

Stars in the making

U.S. ski team boasts two greats, neither named 'Bode'

By BOB BAUM
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The sometimes outlandish mutterings of Bode Miller and the speed of Daron Rahlves and Lindsey Kildow have garnered most of the Alpine ski headlines in the United States in the weeks leading up to the Turin Olympics.

There is much more to the U.S. team, though, as Scott Macartney and Steve Nyman showed during the weekend.

"Both sides, men and women, we really have a lot of people who are just waiting to strike," said Libby Ludlow, who had a career-best seventh place in the super-G last month. "We all train together, and on any given day, each of us has beaten each other."

Macartney, Nyman and Ludlow spoke in a conference call from Europe on Tuesday.

Macartney earned his first podium finish with a second place, behind Austrian Christoph Gruber, in the final super-G race before the Olympics on Sunday in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

A day earlier, Nyman finished a career-best fourth behind a trio of Austrians in the downhill.

"I don't know if there's ever a reason for success," said Macartney, a 28-year-old Dartmouth graduate in his eighth year on the U.S. team, "but I've had a lot of good things going on this year. The last couple of races I've been in, I've caught some momentum



AP PHOTO
Scott Macartney of the United States races to second place at the men's World Cup super-G race in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, on Sunday.

and started to figure out some things about skiing."

This will be Macartney's second Olympics, and the first for Nyman, who turns 24 on Feb. 12.

"I feel healthy. It's plain and simple," Nyman said. "I've been struggling with injuries. Two broken legs the past three years doesn't help. I went through a full season in pain last year and just suffered."

"Going into the summer, I knew I had to get better or else I probably wouldn't be ski racing after this year. I just couldn't handle it."

After winning a world junior title in 2002, Nyman broke his left leg skateboarding that spring. A year later, after winning a Europa Cup race, he crashed and broke his right leg.

But with the help of Salt Lake City chiropractor and "muscle activating guru" Craig Buhler, who used to work with basketball great John Stockton, Nyman emerged pain-free for this season.

"My expectations are to enjoy it," Nyman said of his first Olympics. "I'm taking Scott's advice to go there and soak in the moment, but yet I want to do well."

Low-key and quiet, Nyman said he will steer clear of the kind of controversy Miller has created.

"I'm young and fresh at this, but I'd like to portray myself as somebody that's likable, approachable," Nyman said.

"I'm not saying that he's not. Bode is very intelligent. He's a smart guy. He just needs to know how to use his intelligence in a better way. I learned a lot from him."

City's other claim to fame

Turin best known as home of burial cloth linked to Jesus

By RICHARD N. OSTLING
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TURIN, ITALY

Just as Salt Lake City was famous long before the 2002 Winter Olympics because of its tie to the Mormon Church, so the 2006 host city has been renowned for its own religious connection: For 428 years it's been home to the world's most celebrated holy relic, the Shroud of Turin.

Could this linen cloth, as believers think, have wrapped the body of the crucified Jesus Christ at the moment he rose from the grave?

Take your pick. The shroud is either:

A) Astonishing physical evidence of the Easter miracle;

B) Fascinating medieval folk art; or,

C) A fabulous fraud.

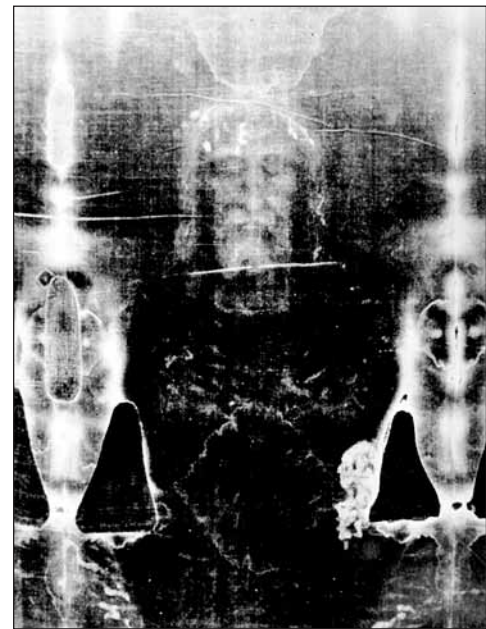
Don't expect any help from the Roman Catholic Church as you decide. The Vatican remains neutral on this popular puzzle.

Olympics tourists might stroll to the Piazza San Giovanni and the cathedral where the more than 14-foot-long shroud is encased in a huge, climate-controlled steel box under bulletproof glass.

But none will see the storied and closely guarded relic. The next display is scheduled 19 years hence, and Turin's Cardinal Severino Poletto barred even private viewings for dignitaries at the games.

Fascination with the shroud has spread beyond Roman Catholics to secular scientists and even some evangelical Protestants. There are some 28 organizations of devotees in the United States alone, five in Italy and 10 elsewhere.

The shroud's mystique stems from its sepia image of a wounded, wiry, bearded man. The faint picture is formed by discoloration of the outer layer of the fibers. Scientists have



AP PHOTO
The Shroud of Turin is revered by some as the burial cloth of Jesus Christ.

reached no agreement on how hoaxers could have produced this figure.

Other uncanny aspects: Pollen embedded in the cloth came from plant species found only in Turkey and the Holy Land. Blood stains seen on the cloth contain chemicals from human blood and weren't painted on. The catch is that the stains are red, but old blood turns black.

The shroud's existence can be traced back only to 1357 when it went on display in Lirey, France. It was controversial even then. A bishop declared the exhibit a fraud and a subsequent bishop warned the pope in 1389 that the shroud was a product of human handcraft.

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