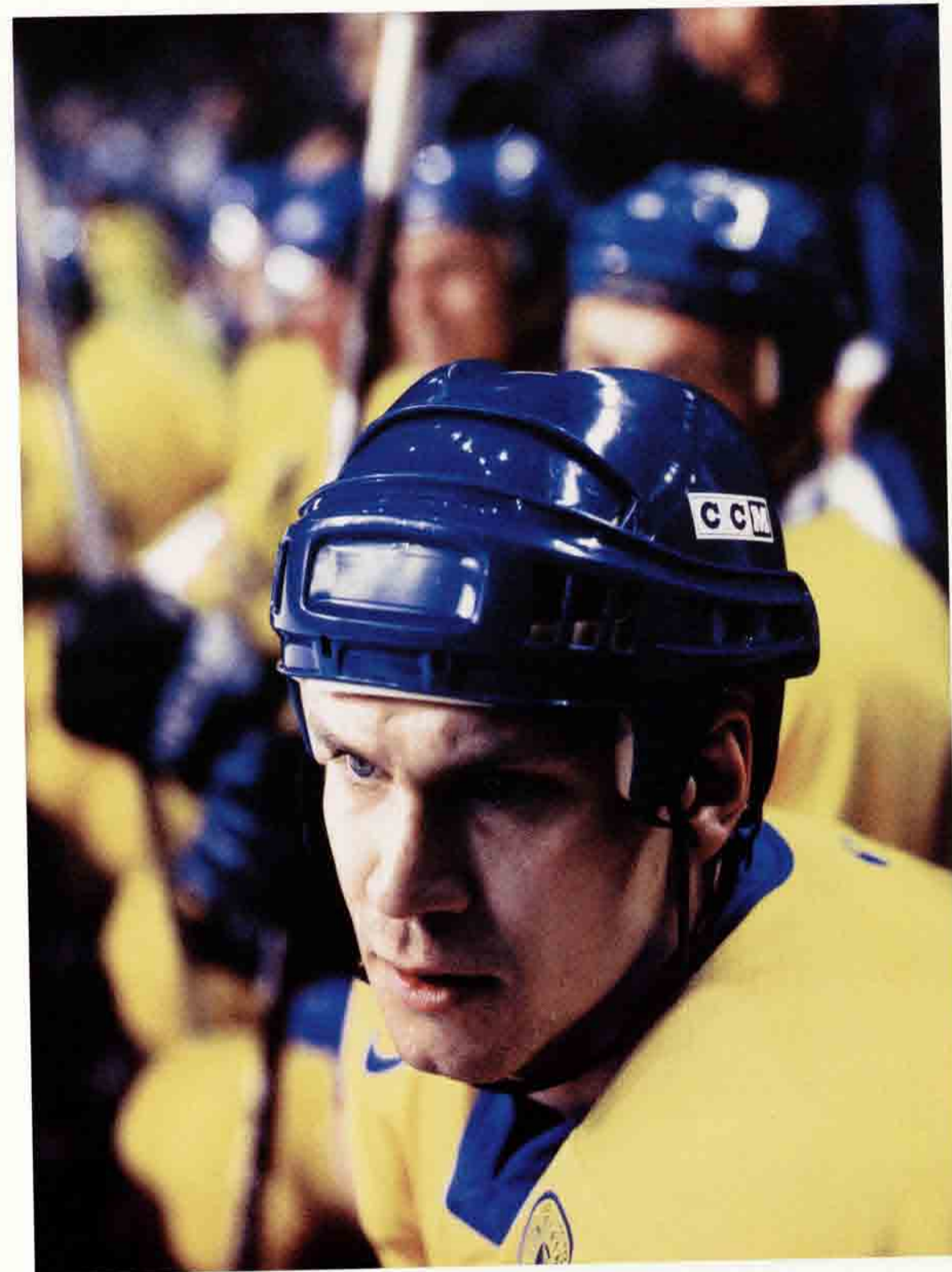
—Mark MacKay, Germany

I A N L O G A N



"I'd rather be a silver medalist from America than a gold medalist from any other country." - U.S. goaltender Sarah Tueting, above

I A N L O G A N



"It's an empty feeling, and there's not much you can do about it." - Nicklas Lidström of Sweden, above, whose team was eliminated after a 3-4 loss to Belarus.

D A V I D B U R N E T T



"You start each game like a painter. You've got a blank sheet of paper, and you don't know how it's going to end until 60 minutes are over." — Theo Fleury, Canada

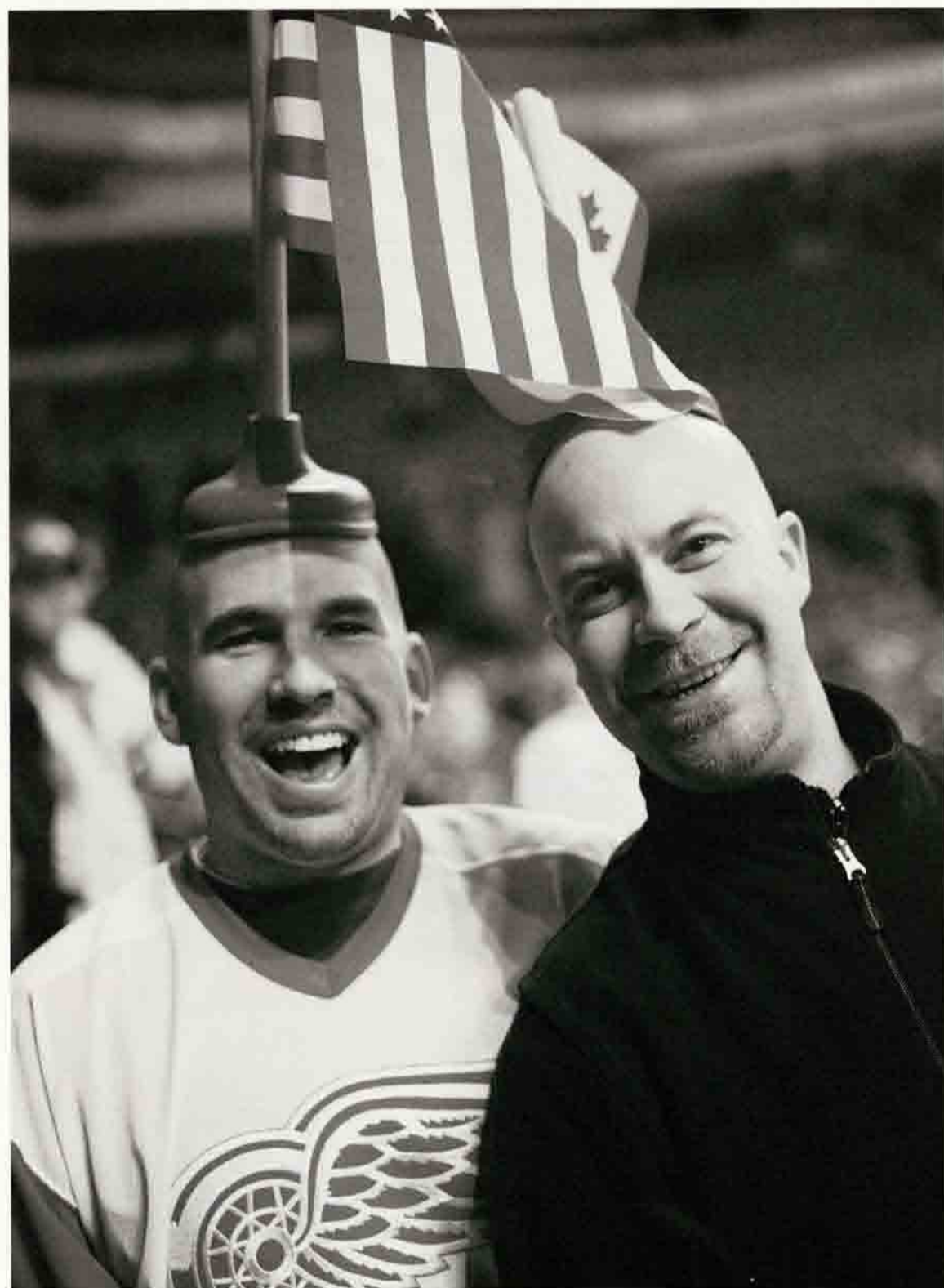
The Peaks Ice Arena, above, hosted more than 1400 minutes of ice hockey in February 2002.

CHAD HOLDER



The Kazakhstani players had come to Salt Lake City with \$30 in their pockets and a dream to compete in the Olympics. They were going home with last place but with the hearts of the fans and the community. Spectators fell in love with the players' fighting spirit. They cheered for every save and exploded when Kazakhstan scored its two goals. When a volunteer heard the players couldn't find any affordable souvenirs, she and the local community responded. After a tough 0-7 loss to Sweden, the players boarded the team bus to find gifts, money and letters. Momentum built and their schedule became packed with brunches, receptions and parties—all thrown in their honor. Said forward Dinara Dikambayeva, "We felt the warmth of strangers here. And it inspired us."

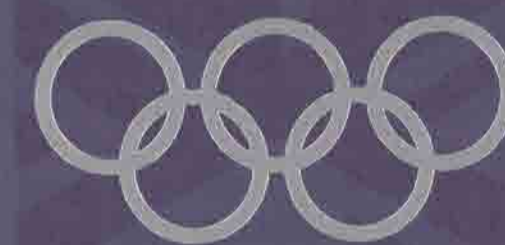
JOHN HUET



Hockey fans often encouraged teams to play harder. "I don't think this building has ever been as loud as it is when we're on the ice, and it definitely gives us more momentum."

— Forward Jeromy Roenick, United States of America

I A N L O G A N





SPEED SKATING IS THE FASTEST HUMAN-POWERED SPORT IN THE WORLD. WITH JUST THE STRENGTH OF THEIR LEGS AND THE SWINGING OF THEIR ARMS, SKATERS GO NEARLY 40 MILES PER HOUR. AND FOR 12 DAYS IN 2002 AT THE UTAH OLYMPIC OVAL, THE SPORT WAS THE FASTEST EVER. * THE OVAL SITS AT A HIGHER ALTITUDE THAN ANY OTHER SUCH VENUE IN THE WORLD. SKATERS CUT THROUGH THE AIR WITH LESS RESISTANCE. BECAUSE OF UTAH'S DESERT CLIMATE, THE ICE IS HARDER. IT IS ALSO DENSER AND SLICKER AS THE DRY ATMOSPHERE PRODUCES



The Utah Olympic Oval's ice is kept at a constant surface temperature of 47 degrees Fahrenheit with a system of more than 30 miles of cooling pipes and 74 miles of reinforced steel, embedded in a concrete slab under the 3/4-inch-thick ice. The meticulous maintenance produces superior ice.

ALBERT COLANTONIO

less frost. The result? The smoothest, fastest ice on earth. During the Salt Lake 2002 Games, every Olympic record and eight out of 10 world records fell. And nearly 300 personal and national records were broken. "It's a special place to compete," said Dutch skater Jochem Uytdehaage, the "Flying Dutchman" who would emerge as the king of the Utah Olympic Oval.

MEN'S 5000 M •

Records began falling in the first speed skating event of the Games, with Jens Boden of Germany setting a new Olympic mark of 6:21.73, only to be eclipsed two hours later by American Derek Parra. A former in-line skating champion, Parra doubted he would perform well in the 5000 m. He had even asked his wife to stay home with their newborn daughter because he probably wouldn't win a medal. And then, in what he described as the best 5K of his life, Parra set a new Olympic and world record with a time of 6:17.98. "When you see someone else finish well, it encourages you," he said. "You say to yourself, 'I can skate as fast as he can.'"

Which is exactly what Uytdehaage must have been thinking when he blasted from the starting line 30 minutes later. He shattered Parra's time—and won the gold—by skating the course in 6:14.66. Boden, meanwhile, took home the bronze and Parra, earning the silver, became the first Mexican-American ever to medal in the Olympic Winter Games. It was a day of emotions. When Uytdehaage was asked why he shed tears after finishing, he responded, "Why shouldn't I cry? Why not?"

LADIES' 3000 M •

Like many other athletes at the Oval, German Claudia Pechstein and Canadian Cindy Klassen turned to speed skating after trying another sport. Pechstein began figure skating at age 3, but became bored by the ballet training. Klassen had played ice hockey, but failed to make the 1998 Olympic team. She tried speed skating reluctantly, only at the urging of her parents. Their second choice would prove to be the wisest. On February 10, Pechstein skated the tough 3000 m race in 3:57.70, breaking the world record (a 3:59.26, which she also set in 2001 in Calgary) and taking the gold. While Dutch skater Renate Groenewold won silver, Klassen found herself on the podium for bronze. "I never expected to medal," she said. "I just wanted to have fun."

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MEN'S 500 M •

The 500 m is the only speed skating event in which athletes race twice, in two consecutive days. This gives competitors twice the chance to win—but also twice the chance to lose. For Canada's Jeremy Wotherspoon, it was a double disappointment. On February 11, the gold-medal favorite was just five steps into his first race when he tripped and fell. "It's one of the hardest things I've had to watch in competition," said American Casey FitzRandolph, whose interest in speed skating was sparked after he saw Eric Heiden win five gold medals in Lake Placid. "He's one of my best friends."

On February 12, Wotherspoon's time of 34.63 was the day's fastest, but by failing to finish the previous day's race, he had already missed his shot at glory. The gold would instead go to friend and training partner, FitzRandolph. He was joined on his victory lap by teammate Kip Carpenter, who won the bronze. Hiroyasu Shimizu of Japan, the Nagano 1998 gold medalist, won silver.

"It's a combination of art and grace," said FitzRandolph of speed skating. "And it's also power and strength."

LADIES' 500 M •

During the two days of competition in the ladies' 500 m, Catriona Le May Doan of Canada showed little emotion. As the defending gold medalist, she was the favorite for the event. Even she admitted that she would be surprised not to win. The pressure was enormous, but Le May Doan kept it inside. "I am in a sport where I am just going against the clock," she said. "I wouldn't want it any other way."

Although she set an Olympic record of 37.30 in the first race, she remained stoic until the next day when she crossed the finish line in 37.45 and knew she had won the gold once again. She smiled as she skated a victory lap with a Canadian flag. Her intense spirit was echoed by silver medalist Monique Garbrecht-Enfeldt of Germany, who had won bronze at the Albertville 1992 Games but had been struggling to reach the podium again for 10 years. Sabine Völker of Germany won the bronze, her first Olympic medal.

MEN'S 1000 M •

Gerard van Velde of the Netherlands was about ready to give up—again. In 10 years of Olympic competition, he had just missed a medal several times, and didn't race in 1998, because he couldn't adapt to the new klap skate. After taking a job as a car salesman, he was lured back to the ice and decided to give speed skating another shot at the Salt Lake 2002 Games. In the 500 m on February 11 and 12, van Velde, 30, finished fourth by 0.02 seconds. His expectations were low for the 1000 m. "I'm here for fun," he decided. "I'll do my best and give it everything I have."

After a mediocre start that left him 0.14 seconds behind Russia's Sergey Klevchenya at the first split, van Velde skated the fastest lap in any distance ever in speed skating. And he destroyed the world record with a time of 1:07.18. His first full lap was 36 miles per hour, nearly as fast as a greyhound runs. The car salesman had made history, and teammate Jan Bos, who won silver, could only watch in admiration. "After Gerard put in such a great time, I could only skate for second place," said Bos. "He skated the race of his life."

LADIES' 1000 M •

Speed skating is tough. Speed skating while suffering from an exhaustive case of mononucleosis? Impossible. Or so one would think until witnessing American Chris Witty's performance in the 1000 m. Feeling drained in the months leading up to the Games, Witty found out just three weeks before the Opening Ceremony that she had the virus. Her training and competition days were cut down dramatically, and she was unsure of how she would perform in the Games. "I was happy just to be able to skate the 1000 m," she said later.

Paired with Canadian Catriona Le May Doan—the 500 m gold medalist—Witty felt shaky at the start. Fellow American Jennifer Rodriguez, a former in-line skater from Miami, had nearly stumbled coming out of the first corner, but made up the lost time to win the bronze. Could Witty manage the same kind of comeback? Her weakness seemed to vanish as she began skating around the track, trailing just behind Le May Doan at the 600-meter mark. "I was just happy to be so close to her," Witty later said. And then came the last lap, when Witty pushed forward to take the lead and break the world record in a time of 1:13.83.

MEN'S 1500 M •

While Witty fought fatigue, Norway's Ådne Søndrål battled pain. While training just before the Games, he dislocated not one but both of his shoulders—an excruciating experience for one who must swing his arms for speed, balance and momentum. "So far, I've mostly seen hospitals at the Olympics," he joked after the 1500 m, an event in which sprinters and long-distance skaters participate. The competition is so fierce, explained American J.P. Shilling, "The last lap, you just try to hang on, when your tongue is hanging out of your mouth and your eyes are crossed."

On February 19, Søndrål hit the ice and hoped for the best. Just minutes before, American Parra had set a new world record of 1:43.95, landing him a gold medal and knocking Uytdehaage into second for a silver. Søndrål was paired with American Joey Cheek to battle it out for bronze. Cheek quickly gained the lead. The already noisy crowd began cheering even louder for Cheek. But in the final 200 m of the last lap Søndrål hung on. He passed Cheek and finished in 1:45.26, good

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LADIES' 1500 M •

enough for the bronze medal, by simply ignoring the pain. "When you're racing, you don't feel anything," he said. "You could cut off both arms and not notice."

Anni Friesinger was famous, and she was flashy. Long before she arrived in Salt Lake City, her fellow Germans had been following her times, her training—and her tattoo—in the pages of celebrity magazines. But the child of two speed skating parents (her mother competed for Poland in the Innsbruck 1976 Games) also had a softer side. Her tattoo of a flame was created in memory of her father, who died in 1996 after a stroke and had always wanted a tattoo. "He was my coach, my best friend, my father," she said. And on February 20, when she beat her own world record to win the gold medal in the 1500 m, the so-called glamour girl began to cry.

Friesinger's race impressed more than her fans. "After Anni," said American Jennifer Rodriguez, "we were all going for second place." Rodriguez won the bronze medal, while that second-place spot would go to Germany's Sabine Völker, who finished the Salt Lake 2002 Games having won a medal in every race in which she competed.

MEN'S 10,000 M •

The 10,000 m is the marathon of Olympic speed skating: a long, 25-lap race where many athletes collapse or vomit or both at the finish line, a race where altitude hits hard. This marathon was dominated by the Dutch skaters. Gianni Romme, the gold medalist at Nagano in the 5000 and 10,000 had failed this year to qualify for the 5000, which meant the 10,000 was his only Olympic race. He aimed to break his own world record of 13:03.40.

But before Romme was even halfway through the race, his legs began to throb. He started losing his technique—and time. When he crossed the line, the clock read 13:10.03, which would eventually earn him the silver. Teammate Jochem Uytendhaage, whom Romme couldn't bear to watch win the 5000, set a new world record of 12:58.92, earning him his second gold and third medal of the Games. "Halfway, I saw the scoreboard and I thought 'Oh, it is going good,' and I started to increase my pace," he said. As Derek Parra, who was paired with the flying Dutchman in the 10,000 m said, "He's the king of these Olympics in speedskating...he's on fire."

The bronze went to Norwegian Lasse Sætre.

While German teammate Anni Friesinger stole the speed skating spotlight, Claudia Pechstein preferred to remain in her shadow, training steadily and seriously. So while the world turned to Friesinger to win her second gold of the Games in the 5000 m, Pechstein, the defending gold medalist, kept a low profile.

In the first pairing of the day, Gretha Smit of the Netherlands skated a 6:49.22, breaking the world record by more than three seconds, and secured a silver. Canadian Clara Hughes, a two-time Olympic bronze medalist in cycling, finished in the next fastest time, 6:53.53, for another bronze.

In the next heat, Pechstein, who was paired with Japan's Maki Tabata, exploded from the start and skated the 12.5 laps in 6:46.91. The time was more than 10 seconds faster than her personal best, and shattered the world record by more than two seconds. As Tabata, her only threat, finished far behind her, Pechstein realized she had won. It was her third consecutive Olympic gold medal in the 5000 m, a feat not accomplished since Bonnie Blair won her third consecutive in the 500 m. Pechstein stepped from the shadows to skate a victory lap, wearing a wig in Germany's colors and tossing flowers to the crowd. "I'm not really thinking about the future right now," she said. "I just want to celebrate."

LADIES' 5000 M •

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Kevin Marshall of Canada glides through the men's 1000 m on February 16.

SHEILA METZNER



Joey Cheek of the United States of America races in the 1500 m. He would place fourth, missing the bronze by 0.08 seconds.

TIBOR NEMETH



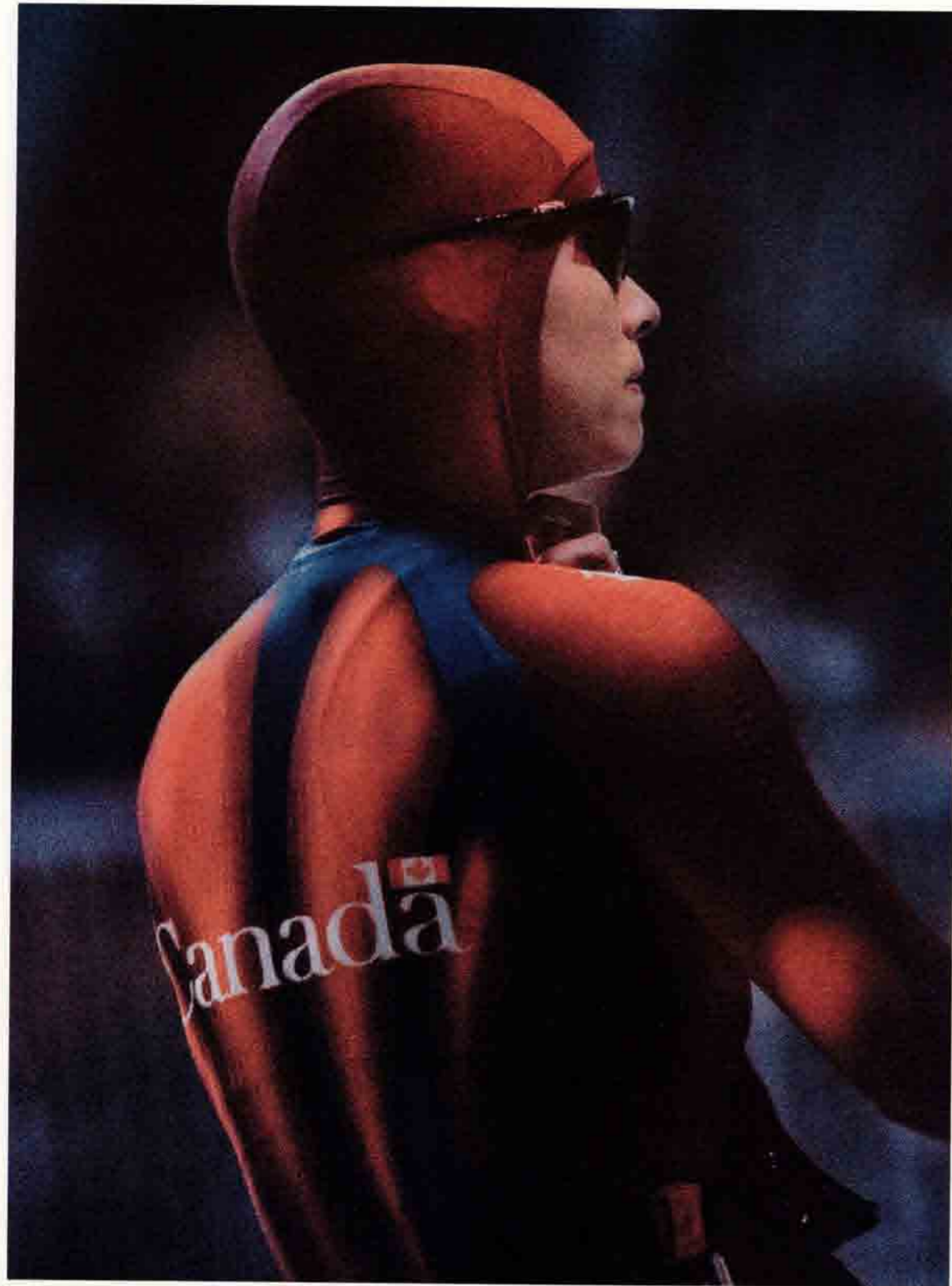
"I have never dug so deep. With three or four laps, I thought, 'Please just let me stand up. I just want to stand up and finish.'" - American Jason Hedstrand

TIBOR NEMETH



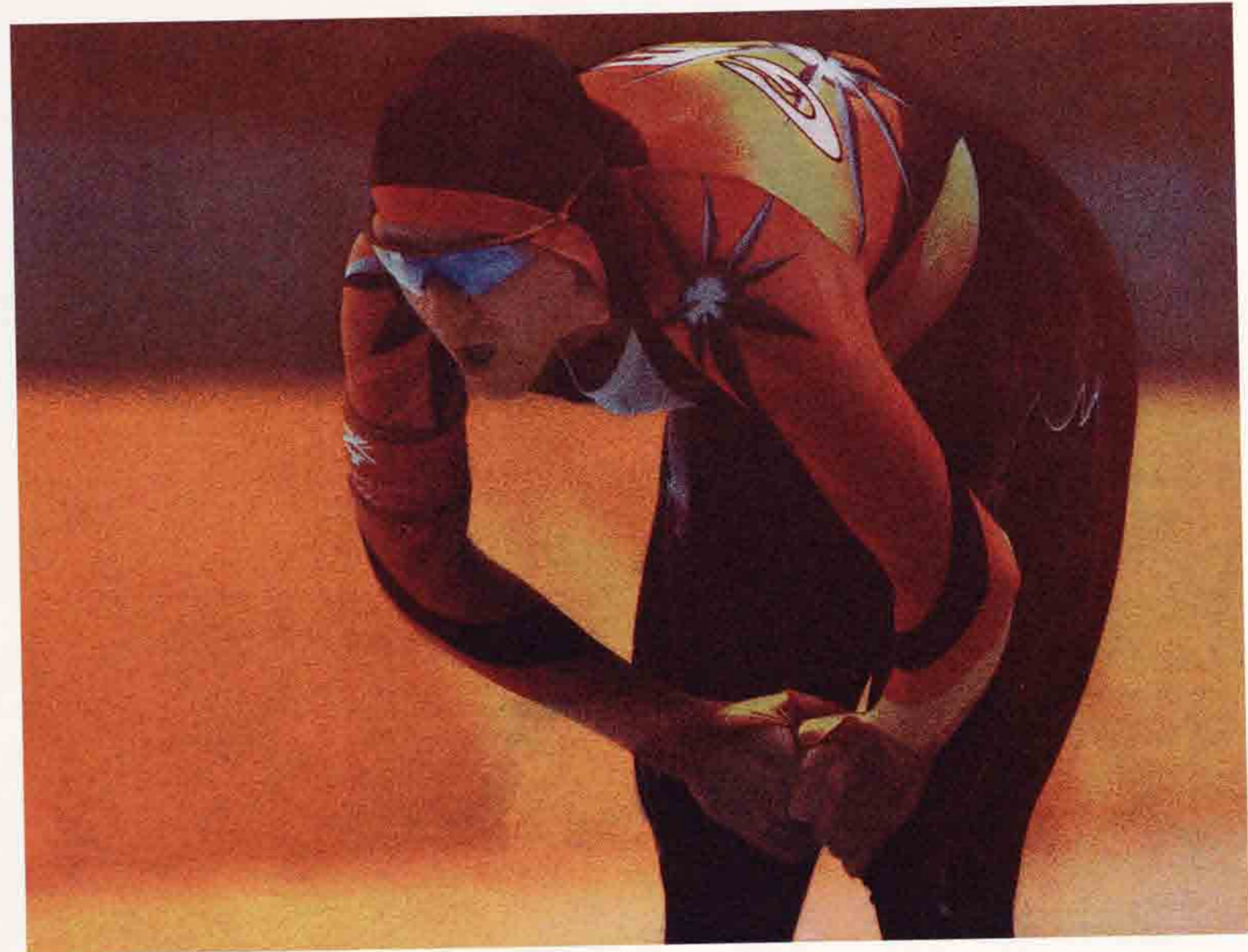
Canadian Patrick Bouchard, who set a personal record in the 1000 m, has a black belt in kung fu and a master's degree in electrical engineering.

SHEILA METZNER



Canada's Caitriona Le May Doan began speed skating when she was 9. On February 14, the Saskatchewan native won the ladies' 500 m, giving Canada its first gold medal of the Games.

SHEILA METZNER

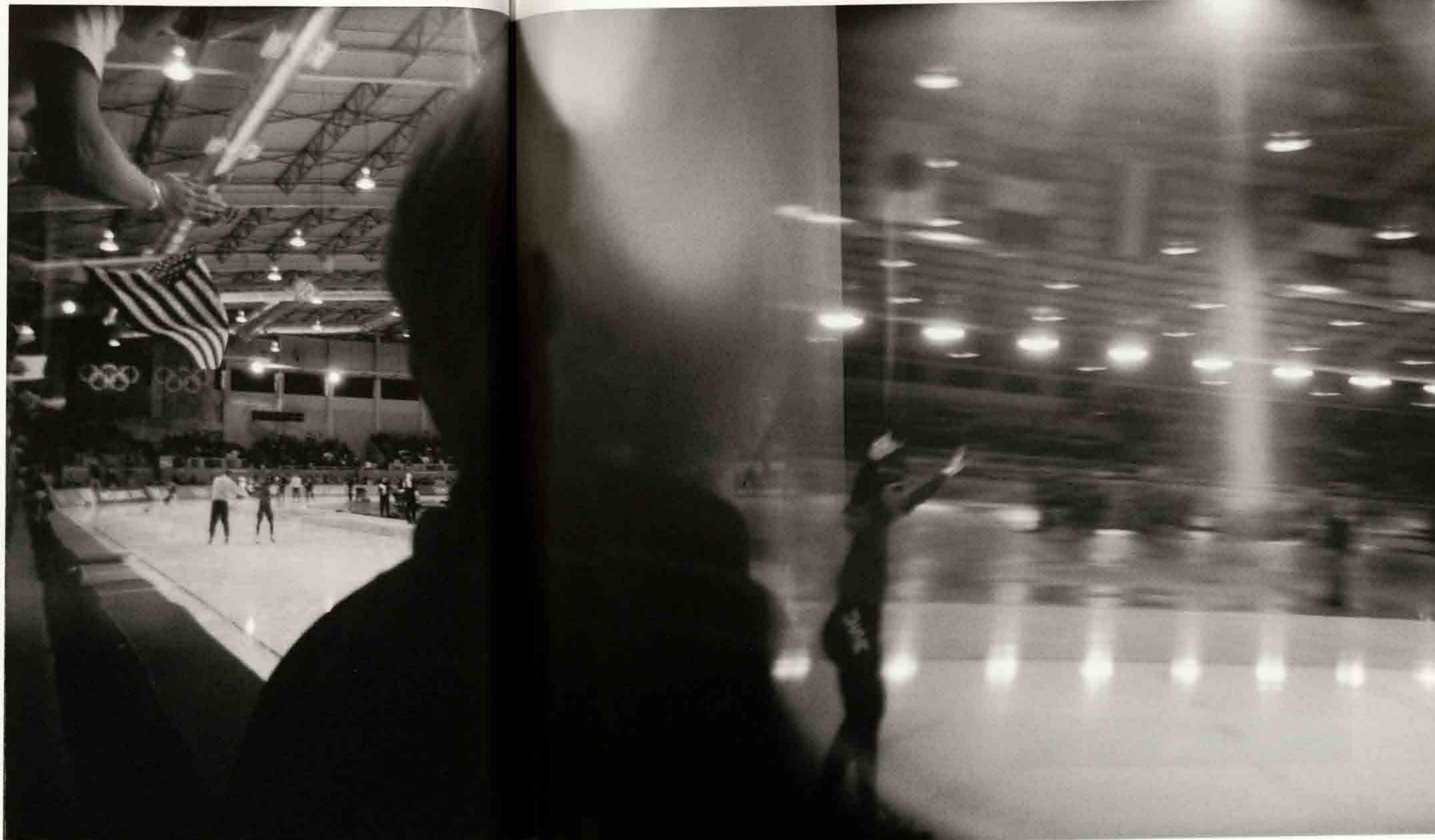


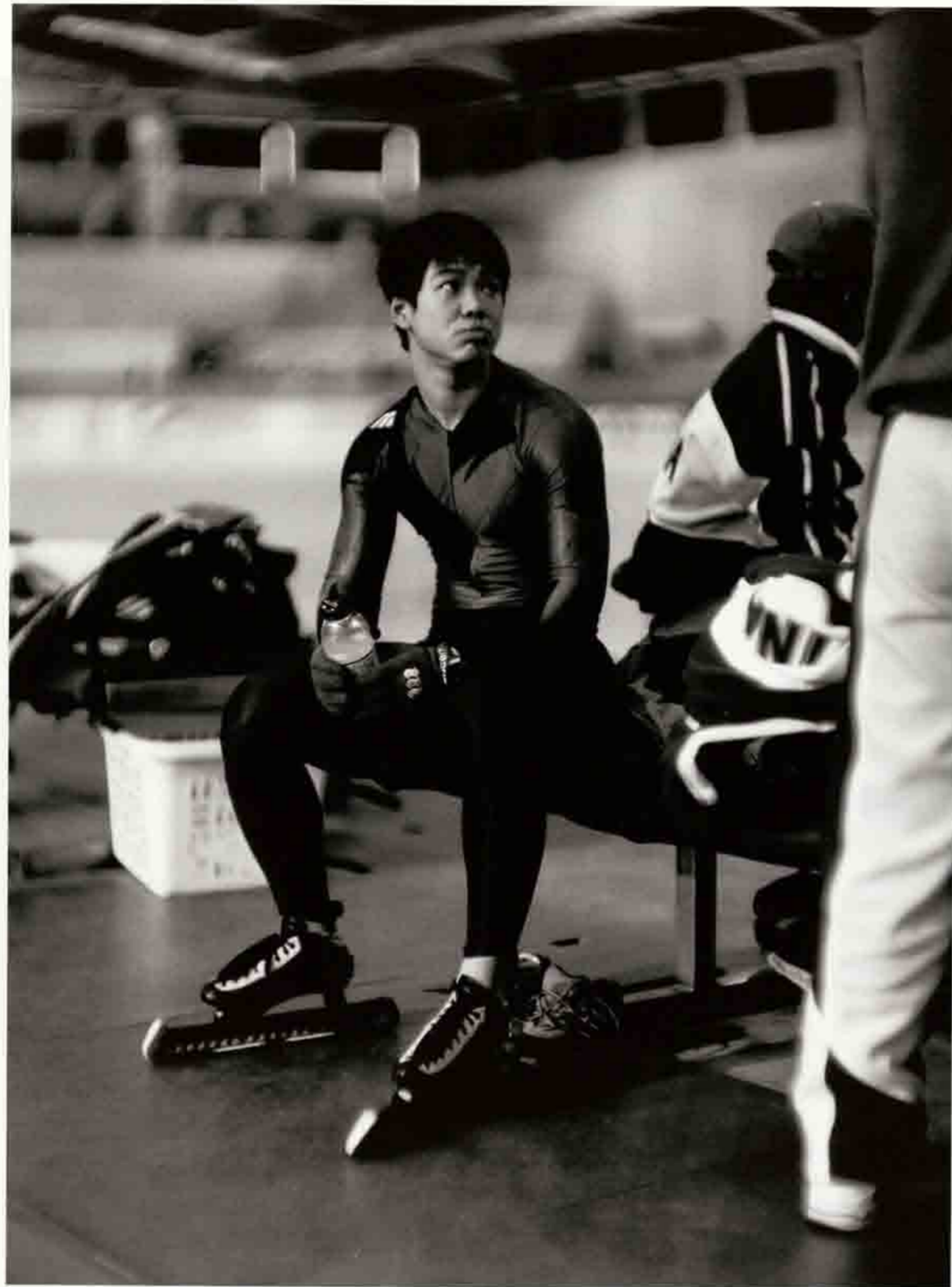
Christian Breuer of Germany catches his breath.

SHEILA METZNER

*"Dreams come true. If you think it, you believe it" — Derek Parra, right,
who on February 9 became the first Mexican-American to win a
medal in the Olympic Winter Games. Ten days later, he set a new world record
of 1:43.95 in the 1500 m.*

T I B O R N E M E T H





China's Fengtong Yu, 17, was the youngest speed skater to compete at the Salt Lake 2002 Games. He set a personal record in the 1000 m.

ANDY ANDERSON



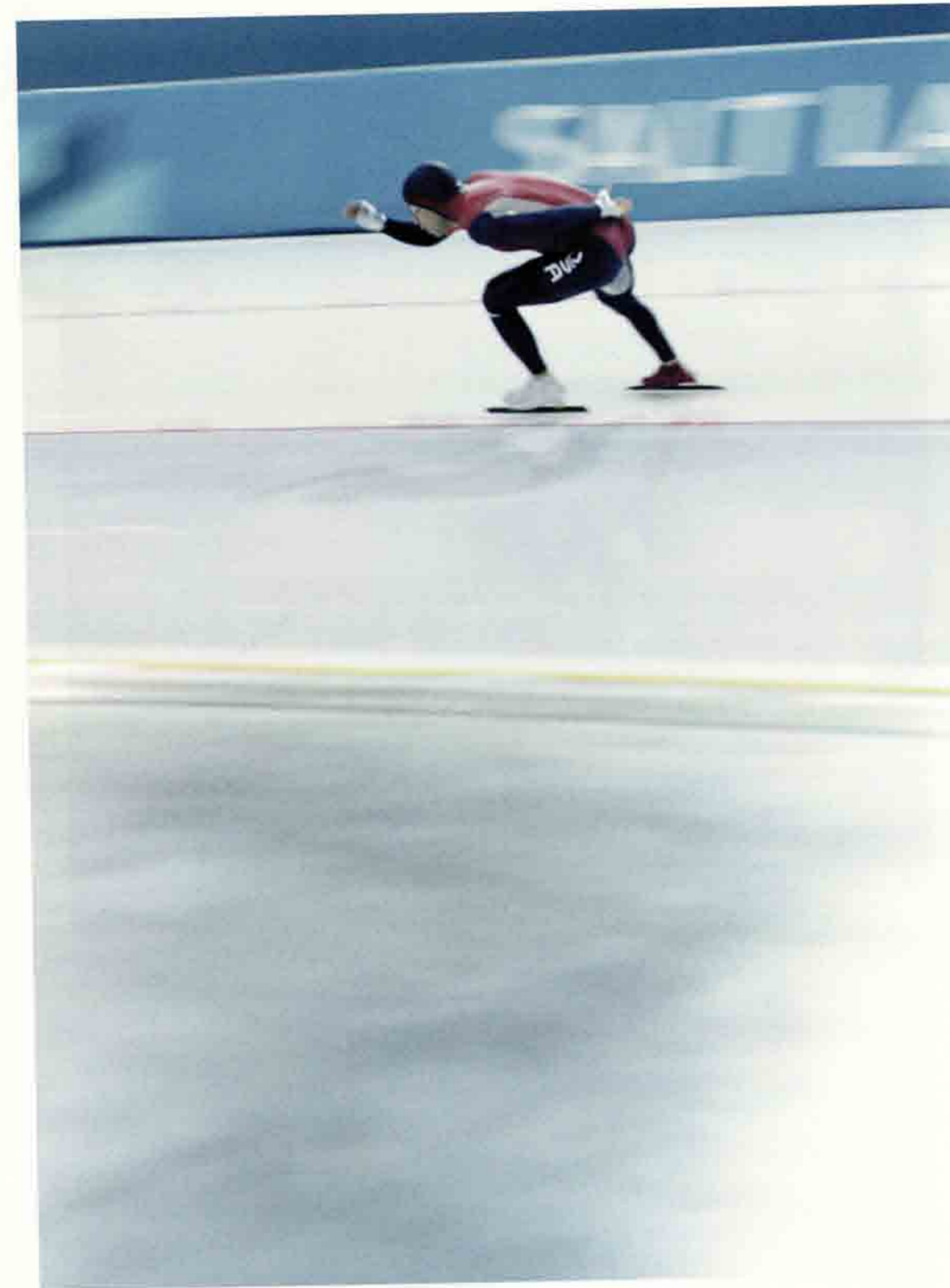
In 1998, Gerard van Velde of the Netherlands (center) gave up speed skating to still cars. In 2002, he came back to destroy the 1000 m record. "That I could do it here is so incredibly beautiful," he said. "It's a crown on my career."

SHEILA METZNER



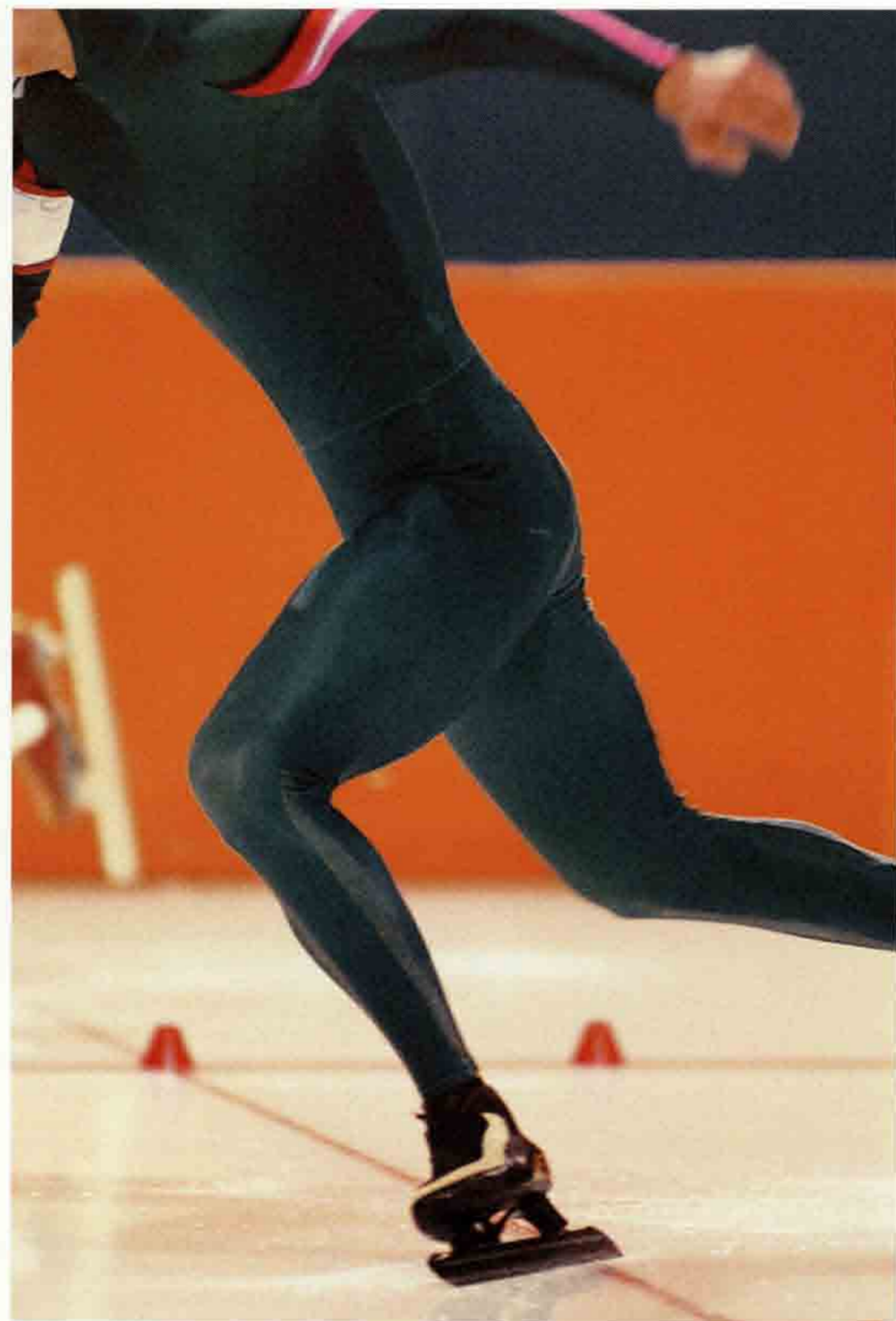
Korea's Seung-Yong Choi, above, set a new national record on the first day of competition in the ladies' 500 m.

T I B O R N E M E T H



American Derek Parra paces himself in the grueling 10,000 m.

J O H N H U E T



Belarusian Aleksey Khatylyov takes off in the explosive 500 m.

DAVID BURNETT



The Dutch team warms up. Before the Salt Lake 2002 Games, the Netherlands had won 61 Olympic Winter Games medals, 58 of which were in speed skating. "It's definitely a Dutch sport," said Jan Bart Schenk, who traveled to Utah from Holland carrying a suitcase stuffed with orange cheering gear.

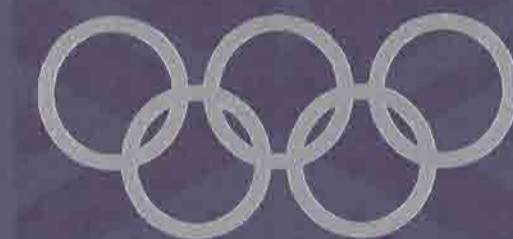
DAVID BURNETT (TOP)

JOHN HUET (BOTTOM)



Each day of competition, athletes treated 4600 spectators to history in the making, as world, Olympic, national and personal records fell, one by one.

ALBERT COLANTONIO





S H O R T T R A C K • ONE BY ONE, THE SKATERS
GLIDE INTO THEIR STARTING POSITIONS, SHAKING THE LAST
JITTERS FROM THEIR POWERFUL LEGS AS THE ANNOUNCER
CALLS THEIR NAMES. ON THE LINE, THEY CROUCH, MOTION-
LESS, BALANCED ONLY ON THE PINPOINT TIP OF ONE SKATE
AND THE RAZOR-THIN BLADE OF THE OTHER, WHICH
THEY'VE WEDGED INTO THE ICE PARALLEL TO THE START
LINE FOR MAXIMUM LEVERAGE. THE CROWD HUSHES. SKATES
GLINT. MUSCLES TENSE. THIS IS HOW ALL SHORT TRACK
RACES BEGIN. BUT THE WAY IN WHICH THIS ONE—THE



*Canada's Marc Gagnon, the United States of America's Apolo Anton Ohno
and Korea's Kim Dong-Sung jockey for the lead in the dramatic 1500 m final.*

S H E I L A M E T Z N E R

MEN'S 1000 M •

men's 1000 m final—ends is stunning, even in the fast, furious and notoriously unpredictable world of short track speed skating.

Starting on the inside is Canadian and two-time Olympian Mathieu Turcotte. Next to him is Ahn Hyun-Soo, 16-year-old junior world champion from South Korea, then American Apolo Anton Ohno, a rebellious teenager turned skating dynamo. To Ohno's right is Li Jiajun, China's defending Olympic silver medalist in this distance. And in the outside lane is Steven Bradbury, Australia's four-time Olympian, but a long shot for a medal.

The start gun sounds, and the skaters vie for position in a sudden jumble of skates, arms and legs, then fall into an orderly line that moves with unexpected serpentine grace. Korea's Ahn takes an early lead. Ohno moves into second place with a sleek inside pass, then explodes into the lead with Ahn on his heels, Li and Turcotte close behind. Ohno sprints toward the finish line, a gold medal just meters away. But suddenly everything changes: Li makes contact with him, then catches a skate and tumbles to the ice helplessly. Tripped up by Li's fall, Ahn goes down, too, arms flailing in a desperate attempt at recovery, which takes down both Ohno and Turcotte. Only straggler Steven Bradbury is still on his feet, and in a matter of seconds he has moved from last to first. "Hang on a minute, I've just won!" he thinks, crossing the finish line, both stunned and elated. Behind him, Ohno, whose thigh has been sliced by a skate and will require stitches, struggles to his feet and flings his body over the line to claim the silver. Turcotte follows him, winning the bronze.

It was a shocking race, but for Bradbury, just part of the topsy-turvy sport. Short track nearly killed him in 1994, when a blade cut through his leg, causing a serious loss of blood and requiring 111 stitches. At the Salt Lake 2002 Games, the Australian, who makes Ohno's skates, hoped the American might mention his handiwork upon winning. Instead, Bradbury found himself in the spotlight, earning his country's first-ever gold medal in an Olympic Winter Games and trying to defend his good-luck win. "Anything can happen," says Bradbury. "Sometimes it's a very cruel sport, and other times it's a sport that you smile a lot about, which is my case at the moment."

LADIES' 1500 M •

Delighted spectators experienced short track's fickle nature again and again at the Salt Lake Ice Center. First, there was the ladies' 1500 m event, held three nights before Bradbury's surprising win. The final round was a matchup of the world's best: Chinese favorites Yang Yang (A), the world's top female skater, and Yang Yang (S), ranked third in the world; Korea's Ko Gi-Hyun, just 15, and Choi Eun-Kyung, who had set a world record in the semifinals; Canada's Alanna Kraus, 23, from Calgary, Alberta; and Evgenia Radanova of Bulgaria, who had just swept the European championships.

Ko led for most of the race. Behind her, with about eight laps to go, Yang (S) and Kraus clipped skates and fell. Then Yang (A) tumbled, too, and Choi moved into second. With two laps to go, Radanova, in third, tried to pass both Ko and Choi, but they clung to their positions, Choi tucked in tightly behind her teammate. Ko took the gold medal, becoming the youngest individual gold medalist in short track history; Choi followed her for the silver, and Radanova took the bronze.

LADIES' 500 M •

By February 16, the next night of competition, the word was out: Short track was a wild card, a rough-and-tumble, high-speed thrill ride. Fans donned stick-on "soul patch" beards in honor of Ohno or scooped up Korean and Chinese flags to wave from the bleachers. The show-stopping men's 1000—with its mass tumble and its come-from-behind-victory—provided drama. So did the ladies' 500—an all-out sprint. In the final round of the event, China's Yang Yang (A) achieved what she called her greatest victory: earning her country's first-ever gold medal of the Olympic Winter Games. She

MEN'S 1500 M
LADIES' 3000 M RELAY •

won by staving off Bulgaria's Evgenia Radanova, who won silver. Behind Radanova was China's Wang Chunlu, who, with a bronze medal, shared in her country's glory, a moment that coincided with the Chinese New Year. "We want to take this back to China as the best gift ever," said Wang. "This has been a dream for two generations," said Yang Yang (A). "Happy New Year!"

On February 20, the thrills and spills continued as competitors in the final round of the men's 1500 m took to the ice. As the race began, Korean Kim Dong-Sung led the pack. He had come to Salt Lake City as a major threat, with two 1998 medals from Nagano and the highest top speed of any skater on his formidable team among his credentials. But Ohno was on the move after a slow start, passing skaters one by one until he was on Kim's shoulder, jockeying for the lead with an inside pass. Kim aggressively defended his position and finished first, with Ohno close behind.

Kim threw his fists into the air triumphantly and grabbed a Korean flag from the sidelines. But as he began a victory lap, the news came over the loudspeaker: He was disqualified for illegally blocking Ohno's pass attempt, and the gold would go to Ohno. Kim threw down the flag and kicked at the ice in anguish. China's Li Jiajun, who had finished third, won the silver, and the fourth finisher, Canada's Marc Gagnon, won the bronze. While Kim and his fans were angered, Ohno was elated by his fortune. "They can just go throw me in the desert and bury me," said Ohno. "I got a gold medal."

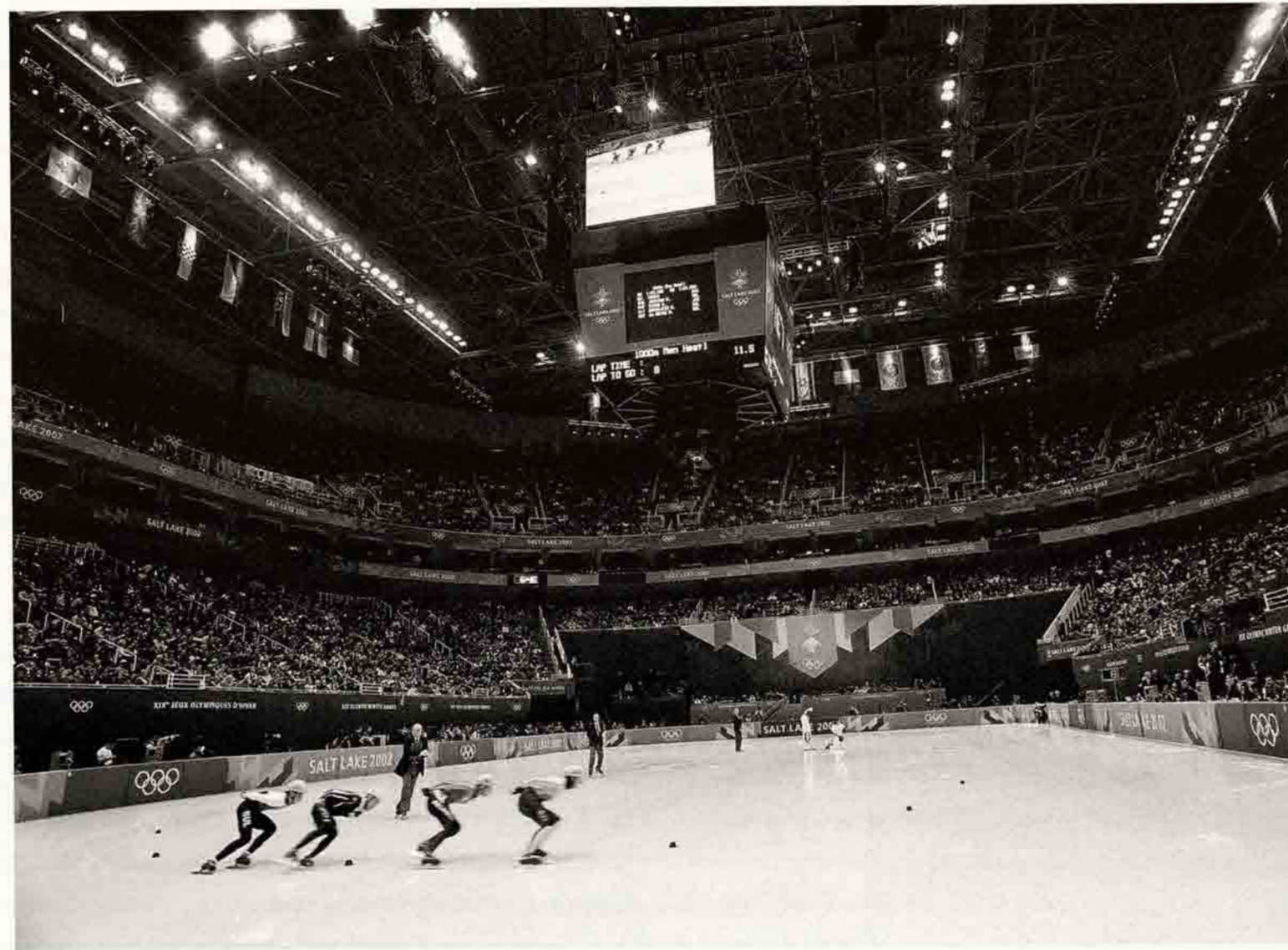
Korea was luckier in the ladies' 3000 m relay final, in which the team, made up of Choi Eun-Kyung, Choi Min-Kyung, Joo Min-Jin and Park Hye-Won—four first-time Olympic competitors in the event—pulled well ahead of China in the final two laps to set the world record and win the gold—Korea's third straight Olympic victory in the event. "I feel it was a great match," said Choi Min-Kyung later. "We finally did as we wished we could," added Joo Min-Jin.

MEN'S 500 M
MEN'S 5000 M RELAY
LADIES' 1000 M •

Short track's last night, February 23, began with the fast-paced men's 500 m. A much anticipated rematch between Ohno and Kim never happened; Kim was eliminated and Ohno was disqualified during the semifinals. In the elegantly skated final round, Canada's Gagnon stole American Rusty Smith's lead with a powerful inside pass—which Smith would later call "beautiful"—and won the gold medal, making him Canada's most decorated Olympian of all time. Fellow Canadian Jonathan Guilmette also passed Smith in the race's last seconds to win the silver, and Smith took the bronze. This proud moment for Canada would only be outshined later that evening, when the Canadian team (Gagnon, Guilmette, Eric Bédard, François-Louis Tremblay and Turcotte) won the men's 5000 m relay, making Gagnon the most medal-winning male short track skater in Olympic history.

But Canada wasn't the only nation celebrating. In the ladies' 1000 m, Yang Yang (A), already a national hero for winning her country's first Olympic gold in the 500 m, won again. Yang Yang (S) led early, but she was soon passed by Yang (A). Korea's Ko Gi-Hyun pushed for the lead, but Yang (A) held her at bay and took first place; Ko finished second, and Yang (S) third. "Each day, I have more passion for my sport," said the jubilant Yang (A). "This gold medal is very important to me, but the value of the experience of being here exceeds even the value of the gold medal."

For four memorable nights at the Salt Lake Ice Center, first became last and last became first. A nation's greatest hope was realized. Another's expectations were shattered. History was made. And the differences between first and last, elation and devastation, glory and infamy, were the tiniest of margins: one width of a paper-thin steel blade, a few hundredths of a second, a skate thrust over the finish line just barely ahead of another, a shoulder shifted inches off course. Unlikely gold-medal winner Steven Bradbury was right about short track: Just about anything can happen. And at the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games, just about everything did.



*New Zealand's Mark Jackson, Bulgaria's Miroslav Boiadiev, Japan's Satoru Terao
and Belgium's Wim de Deyne compete in the men's 1000 m.*

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



*The United States of America's Apolo Anton Ohno leads Italy's Fabio Carta and
Korea's Kim Dong-Sung on the 111.12-meter oval at the Salt Lake Ice Center.*

J O H N H U E T



Men's 1500 m Korea's Kim Dong Sung and New Zealand's Mark Jackson (top) and the Netherlands' Cees Juffermans and Canada's Marc Gagnon (bottom) compete in the preliminary heats.

SHEILA METZNER



"I just gave my best and I skined, like a star or something. I saw my chance and took it."
— American Apolo Anton Ohno, above, on his victory in the bizarre 1500 m.

SHEILA METZNER



"I don't know if everything sits perfectly well in my stomach about how I won the race. But, I'm justifying it within myself through the last 10 or 12 years of what I've put into this sport. I've been on a massive roller-coaster ride...I've paid my dues, I reckon" – Gold medalist Steven Bradbury of Australia

TIBOR NEMETH



"I need to think about having won two gold medals first," said Canada's Marc Gagnon when asked how it felt to be the most decorated man in Olympic short track history.

TIBOR NEMETH



On turns in short track, skaters lean inward at an angle of almost 50 degrees.

TIBOR NEMETH



Canada's Alanna Kraus and Japan's Chikage Tanaka battle for position in the ladies' 1000 m.

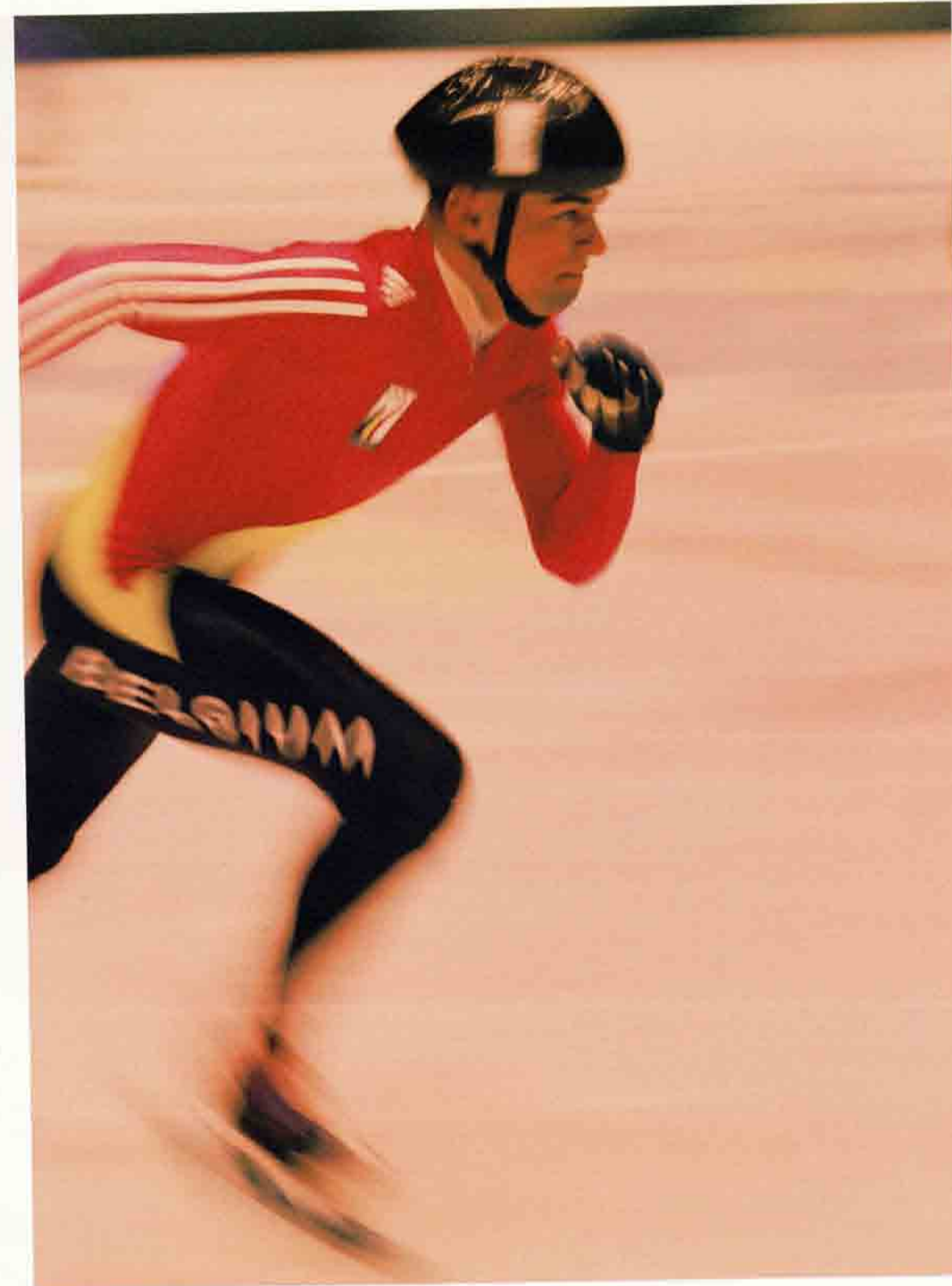
IAN LOGAN



316

Members of China's and Canada's teams compete in the men's 5000 m relay.

CHAD HOLDER



317

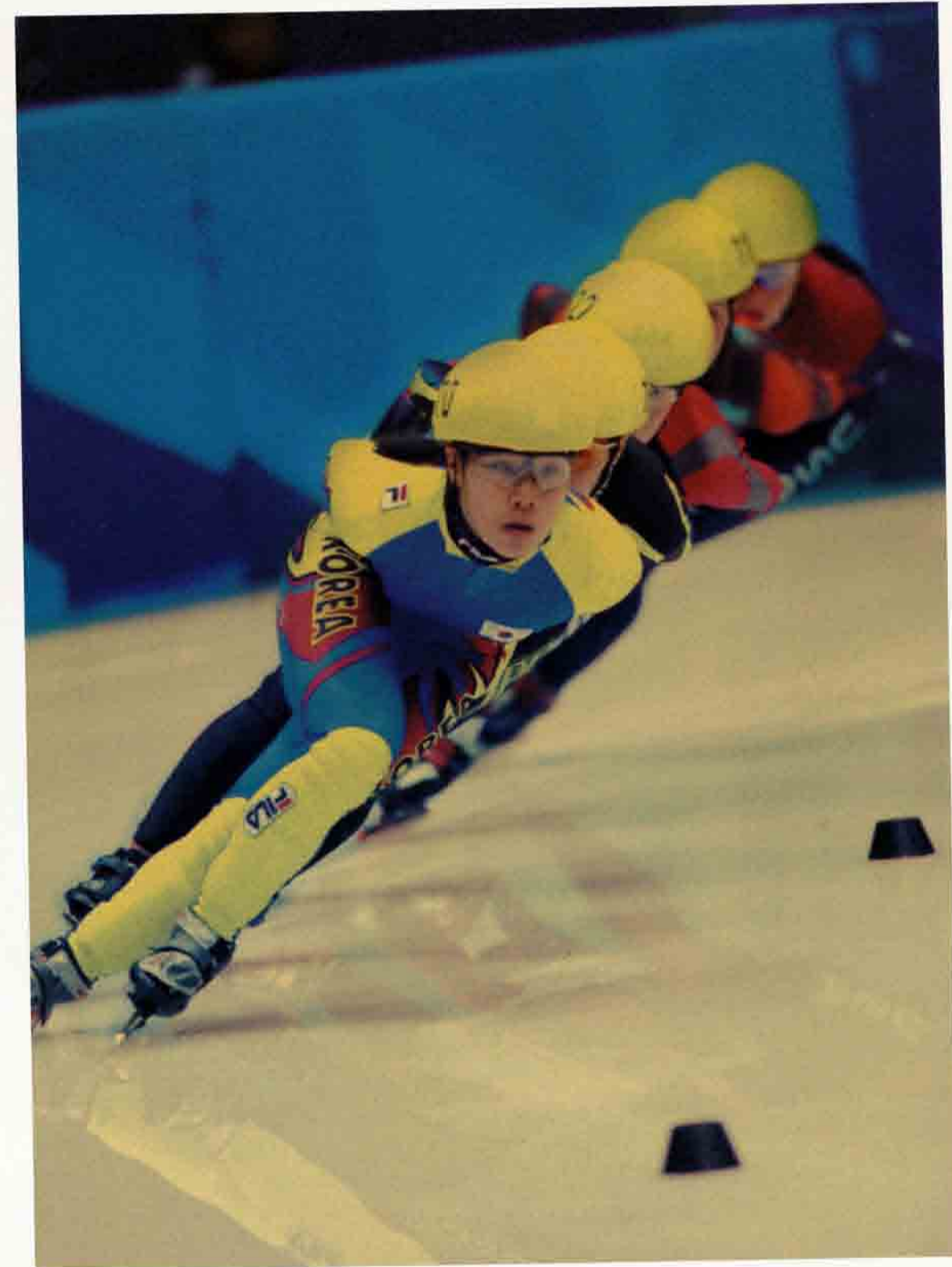
Short track skaters start each race by sprinting on the ice to try to claim a position near the front of the pack.

IAN LOGAN



China's Yang Yang (A), in front, claimed her country's first-ever gold in the Olympic Winter Games by winning the ladies' 500 m.

MICHAEL SEAMANS



Korea's Choi Eun-Kyung leads a serpentine pack of skaters in the ladies' 1500 m.

MICHAEL SEAMANS



120

Canada would leave Salt Lake City with six short track speed skating medals.

SHEILA METZNER

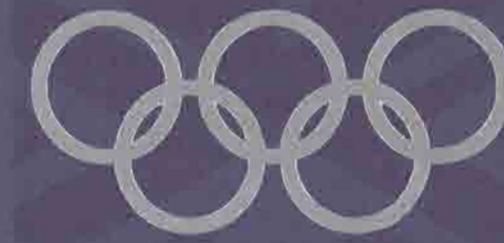




FIGURE SKATING BEGINS IN COMPLEXITY — THE LAWS OF PHYSICS TESTED, THE HUMAN BODY A PRECISE MACHINE THAT JUMPS, SPINS AND GLIDES ACROSS THE SLICKEST OF SURFACES. BY THE END OF A PERFORMANCE, THOUGH, THE MECHANICS MELT AWAY INTO THE SIMPLEST OF FORMULAS, WHERE GRACE AND POISE TAKE AWAY ONE'S BREATH. DURING THE SALT LAKE 2002 GAMES, FIGURE SKATING BEGAN IN A COMPLICATED TANGLE, WHEN A CONTROVERSIAL JUDGING DECISION SHOOK THE SALT LAKE ICE CENTER. TEN DAYS LATER, IT ENDED IN THE SIMPLEST OF



*"When someone gives you a kick in the butt, you go forward, right?" — David Pelletier.
He and Jamie Salé, who won a dual pairs gold after a controversial judging decision, relax
backstage after their exhibition performance on February 22.*

J O H N H U E T

ways, when a 16-year-old girl took our breath away with grace, polish and raw exuberance.

On February 9, Russians Elena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze, two-time pairs world champions, skated a nearly flawless short program. They performed a triple loop side-by-side spin in perfect unison and completed the program with solid athletic technique. They earned the first-place spot going into the long program. "Many things happened in the last four years, good and bad ones," said Sikharulidze. "To be here and skate well is just great."

When the Russian pair first teamed up in 1996, Berezhnaya could barely walk. During a training session, she and a skating partner had become unsynchronized during a side-by-side camel spin. His skate blade pierced her skull. The gash required emergency brain surgery, leaving her speech impaired and the right side of her body partially paralyzed for some time. Her boyfriend Sikharulidze kept vigil at the hospital and when Berezhnaya recovered, the two decided to skate together.

Canadians Jamie Salé and David Pelletier were in second place after the short program. Before they met, he was selling hot dogs in a Montreal stadium and she was waitressing at an Edmonton restaurant. Salé couldn't find the right partner and thought about hanging up her skates. But when she first skated with Pelletier, they clicked instantly. "I feel like I'm one with him," said Salé. "I feel his energy, and he feels mine." In the short program, they nailed a side-by-side triple toe loop, a difficult lift and a triple twist. But in their pose at the finale, the 2001 champions slipped and fell. They lay on the ice laughing. "I just thought, 'I came all the way to the Olympics to do that?'" Pelletier said later.

The lighthearted moment would soon end. The following evening, 20 pairs skated before the final three pairs—in first, second and third place, respectively—took to the ice: Berezhnaya and Sikharulidze would be followed by Salé and Pelletier, and then China's Xue Shen and Hongbo Zhao.

The Russians' performance, set to the opera piece "Meditation," was strong. But the pair made four mistakes, including Sikharulidze stepping out of the landing in the double Axel. Skating to the theme from the film *Love Story*, a program they had created two years prior to the Games, Salé and Pelletier seemed to have outperformed the Russians. Their throw triple Salchow, double Axel double toe loop and a triple throw loop were impeccable, and at the finish, an exuberant Pelletier kissed the ice in triumph. Fans, expecting a perfect score from the judges, chanted "Six! Six!"

But when the marks appeared, silence fell on the crowd. Salé and Pelletier were awarded a string of 5.8s and 5.9s and a second-place spot, not the first they were expecting.

What had happened? Had the Canadians been penalized for skating an old program? Or had something gone wrong with the judging process? Rumors of French judge Marie-Reine Le Gougne being pressured to vote a certain way began to swirl. The bronze medal, won by China's Xue Shen and Hongbo Zhao, was clear, but the gold remained murky for days. (Later, the International Skating Union suspended Le Gougne and banned her from the 2006 Games.) Finally, on February 15, a compromise was reached. Berezhnaya and Sikharulidze would keep their gold medal, while Salé and Pelletier would exchange their silver for a tie gold medal.

It was a significant moment in Olympic history, but for both pairs, simply one of relief. Said Berezhnaya, "I'm very happy it's all over, and it's closed."

The controversy had also turned competitors into colleagues. "The four of us were part of history," said Pelletier. "Obviously, it was a tough few days, but now we're happy to put some closure to it and we can go on and be athletes. Our gold medal is everybody's."

While the world debated the outcome of the pairs competition, it nearly missed the men's event, in which Russia's Alexei Yagudin skated one of the most outstanding performances of the

Games. Before the short program, held just one night after the pairs free skate, it seemed that the gold-medal matchup would be between Yagudin and Evgeni Plushenko, three-time Russian champion. Though countrymen, they were known for a fierce rivalry in which each tried to outjump, out-choreograph and outperform the other.

But Plushenko fell on the opening quadruple toe loop in the short program, landing in fourth place. For Yagudin, whose complicated spins and original moves had earned him first place, the coast was suddenly much clearer. And when he reappeared two evenings later for the free program, skating to music from *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Yagudin seemed ready to end the duel with Plushenko. With incredible timing and execution, he performed no less than five triple jumps, with fast and furious footwork between each one. Having been prescribed skating lessons at age 4 because he was so small and sickly, Yagudin's moment had arrived. He was already crying with joy when his scores, including four 6.0s, flashed on the board. It was the first time in history any singles skater had earned more than one 6.0. "I was in a fog," he said. "I heard that I was the only guy who got 6.0s in the Olympics...I became not just a jumper, but also an artist on the ice."

Plushenko, meanwhile, had recovered sufficiently to earn the silver, with a flamboyant performance and complex moves. American Timothy Goebel, known as the "Quad King" for his ability in jumps of four revolutions, skated just after Plushenko and earned the bronze with a strong technical program and a carefree attitude as he skated to *An American in Paris*. He also became the first male figure skater to land a quadruple Salchow (in the short program) and three quads (in the free) in an Olympic competition. Goebel was the first U.S. athlete in 10 years to win a medal in men's Olympic figure skating. "It's great we've got an American man back on the podium," he said. "Any of the three of us [U.S. skaters for the men's event] could have medaled, and I'm just really happy it was me."

If figure skating is a balance between artistry and athleticism, ice dancing tips to the side of artistry. Before the Salt Lake 2002 Games, some questioned whether the sport, part of the Olympic program since 1976, belonged there. With fewer compulsory moves than pairs skating, and rules requiring at least one foot on the ice at all times, except during circumscribed lifts or jumps (and therefore limiting highly technical moves), ice dancing was prone to highly subjective judging. And when the pairs controversy heated up, the sport gained even more intense scrutiny.

The three-part competition began with the compulsory program, in which all 24 couples were required to perform one dance each of the quickstep and the blues. France's Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat emerged as the leaders. Their story fit well in a sport known for its drama: Anissina was born in the Soviet Union and had been winning junior titles with Ilia Averbukh until he fell in love with another skater named Irina Lobacheva and abandoned Anissina. Six months later, Anissina began practicing with Peizerat, a skater who liked to scuba dive and rock climb in his free time. She moved to France to try skating and eventually compete with him.

Finishing second in the Salt Lake 2002 compulsories were none other than Irina Lobacheva and Ilia Averbukh, now married, who were hot on Anissina's and Peizerat's heels. Italy's Barbara Fusar Poli and Maurizio Margaglio, the defending world champions, were in a close third place. Two nights later, the three pairs returned to the ice to battle it out in the original dance, set to a Spanish medley for all competitors. Anissina and Peizerat danced the flamenco and the tango, earning another first-place finish. Lobacheva and Averbukh, also in a tango and flamenco-inspired performance, again landed in second while the Italians held on to third.

There was just one more element to conquer: the free skate program. Anissina and Peizerat chose to honor the United States with a dance that began with Anissina posing as the Statue of

Liberty, set to music mixed with parts of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Their performance was packed with spins, spirals and synchronized movements, including the "gender bender" pose with Anissina lifting Peizerat. Barely edging out Averbukh and Lobacheva, who were second and the silver medalists by a 5–4 judging split, the duo captured France's first Olympic ice dancing gold medal. Winning bronze was Fusar Poli and Margaglio of Italy.

Often considered the marquee event of any Olympic Winter Games, the ladies' figure skating competition was in 2002 dominated by four names—Michelle Kwan, Irina Slutskaya, Sasha Cohen and Sarah Hughes—even before it began. Kwan, the United States of America's silver medalist at Nagano in 1998, was more determined than ever to win a gold medal. So determined, in fact, that she fired her longtime choreographer, and then her coach of nine years, shortly before the Games. Her career included six national and four world championships and 27 scores of 6.0. All it was missing was Olympic gold, and she would go for this final piece without a coach.

Russia's Slutskaya began figure skating to cure chronic bronchitis and ended up becoming the four-time European champion. She was poised to become Russia's first woman to win the Olympic figure skating gold. Known for landing difficult jumps, Slutskaya was the first woman to perform a double Biellmann spin with a foot change, a move in which she grasps the blade of a skate behind her back, pulls it over her head and spins, switching feet halfway through the move.

Cohen of the United States was a 17-year-old whose grace and flexibility had already commanded serious attention from judges in the figure skating circuit. And then there was Hughes, an American figure skating prodigy who learned to tie her own skates at age 3 and performed her first double Salchow (a distinctive move that requires taking off and landing on different edges of the skate) at age 5. Her natural prowess was tempered by a down-to-earth attitude: Unlike most skaters, Hughes trained from home. She was an excellent student, and hoped to become a doctor someday.

There were few surprises in the short program, with Kwan finishing first, Slutskaya second, Cohen third and Hughes in fourth. In the long program, everything changed. Of the four, Hughes skated first, in a stunning, flawless performance, landing seven successful triple jumps and nailing a difficult triple toe loop–triple loop combination. As the crowd roared and flowers rained down, Hughes threw her arms upward, radiant, with the overwhelming joy of an athlete who has just performed at her very best.

But there was more to come. Cohen fell on her triple-jump combination, only to be followed by Kwan, who fell out of a triple flip and landed poorly on another. Encouraged by cheers from the spectators, she landed three more triple jumps: Salchow, Lutz and toe loop. "I made a few mistakes," she said, "but I kept on going strong." Then, Slutskaya skated, with a shaky triple flip in a program that lacked her usual strength and speed.

Hughes, who was backstage with her coach Robin Wagner at this point, still didn't think it was possible to win gold. Suddenly, a nearby cameraman, who had heard the judges marks, told her she had won the gold. Hughes and Wagner fell to their knees, shrieking, completely in shock. She was the first figure skater ever to vault from fourth to first place in a tricky scoring system introduced in 1992. "In the past, I've held back, not always given it my all," said Hughes, still trying to grasp this truly Olympic moment. "Tonight, I just said, 'I have nothing to lose.'"

Nothing to lose, indeed. After causing one of the biggest upsets in Olympic history (Slutskaya won silver, Kwan, the bronze) and celebrating her gold medal with her brothers and sisters late into the night, Hughes was already turning her attention toward conquering another challenge: her college entrance exams. "My next goal," she said, "is to get in the high 1500s on my SATs."



Russia's Elena Berezhnaya and Anton Sikharulidze, who were awarded the first pairs gold, performed their free skate to music from the opera "Thais," the story of a seductress who courts a Cenobite monk.

MICHAEL SEAMANS



*U.S. skater Michelle Kwan captured first place in the ladies' short program on February 19.
"I felt America behind me—and that was incredible," she said.*

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



While preparing for the Salt Lake 2002 Games, American Sarah Hughes was most looking forward to sharing meals with other athletes at the Olympic Village cafeteria. Shown here during the short program, Hughes was soon staring gold with the world.

ELISABETH O'DONNELL



A powerful jumper, Russia's Irina Slutskaya was the first woman to land a triple Lutz-triple loop, the first woman to land a Salchow-triple loop combination and the first woman to perform a double Biellman spin with a foot change.

I A N L O G A N



Known for her classical elegance, Russia's Maria Butyrskaya assists in designing her costumes.

I A N L O G A N



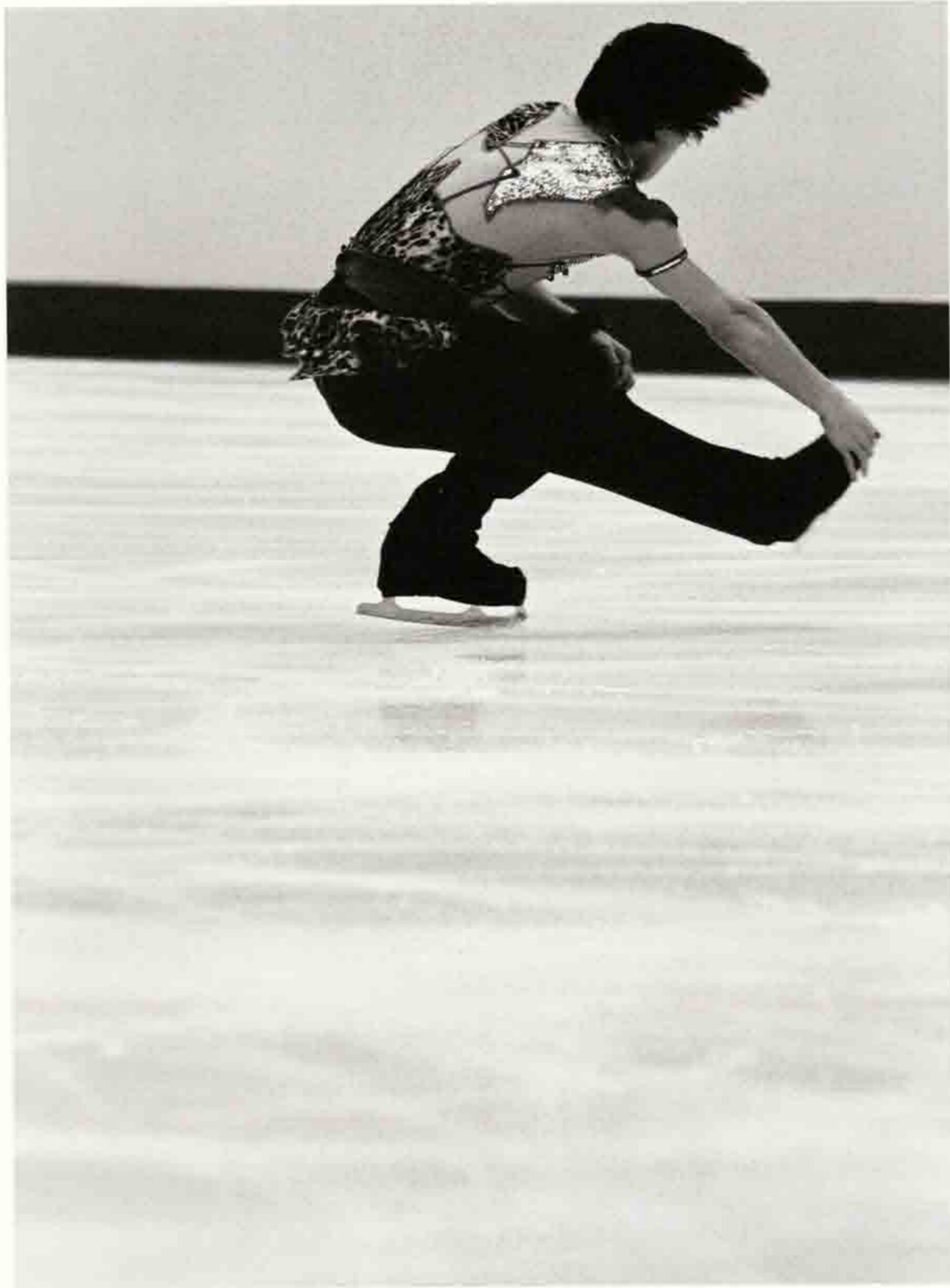
"When I got on the ice, I couldn't believe it was finally here. The moment I waited for my whole life."
 — Sasha Cohen, United States of America

J O H N H U E T



"I can't be perfect all the time," said Russia's Alexei Yagudin. "I'm not a machine." Yagudin was near perfect in Salt Lake City, however, earning a record four 6.0s and winning the men's gold.

J O H N H U E T



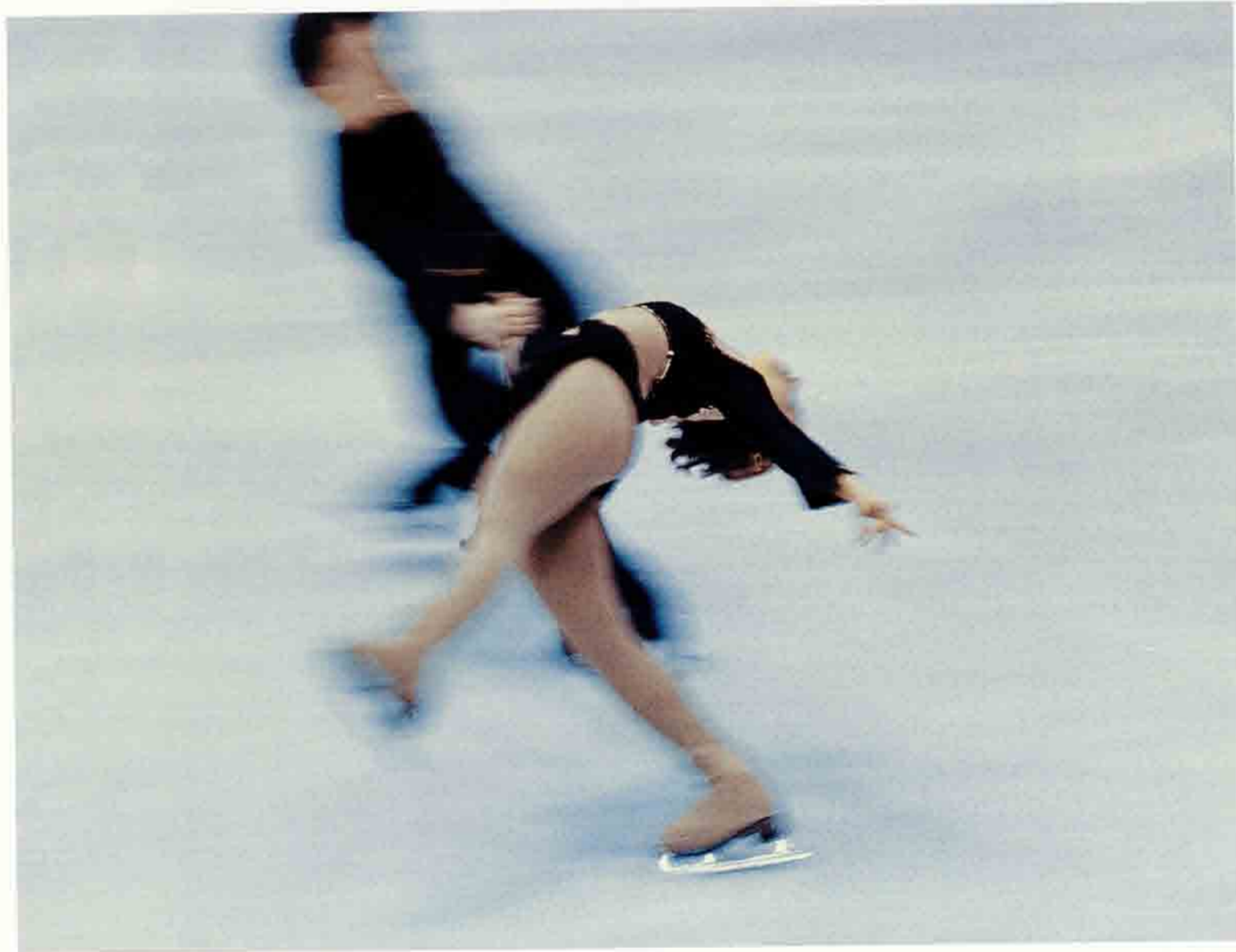
Yosuke Takeuchi of Japan performs a camel spin during the men's free program.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Alexander Abt of Russia landed in fifth place after the men's free program.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



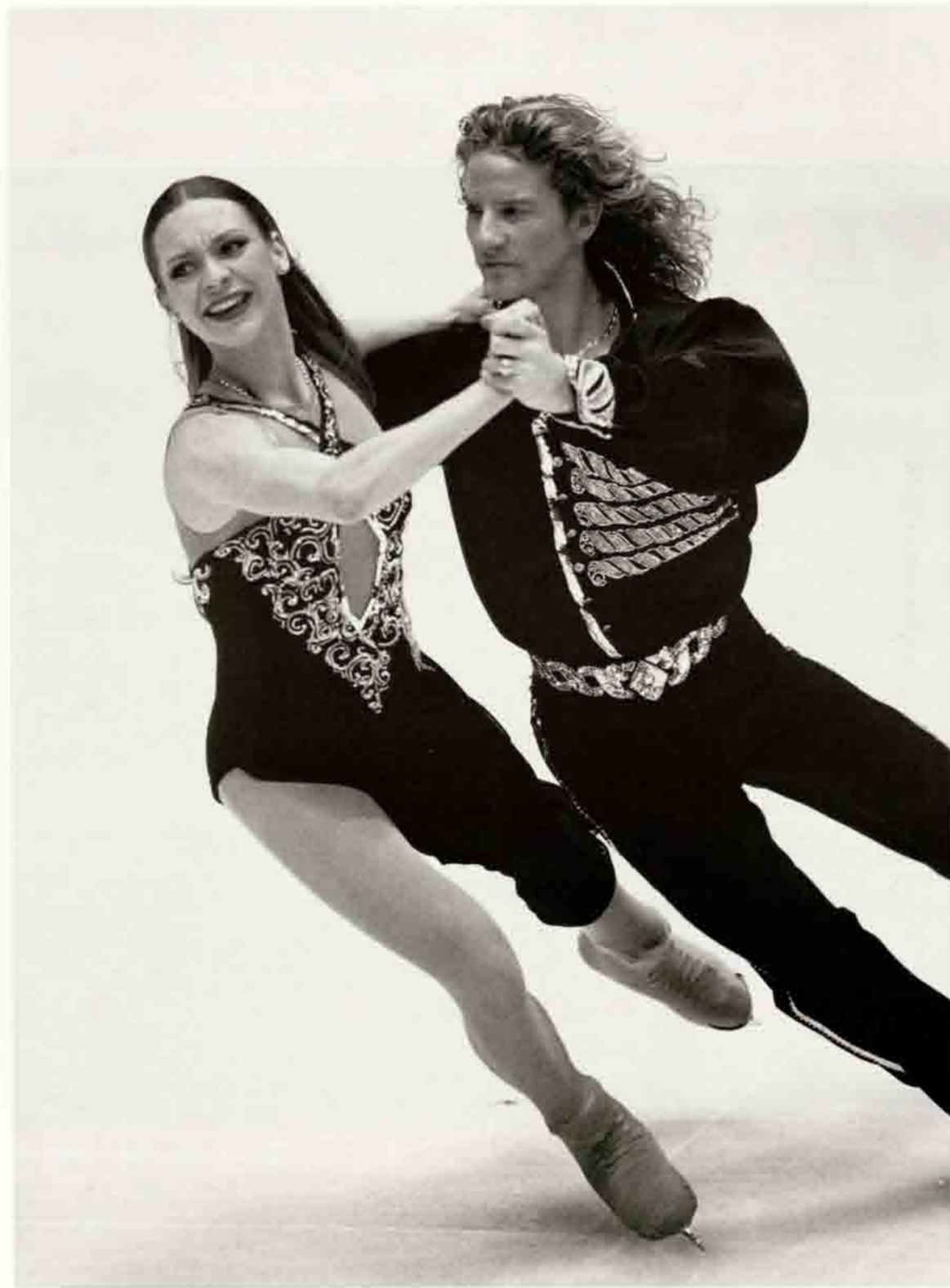
Slovakians Olga Bestandigova and Jozef Bestandig, siblings, compete in the pairs competition.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Bestandig tosses his sister in a throw triple loop move during the pairs competition. The two are five-time national champions.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Gold-medaling ice dancers Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat of France teamed up after Anissina, deserted by her partner, wrote a letter to Peizerat from her native Russia. She remembered seeing him at a competition. He answered six months later, when his own partner retired.

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Anissina, above, followed in the footsteps of her mother, Irina Cherniyeva, who competed in pairs skating at the Sapporo 1972 Olympic Winter Games.

I A N L O G A N



Ice dancers Marika Humphreys and Vitali Baranov of Great Britain present their routine for original dance

I A N L O G A N



Naomi Lang of the United States, shown here with ice dancing partner Peter Tchernyshev, is a member of the Karok tribe and the first female Native American to compete in the Olympic Winter Games.

I A N L O G A N



*Gold medalist Sarah Hughes dedicated her exhibition performance, one night after she won gold,
to those who suffered from the attacks of September 11, 2001.*

JOHN HUET





OLYMPIC VILLAGE • AS FORTRESSES GO, THE SALT LAKE 2002 OLYMPIC VILLAGE, LOCATED IN THE CITY'S HISTORIC FORT DOUGLAS AREA, WAS AMONG THE FINEST. SET HIGH IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE WASATCH MOUNTAINS, IN THE GLOW OF THE OLYMPIC CAULDRON, IT WAS A MYTHICAL LAND FILLED WITH THE WORLD'S GREATEST ATHLETES—BUT KEPT STRICTLY OFF-LIMITS TO OUTSIDERS. MILES OF FENCING, SECURITY GUARDS AND SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS DID NOT JUST PROTECT THOUSANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN, THEY PRESERVED PEACE OF



Andreas Morczinietz and Marc Seliger, Germany, Ice Hockey

RAYMOND MEEKS

mind. Inside its walls, individuals from 77 delegations were united as one community as they unfurled flags from dormitory windows, unpacked good luck charms and began to unwind. Tomorrow, or the next day, or even next week, they would compete, with overwhelming expectations pinned on a blip in time. But for now, there were glorious, unfettered hours in which they could contemplate, focus and simply imagine, in a place that soon became less of a fort and more of a blessed sanctuary. These were the hours in which Olympians could simply be Olympians.

It was a place of peace and a place of discovery. Night and day, athletes found camaraderie, comfort—and the musical talents of their fellow residents—in the CoffeeHouse. From Prince Albert of Monaco, a five-time Olympian, to Jayaram Khadka, representing Nepal in its first Olympic Winter Games, they found equality in the simple dormitory lodging and along snow-covered walkways. Families, such as Argentinian siblings and alpine skiers Macarena, Maria Belen and Cristian Javier Simari Birkner, found a second home in the Olympic Village. Individuals such as Kenya's Philip Boit and Cameroon's Isaac Menyoli—their country's sole athletes at the Games—found family. Shiva Keshavan of India found an old friend: Kang Kwange-Bae of Korea, from whom he had borrowed crutches after becoming injured in a 1997 luge event. They had not seen each other since the Nagano 1998 Games. And most everyone found a little bit more about hope, about dreams and about courage.

Photographers could enter the Olympic Village only through tight restrictions, with one exception: Montana-based artist Raymond Meeks. He invited athletes to his small studio in the International Zone, where they could have their picture taken, if they pleased. The result is a remarkable collection of relaxed and intimate portraits, which reveal athletes beyond the boundaries of their sports and capture some of the most precious moments of the Salt Lake 2002 Games.



Stéphanie Bonnier, France, Short Track Speed Skating

RAYMOND MEEKS



Aika Klein, Germany, Short Track Speed Skating

R A Y M O N D M E E K S



Georg Hackl, Germany, Luge

R A Y M O N D M E E K S



Gwendal Peizerat, France, Figure Skating

RAYMOND MEEKS



Jana Schröck, Germany, Ice Hockey

RAYMOND MEEKS



Dinah Browne, U.S. Virgin Islands, Luge (Center)

RAYMOND MEEKS



Sisters Amanda and Jaime Fortier, Canada, Cross-Country Skiing

RAYMOND MEEKS



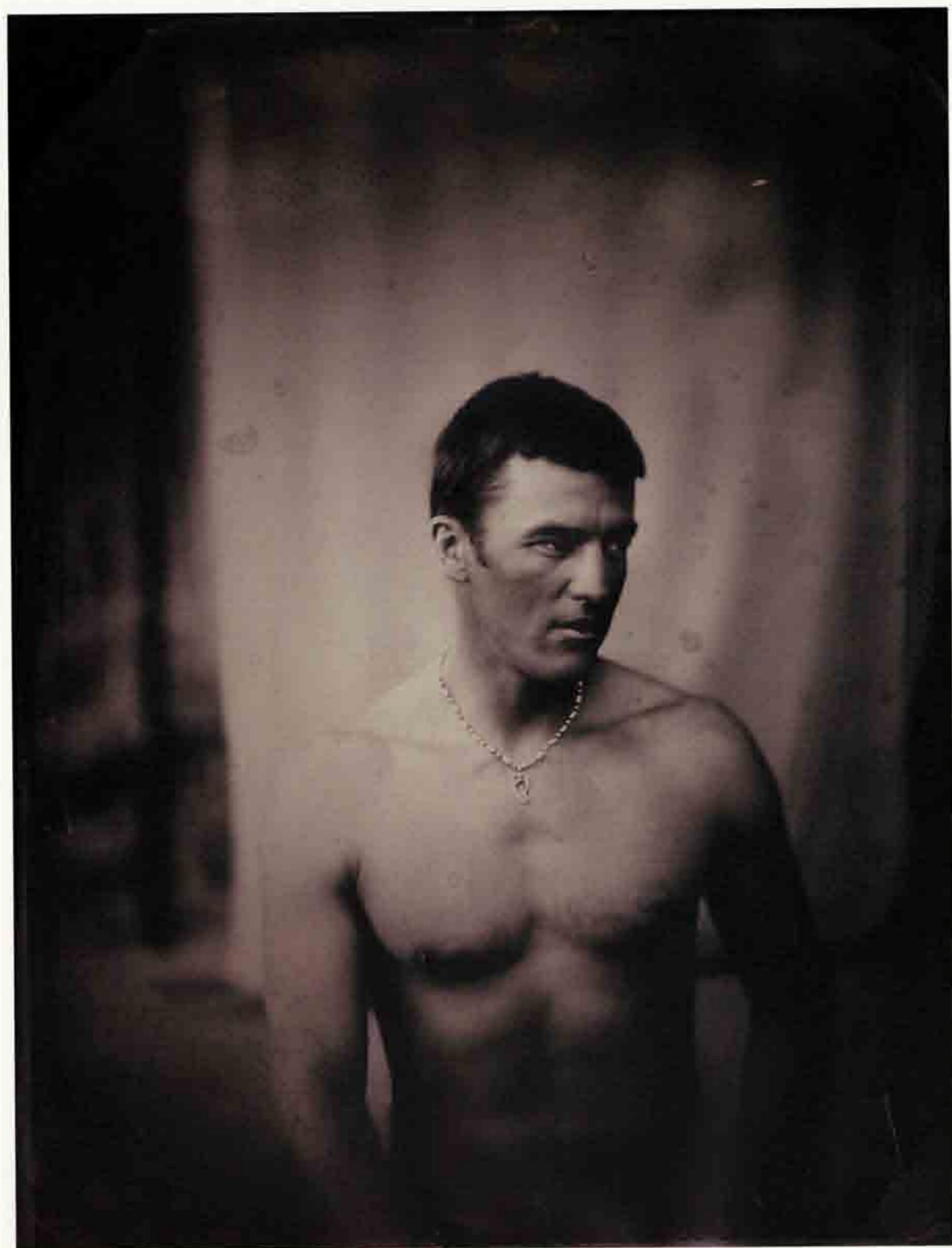
Lutauras Barila, Lithuania, Biathlon (Left)

RAYMOND MEEKS



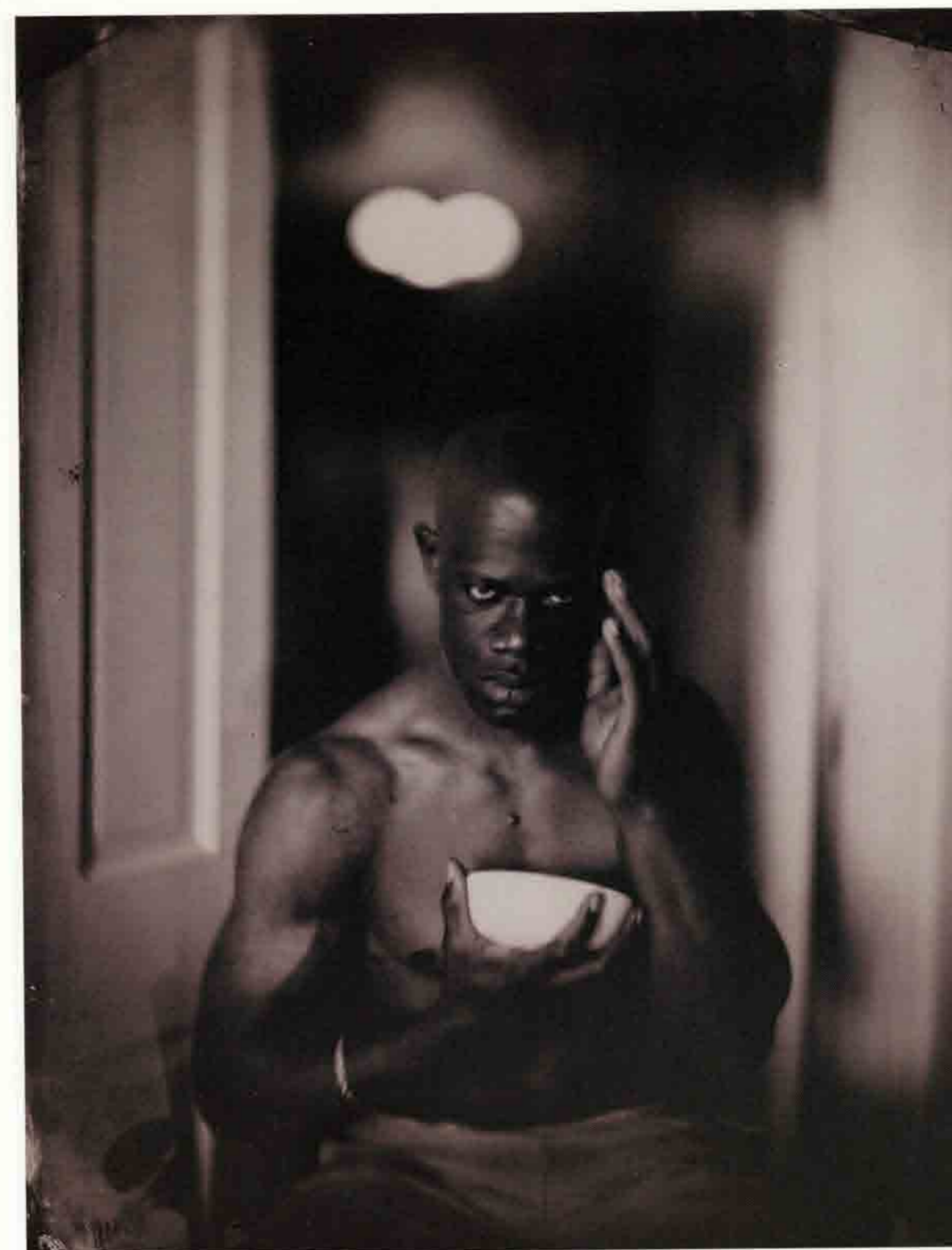
Nicolas Fontaine, Canada, Freestyle Aerials

RAYMOND MEEKS



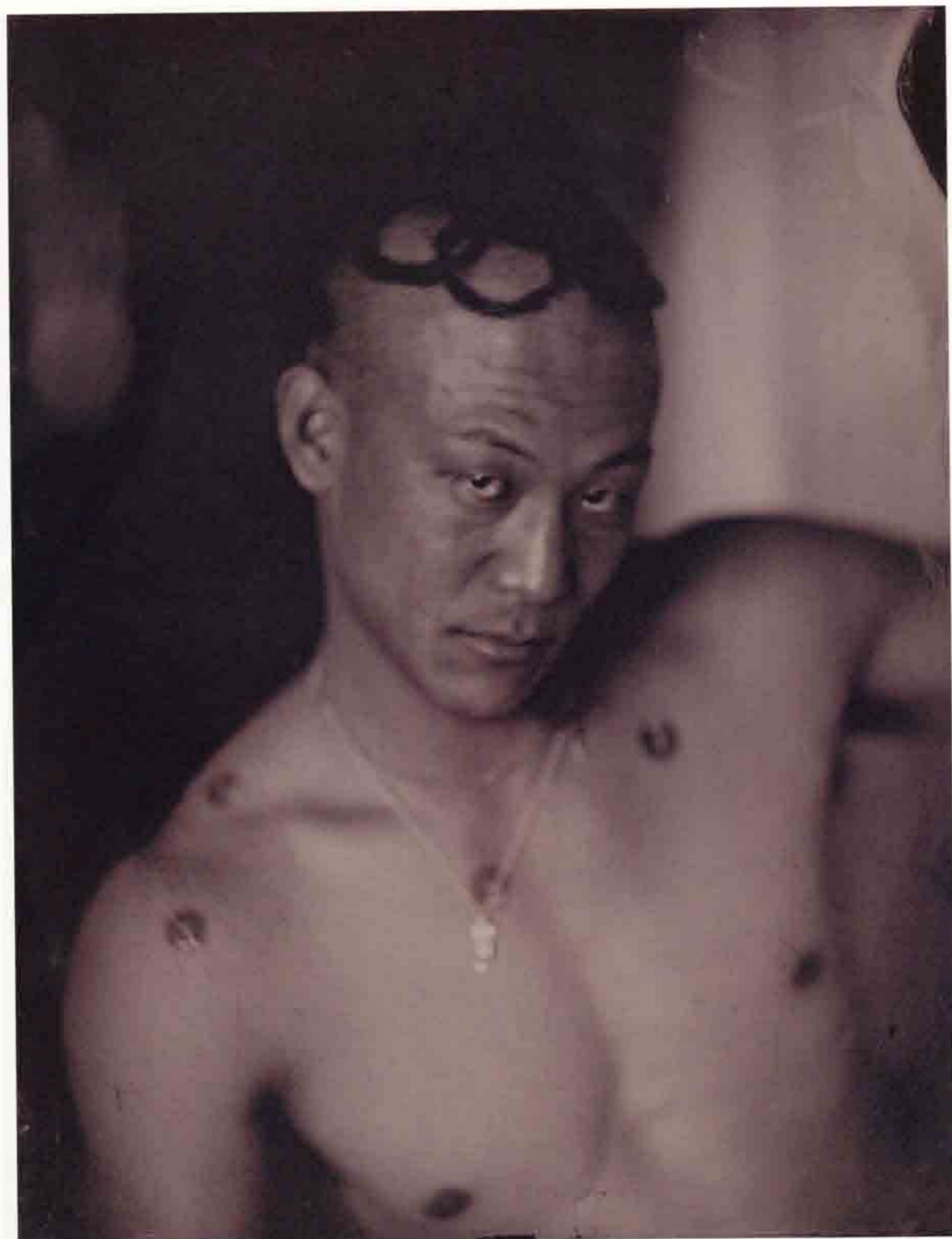
Trennon Paynter, Australia, Freestyle Moguls

RAYMOND MEEKS



Michel André, France, Bobsleigh

RAYMOND MEEKS



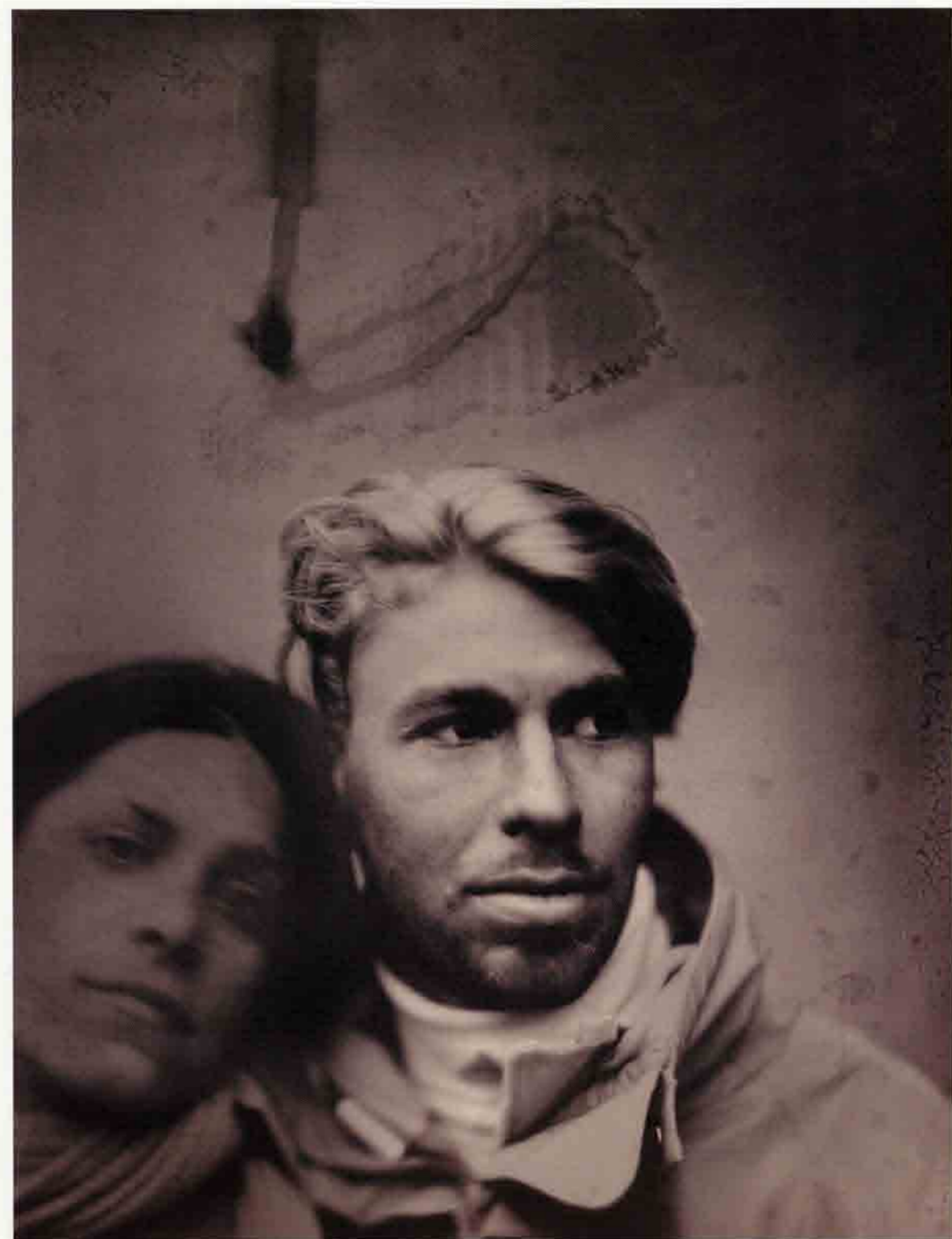
Masanori Inoue, Japan, Bobsleigh

RAYMOND MEEKS



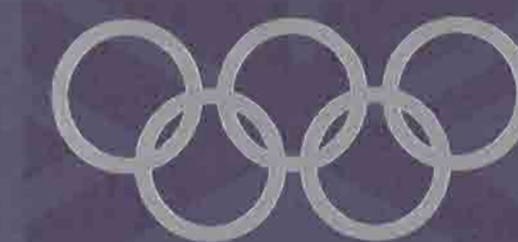
Irina Terentjeva, Lithuania, Cross-Country Skiing

RAYMOND MEEKS



Isabelle Delobel and Olivier Schoenfelder, France, Figure Skating

RAYMOND MEEKS





OLYMPIC MEDALS PLAZA • IT WAS THE HEARTBEAT OF THE OLYMPIC SPIRIT: AN AMPHITHEATER IN DOWNTOWN SALT LAKE CITY CREATED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF HONORING OUR NEWEST OLYMPIC HEROES AND SHARING THEIR GLORY WITH THE WORLD. OLYMPIC MEDALS PLAZA WAS FREE TO THE PUBLIC, OPEN TO THE STARRY SKIES—AND THE HOTTEST PLACE TO BE FOR TWO WEEKS IN FEBRUARY 2002. NEVER BEFORE HAD OLYMPIC LAURELS BEEN PRESENTED ON SUCH A SCALE: 20,000 FANS FLOCKED TO THE VENUE EACH EVENING FOR MEDALS



Women's downhill gold medalist Carole Montillet of France waves to the Olympic Medals Plaza crowd.

ALBERT COLANTONIO

Ceremonies, concerts and fireworks. An extraordinary line up of headline artists, including Dave Matthews Band, Macy Gray, *NSYNC, Alanis Morissette and Marc Anthony, paid tribute to the inspiring achievements of the athletes with rock-the-house shows.

As dramatic and memorable as the shows it hosted was the stage itself, encapsulated by the giant Hoberman Arch. Made of 96 translucent panels and symbolizing the Salt Lake 2002 theme of *Light the Fire Within*, the Arch suspended acrobatic dancers, dangling by silk sheets, from its silver beams. It retracted to reveal the Heroes' Cauldron, lit from the Olympic Flame on February 9 and illuminating the podium. Medalists were led to the stage by a Child of Light. For the first time in Olympic history, gold medals were presented last, allowing a prolonged celebration of bronze and silver medalists before culminating in the gold medalist and the playing of his or her national anthem.

Standing on the podium, surrounded by such grandiosity—and by so many people—was an experience for which the athletes were often wholly unprepared, despite their extraordinary accomplishments. Members of the Finnish nordic-combined team battled pre-Medals Plaza jitters by donning business suits to accept their medals because, as team member Jari Mantila said, "You want to look good up there." American Tristan Gale, having just won gold for a fearless, bone-rattling skeleton ride, could barely find the courage to walk toward the podium. "Lea Ann [Parsley] had to drag me out there," she said. "This was way harder than what I did today. We practice our sport over and over. We never practice standing up in front of our home crowd and hearing our national anthem."

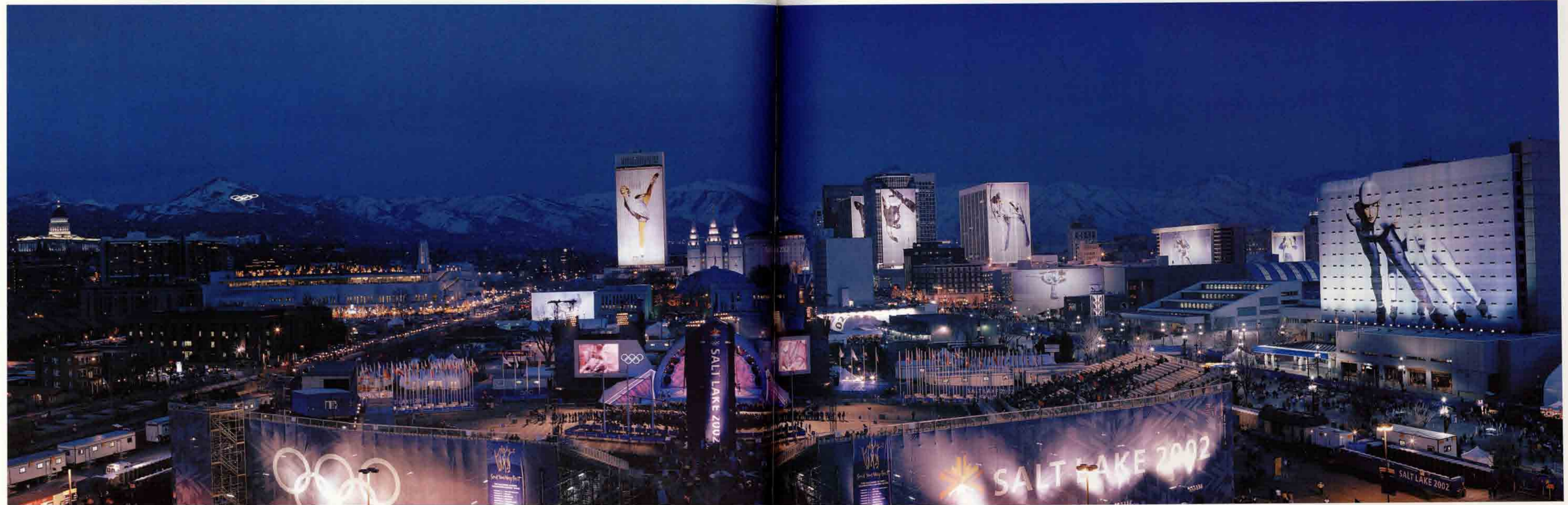
These were times of overwhelming emotion, when speed skater Derek Parra, the first Mexican-American to win a medal in the Olympic Winter Games and bobsledder Vonetta Flowers, the first African-American to win winter gold, cried silently, the tears running down their faces and dripping from their chins. These were times of wonder, when the newly crowned Olympian champions looked down to inspect their medals, to see if they were real. Surprise Swiss ski jumping phenomenon Simon Ammann laughed and laughed at this peculiar but pleasant predicament, winning not one but two gold medals. Australian Alisa Camplin simply bounced on the podium. "I was so excited, I didn't know what to do," said the gold-medaling aerialist. "I just started jumping up and down."

But above all, Olympic Medals Plaza provided times of transcendence for all who gathered there, nights of glitter and splendor, when all things seemed possible. "I feel like I sprouted wings, and I'm showered with joy," said Germany's Silke Kraushaar, after receiving the bronze medal for women's luge. "I'm in heaven right now."



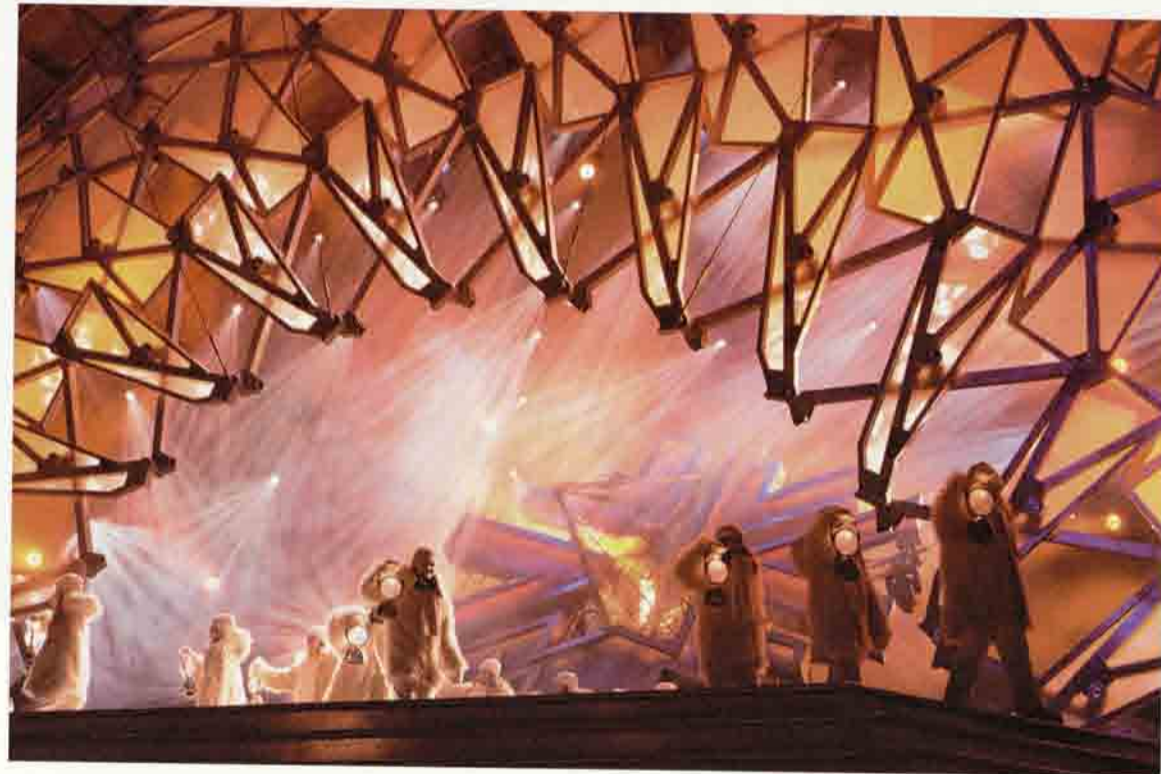
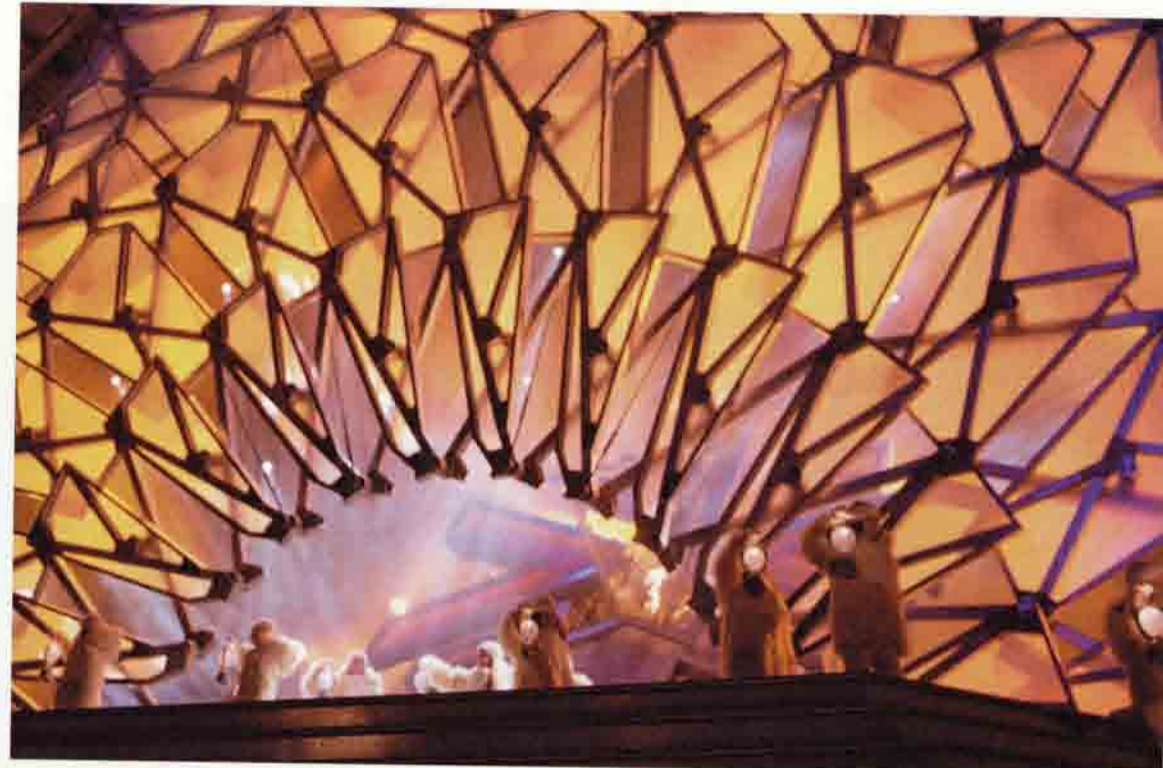
"I should enjoy what I'm seeing right now, because this is just amazing. The people in America are great. They cheered for us just as much as they did for their own." — Doubles luge gold medalist Alexander Resch of Germany, on what ran through his mind as he stood on the Olympic Medals Plaza podium

I A N L O G A N



Creating a cathedral of champions, towering banners of athletes surrounded Olympic Medals Plaza, reminding audiences of the power to inspire.

C H A D H O L D E R



Olympic Medals Plaza was the most ambitious project of its kind in Olympic history. Its centerpiece was the Hoberman Arch, a 30,000-pound structure that spiraled outward and upward.

I A N L O G A N



Designed to open like the iris of an eye, the Hoberman Arch revealed the Olympic Medals Plaza stage and Heroes' Cauldron, which was lit from the Olympic Flame.

I A N L O G A N



Dave Matthews Band performed at Olympic Medals Plaza on opening night, February 9.

DAVID BURNETT



In a city of less than 1 million, more than 1 million visitors, total, strolled through Salt Lake Olympic Square, the pedestrian-only festival surrounding Olympic Medals Plaza.

DAVID BURNETT



"It was mind boggling," said silver medalist Danny Kass (left) of the Medals Ceremony. He, gold medalist Ross Powers (center) and J.J. Thomas (right) experienced after the American sweep of men's bobsleigh. It was the first U.S. sweep of any Olympic Winter Games sport since 1956.

I A N L O G A N



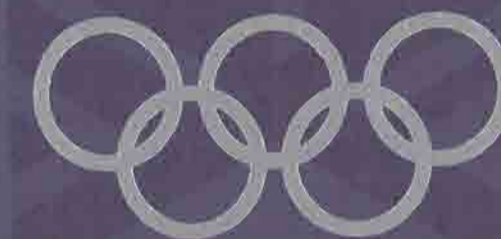
Only two nations swept events at the Salt Lake 2002 Games: the United States of America in men's snowboarding halfpipe and Germany in women's luge.

I A N L O G A N



"To win as a team is different than to win as an individual. Today, it was the team that won, and not just the four racers." – Cross-country men's 4 x 10 km relay gold medalist Frode Estil, Norway, shown here with teammates and silver and bronze medalists from Italy and Germany, respectively.

STEVEN CURRIE





OLYMPIC ARTS FESTIVAL • IN ANCIENT GREECE, THE OLYMPIC GAMES WERE FESTIVALS OF NOT ONLY SPORT, BUT ART. TOP MUSICIANS WERE PRAISED ALONGSIDE CHARIOT-RACE WINNERS FOR THEIR TALENTS. THE SALT LAKE 2002 OLYMPIC ARTS FESTIVAL CONTINUED THIS TRADITION BY SHOWCASING SOME OF AMERICA'S BEST ART AND ARTISTS, WHILE EMBRACING THE CULTURE OF THE AMERICAN MOUNTAIN WEST. FROM ICE-CARVING COMPETITIONS AND POETRY READINGS TO BUD GREENSPAN'S DOCUMENTARY FILMS AND CONCERTS BY THE MORMON



*"We can't say we are the best artists in the world in 2002, but we can say we are a part of a long tradition of mankind thinking about himself and his inner experience."
— Michael Tracy, Co-Artistic Director, Pilobolus Dance Theatre*

JOHN HUET

Tabernacle Choir and the Utah Symphony, the arts events were as diverse as the nations participating at the Games. Athleticism, sportsmanship and teamwork—words that usually describe skiers and skaters—became synonymous with the artists of the Olympic Arts Festival. Dancers, sculptors, musicians, poets, filmmakers, cowboys and chefs gathered in Salt Lake City to embrace the human spirit and, in their own way, to *Light the Fire Within*.

Energizing a synthesis of sport and art, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, one of the United States' premiere modern dance companies, created "Here...Now," specially for the Olympic Arts Festival. Choreographed by Ailey Artistic Director Judith Jamison, the dance was a tribute to the late Olympian Florence Griffith-Joyner. Joyner, or Flo-Jo, as she was called, won three gold medals at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Games. In her brief life—she died in 1998 at the age of 38 from complications during an epileptic seizure—Flo-Jo gained a reputation as a strong athlete and a powerful woman, but little else was known about her. "I had to deal with the surface because of the things that we don't know about her," said Jamison, "but I did know about how gorgeous she was and the kind of speed she had." Set to an original score by jazz trumpeter and composer Wynton Marsalis, the piece featured dancers clad in stylized running gear who leaped, ran and slid over and across a mirrored ramp center stage. "Dancers and athletes do the same kind of things," said Jamison. "Overstretching, going to the wall and through the wall when your strength is completely sapped. But yet you are still relying on this inner faith that you'll be able to get to the finish line...the curtain coming down or winning a gold medal."

Equally athletic was the performance of Tony Award-winning dancer and choreographer Savion Glover, who bounded onto the Abravanel Hall stage to a funky, extended version of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Glover, with a group of young dancers called TiDii, tap-danced to music by Stevie Wonder, John Coltrane, Sade and other musicians. Glover, known for his hard-hitting tap solos and ability to make music with his tap shoes, shared the spotlight with younger dancers he had inspired and who proved they could keep up with Glover and his distinctive style.

Set to the music of Scott Joplin and traditional ragtime jazz, meanwhile, Pilobolus Dance Theater's Olympic Arts Festival commission, "The Brass Ring," featured six dancers in an ode to Olympic athletes. The group has been collaborating for more than 30 years on work that explores

"DANCERS AND ATHLETES DO THE SAME KIND OF THINGS...
RELYING ON THIS INNER FAITH TO GET TO THE FINISH."

basic human emotions through theater, movement and athleticism. "Hopefully, artists bring something new to those who appreciate the physical world of athletes," said Pilobolus' cofounder and artistic director Michael Tracy, as he thought about his role in the Olympic Arts Festival. Creating Pilobolus "was really a perfect blend between theater and sports. Dancers certainly aspire to physical grace—they approach that level of physical achievement that athletes aspire to. But, we also have this other interest of creating imagery and theatrical content."

But with some 75 events taking place around town, there was far more than dance to choose from for the 350,000 people who enjoyed the Olympic Arts Festival. Musical collaborations brought together some of the finest musicians from Utah and around the world. The famed Mormon Tabernacle Choir, known for its 325-voice strong arrangements, invited clarinetist Richard Stoltzman,

opera diva Frederica von Stade, a *cappella* men's group the king'singers and percussionist Evelyn Glennie for free concerts in Temple Square. The Utah Symphony accompanied Elaine Paige, the first lady of British musical theater, singing her favorite tunes by Andrew Lloyd Webber; three-time Tony Award winner Audra McDonald sang pieces from American composers. Jazz pianist Marcus Roberts and his trio also played with the 99-member symphony, performing his version of the George Gershwin classic, "Rhapsody in Blue." And one evening, Keith Lockhart, the symphony's music director, lent his baton to violin virtuoso Itzhak Perlman to guest conduct.

Some of Utah's own performing companies shared their world-class talents. Legendary folk singer Pete Seeger joined Salt Lake City's Children's Dance Theatre. Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company performed "Prelude de l'Olympiad," created by gifted choreographer Daniel Ezralow and Repertory Dance Theatre presented three masterpieces by the founders of modern dance: Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Helen Tamiris. One of America's leading ballet companies, Ballet West, located in Salt Lake City, celebrated 20th century choreographers Jerome Robbins, Hans van Manen and George Balanchine.

And as the contemporary arts were being appreciated across the Wasatch Front, the unique culture of the American West was also celebrated. From an exhibit exploring the art of Utah's indigenous American Indian tribes and appearances by the original Navajo Code Talkers to a rodeo featuring the best cowboys and cowgirls in North America and an evening of cowboy poetry and music, the Olympic Arts Festival honored these distinctive traditions.

Even those simply on their way to Olympic Medals Plaza could catch a glimpse of the Arts Festival, with glass artist Dale Chihuly's "Sun" and "Moon" sculptures gracing the Abravanel Hall plaza while thousands more delicate pieces were on display at the Salt Lake Arts Center. The 27-foot-high "Olympic Tower," a fiery column of twisted glass, had been created specially for the Games and lured passersby to stop and stare in wonder. "So many people will get to come by and see it," said Chihuly of the artwork's proximity to Salt Lake Olympic Square and Olympic Medals Plaza. "Glass is a very magical medium to be working in. It is both fragile and strong."

For these artists there were no podiums, no Medals Ceremonies, no press conferences. But there was much applause. As athletes returned home to recuperate and think about the next step after the 2002 Games, artists returned to their studios to create new dreams. As different as they appeared on the surface, these two groups were remarkably similar. Hard work and determination drove each. Judith Jamison believes artists and athletes share "the same thought process. Put your nose to the grindstone. Keep your eye on the prize. And work." Medals are not the point; the reward "is that you are burning your flame as hot as you can burn it, while you can," said Jamison. "That's the joy of it. That's the passion of it."



*"He likes to get the kids involved, whether it's singing or clapping. He has fun with it."
— Children's Dance Theatre's Laura Meyer, 16, of folk singer Pete Seeger (above)*

TIBOR NEMETH



*Children's Dance Theatre costume designers Cynthia Turner and Nancy Cook
created more than 600 costumes by hand for the group's performance on February 11.*

TIBOR NEMETH



Linda-Denise Fisher-Harrell performs Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's "Revelations."
"We have no ice, but we are still trying to glide." – Artistic Director Judith Jamison

JOHN HUET



Rester Robinson has been dancing with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater for 20 years.

JOHN HUET



Benny Greene on piano and Bob Cranshaw on bass perform as part of the Russell Malone Quartet.

DAVID BURNETT



Jazz guitarist Russell Malone, center, with Bob Cranshaw on bass and E.J. Strickland on drums, performs at the Rose Wagner Performing Arts Center.

DAVID BURNETT



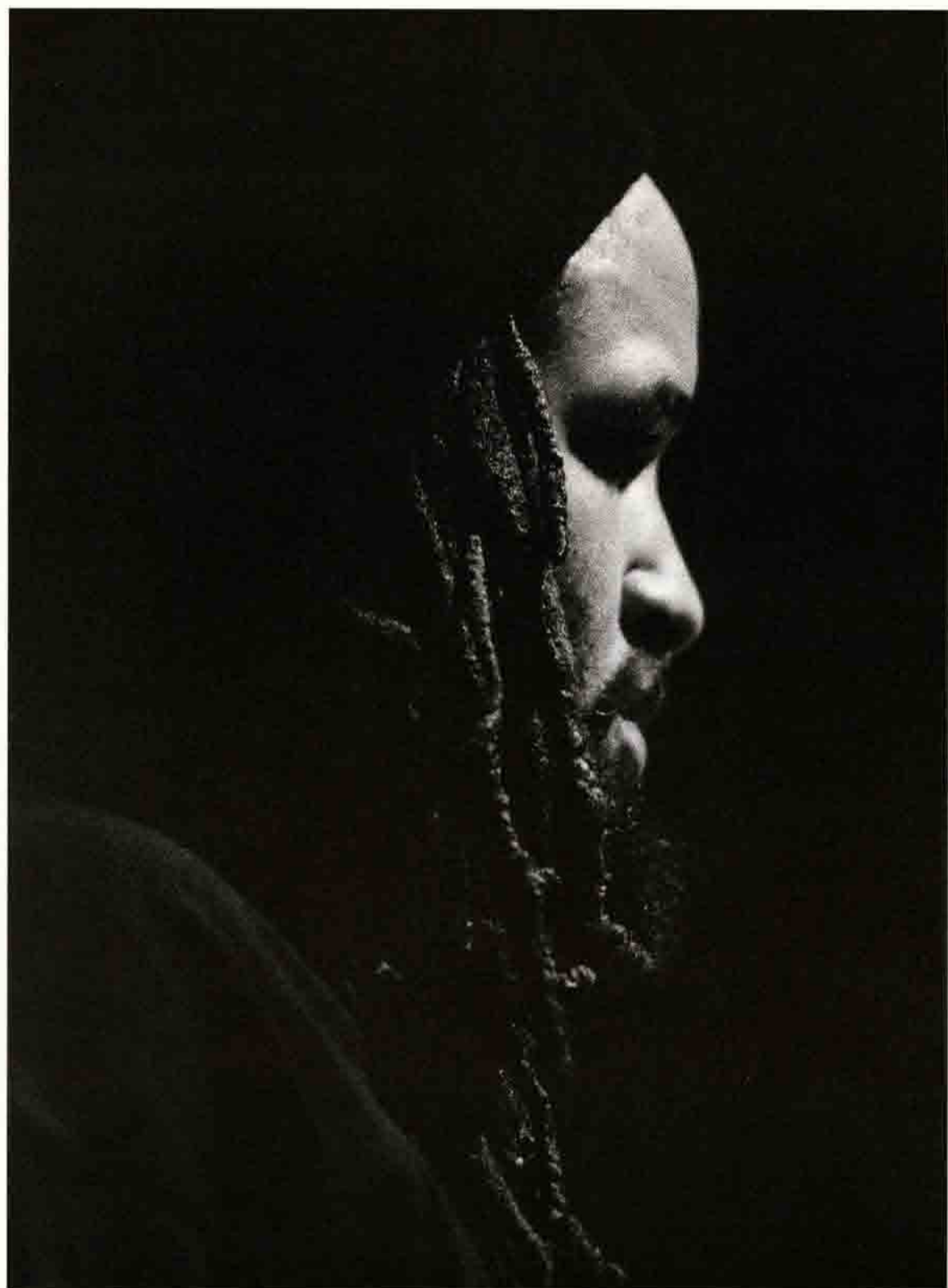
Chihuly's "Olympic Tower" consisted of 1119 pieces of red glass.

DAVID BURNETT



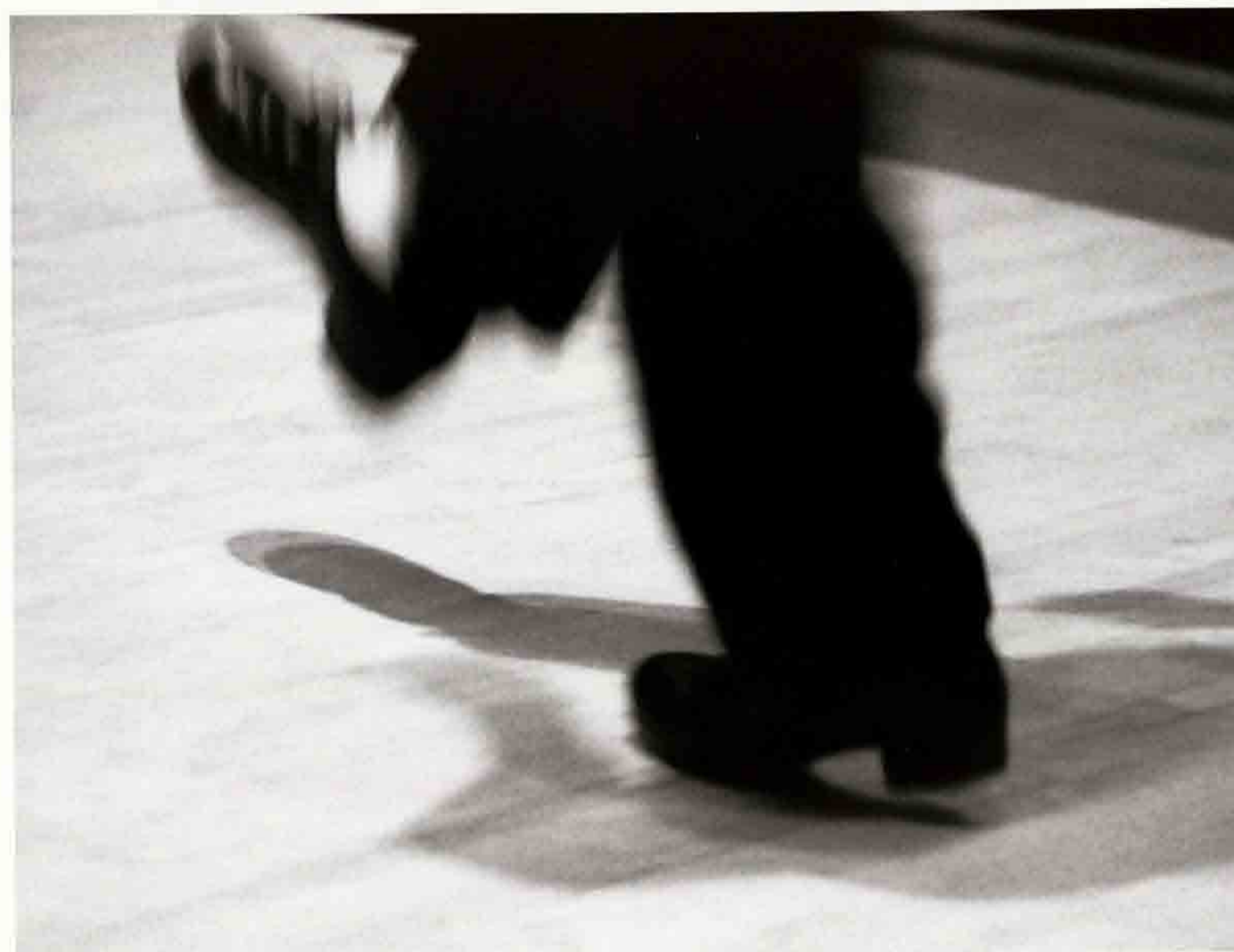
More than 1100 pieces of blown glass meticulously arranged on Plexiglas and suspended overhead created Dale Chihuly's "Persian Pergola Ceiling."

DAVID BURNETT



Tony Award-winning dancer Savion Glover danced to a version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" on February 22 at Abravanel Hall.

T I B O R N E M E T H



Along with his size 12.5 feet, Glover uses jazz, funk and hip-hop rhythms to create his own style of dance called "biting."

T I B O R N E M E T H



Participants in the Olympic Command Performance Rodeo enter the ring at the Davis County Legacy Center in Farmington, Utah.

ALBERT COLANTONIO



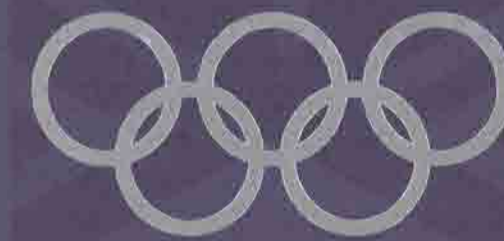
Kyle Bowers of Brooks, Alberta, prepares for the bareback riding competition.

ALBERT COLANTONIO



"Athletes who wish to participate in the Olympic Games devote their years to training mentally and physically. Allan, too, sought to make his art the best, to meet Olympic standards"
— Anna Marie Houser, widow of the late sculptor Allan Houser (1914–1994), whose "Meeting on the Trail," above, was displayed at Washington Square in downtown Salt Lake City.

S T E V E N C U R R I E





CLOSING CEREMONY • We were bewildered by the sudden arrival of the Closing Ceremony on February 24. Had 16 days really passed since we last gathered in Rice-Eccles Olympic Stadium to light the cauldron and welcome the world? Was it really time to say goodbye? As we took our seats, we tried to make each moment last just a little longer, snapping our final photos of the Olympic Flame against the blue and burnished sky of sunset, already replaying in our minds highlights of the Games. From Jim



"Far and away, the most successful Olympics, summer or winter, in history."

—Dick Ebersol, Chairman of NBC Sports

ALBERT COLANTONIO

Shea Jr.'s skeleton run to Janica Kostelić's medal haul to Canada's hockey victory that day, more than 2500 Olympians had shown us their power to inspire and had taught us about our own potential to *Light the Fire Within*, with their courage and their capacity for greatness.

And tonight, these heroes would lift our heavy hearts with their abundant joy. As they entered the stadium, the athletes did not march, but spilled forth, arm in arm, no longer separated by nation but bound by friendship. Some wore costumes, others danced and skipped their way to the stands. Sixteen nights ago, they had walked this stadium as athletes; they now marched as Olympians.

A sense of celebration, mixed with a bit of sadness, continued throughout the evening. Two giant dinosaur puppets, voiced by legendary Utahns Donny and Marie Osmond, cracked jokes and swung an enormous tail in the northeast corner of the stadium. *NSYNC kicked off an unprecedented, nightlong concert from a variety of artists by singing the national anthem, which was followed by the sweeping American Musical set. Kurt Browning skated to Dianne Reeves' jazz, a moving platform carried KISS around the ice, with Kristi Yamaguchi and Katarina Witt skating and pyrotechnics exploding to the sounds of "Rock and Roll All Nite." Earth, Wind & Fire, Gloria Estefan, Harry Connick, Jr. and tap dancer Savion Glover with skaters Ilia Kulik and Dorothy Hamill all added to the medley. Later, in a surprise appearance, Willie Nelson sang "Bridge Over Troubled Water," adding a note of melancholy to an otherwise lighthearted lineup.

We were also sobered, momentarily, by the passing of the Olympic Flag to Torino, Italy, host of the 2006 Olympic Winter Games. Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson's hand lingered on the flagpole during the handover, but as Torino presented singers and slides of Italian culture, we understood that the Olympic Spirit would carry on. We sighed in protest when Jacques Rogge announced that the Olympic Flame would be extinguished, but were reassured by his words. "Keep this flame alight," said Rogge, who called the Salt Lake 2002 Games superb and inspiring. "Promote the Olympic dream in your countries. You are the true ambassadors of the Olympic values."

And the final chapter of the story of the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games was concluded with the Children of Light, who had symbolically carried the fire within during the past two and a half weeks, returning with skater Scott Hamilton to say goodbye and sing "Happy Trails to You" with the audience. The Child of Light passed his lantern to a child from Torino, representing the transfer of hope, peace and honor to the next host.

The Olympic Flame disappeared into the night sky, with Renee Roca and Gorsha Sur skating to the sounds of Charlotte Church and Josh Groban. We knew the Games were gone. The party, however, had only just begun, with Moby, Christina Aguilera and Bon Jovi rocking the stadium while skaters covered the ice in ultraviolet paint and giant, white "snow" balls bounced through the audience. The athletes poured onto center stage, dancing long into the night, long after a fireworks extravaganza of 10,000 explosives launched throughout the city and along the Wasatch Front at a rate of 37 shells per second. They, too, weren't quite ready to say goodbye. Said Canadian luge athlete Mike Moffat, "It's for sure been the greatest two weeks of my life."



Six hundred and eighty Children of Light held up lanterns one last time.

I A N L O G A N



*In a state known for its archaeological discoveries, "Utah's First Family,"
75-foot-tall dinosaurs, entertained the audience.*

JOHN HUET



The audience marveled as aerialists suddenly tumbled out of giant white balloons that floated across the stage.

JOHN HUET



Representing figure skating, snowboarding, skeleton, freestyle skiing and ice hockey, the balloon performers reminded fans of the hundreds of incredible moments they had seen in these and other sports of the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

STEVEN CURRIE



Eric Singer, Gene Simmons, Paul Stanley and Ace Frehley of KISS perform "Rock and Roll All Nite," as fireworks explode from their revolving platform and from the ice.

J O H N H U E T



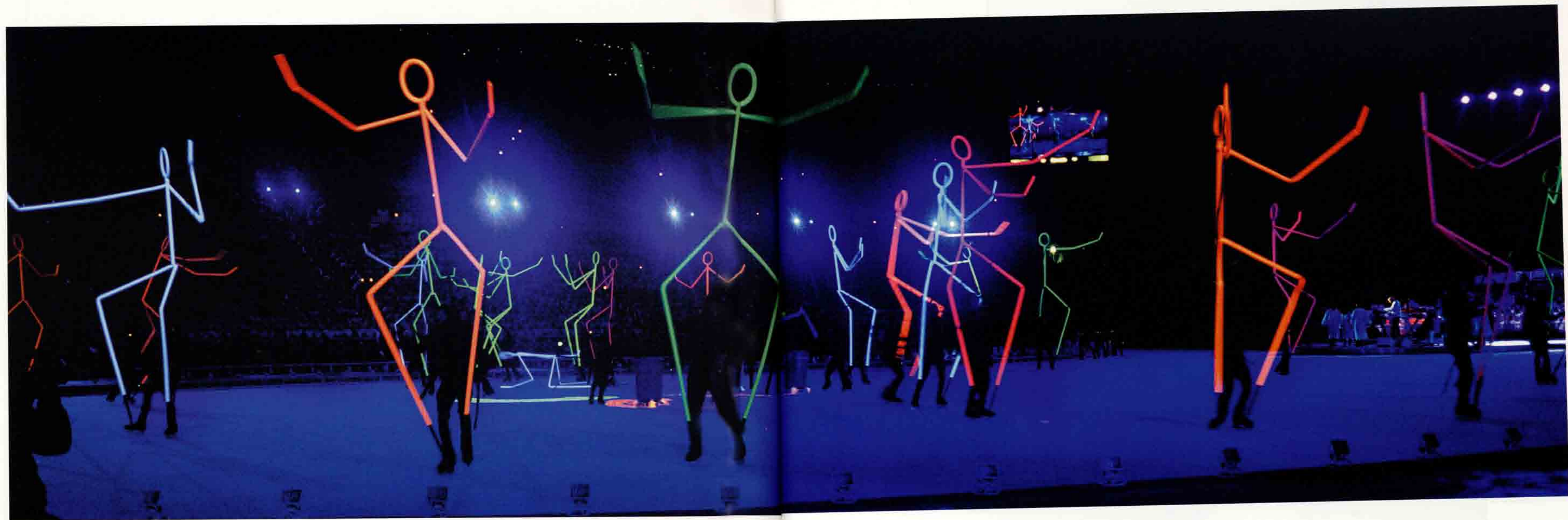
"Olympians, we cheered all of you, not just our own. We saw in you the universal greatness of the human family." - Salt Lake 2002 President and CEO Mitt Romney

M I C H A E L S E A M A N S



Giant white "snow" balls bounce through the audience and onto the athletes, who spilled from the stands onto the field.

T I B O R N E M E T H



"The Stick Man Ballet" kicked off an all-star party for the athletes, which included performances by Moby, Christina Aguilera and Ben Jovi.

JOHN HUET



Nearly 2000 cast members joined together for the Closing Ceremony.

I A N L O G A N



"Volunteers, you are, with the athletes, also champions of these Games. Your generosity and profound kindness has won our hearts. You were marvelous." — IOC President Jacques Rogge at the Closing Ceremony. A volunteer, above, celebrates with short track gold medalist Apolo Anton Ohno of the United States of America.

I A N L O G A N



"These were passionate Games, heartfelt Games, perfect Games. Salt Lake City, we will never forget you" - Legendary Olympic alpine skier Jean-Claude Killy

ALBERT COLANTONIO



SALT LAKE 2002


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SALT LAKE 2002
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