



**2019 WINTER DEAFLYMPICS**  
 VALTELLINA-VALCHIAVENNA  
 DECEMBER 12-21 2019

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# US DEAFLYMPICS DAILY NEWSLETTER

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S. DEAFLYMPIC TEAM AT THE 19TH WINTER DEAFLYMPICS

VOL. 1 NO. 7

DECEMBER 19, 2019

## Double the Gold!

Weibert and Esson win the Snowboard Slopestyle



U.S. snowboard gold medalists Sean Esson, right, and Lauren Weibert won the slopestyle events during the 19th Winter Deaflympics on Wednesday, Dec 18, 2019 in Chiesa In Valmalenco, Sondrio, Italy. (Photo: Hugh Carey)

### USA MEDAL TOTALS



### MEDAL TABLE

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	T
UNITED STATES	2	0	0	2
RUSSIA	15	14	13	42
UKRAINE	3	3	3	9
ITALY	5	0	2	7
CZECH REPUBLIC	2	4	1	7
FRANCE	0	3	2	5
AUSTRIA	0	1	4	5

### TODAY'S EVENTS

#### CHESS

9:00 USA vs Mongolia

#### SNOWBOARDING

11:00 Big Air  
 Women: Benedict Mowl, Weibert, Wheatcroft  
 Men: Esson

#### CHESS

15:00 USA vs TBA  
 (Depending on morning results)

### WEATHER REPORT

#### CHIAVENNA

Rain High 49 Low 43

#### CHIESA IN VALMALENCO

Rain & Snow High 40 Low 36

### FAST FUN FACT

The first National Association for the Deaf (NAD) President, George W. Veditz won the National Deaf Chess Championship in 1915.

Stacy Nowak and Hugh Carey

CHIESA IN VALMALENCO---It took six long days, but the American medal drought has ended, courtesy of the USA Deaf Snowboarding team.

The squad has been the darling of the USA delegation here in Italy, ever since flagbearer Lauren Weibert and her crew led the United States into the Opening Ceremony, dancing and laughing their way into the venue in Sondrio. Their infectious energy and spirit flowed freely throughout their stay in Santa Caterina, and stuck with them as they moved on to Chiesa in Valmalenco.

Everything came together when the Snowboarding Slopestyle competition began. It was time to show the world what American snowboarding was made of.

Weibert kicked off the competition by scoring 81 points on her first run, sending her to top of the leaderboard. She never relinquished that lead. Lauren Benedict Mowl was next. Despite a seriously injured shoulder, she refused to give up. Her best run gave her 46.66 points. She was the picture of grace and positivity. Hannah Wheatcroft showed off some major hang time in the air, scoring 51.66 points

on her first run. Sean Esson put on a show for his eager fans, who waited in anticipation. He scored 88.33 points on his second run, good enough to rocket him onto the top of the leaderboard. All four Americans finished all three of their runs—there was no backing out or quitting. Not on their watch, no way.

As they waited for the final results, Weibert walked around, hugging other athletes with the American flag draped around her shoulders, while Esson sat, clearly nervous, with his face in his hands. When the results were finally announced, the USA athletes and fans erupted in shouts and celebrations loud enough to shut down USA Team Coordinator Liza Offreda's hearing aid. Esson was overcome with emotion. When things calmed down and he was finally able to reach his wife and daughter on FaceTime, he broke down in tears of joy. He had finally done it. Weibert kept thanking everyone for their support and love.

USA Deaf Snowboarding Coach Jeff Pollock looked around, took a deep breath, and said—"We are family." There was no question. USA Deaf Snowboarding had become a family in Italy.



USA Deaf Curling takes on Hungary during the 19th Winter Deaflympics on Wednesday Dec 18, 2019 in Madesimo, Italy. (Photo: Amelia Hamilton)

## *Curling Bows Out*

Stacy Nowak

MADESIMO---USA Deaf Curling lost to Hungary yesterday morning, 4-9. The loss signaled the end of their 2019 Winter Deaflympics run. Even if they had won, they would have been eliminated from contention because Ukraine defeated Korea, ruining the USA's chances.

The USA kicked off play with the first point at #1 End. Hungary took two points at End #2. As the game went on, Hungary proved to be hungrier, wrapping up the game, 4-9.

One single game made the difference between an 4th and 8th place finish. Regardless of their overall 5-6 record, the Americans will depart Italy with 11 international games under their American flag belts.

## *Bell makes us Well!*

Stacy Nowak

CHIESA IN VALMALENCO---Ilana Bell is a true dark horse for the United States here in Italy. Serving as the athletic trainer for Team USA, she has come to the rescue of our athletes' bodies day in and day out. Cherished by the American athletes, she goes above and beyond her role—hosting wellness clinics, talking nutrition and providing advice and suggestions. Athletes know they can ask her for anything, and she always says yes with a warm smile. Bell specializes in assisting with recovery, and is an expert masseur, focusing on relaxation techniques. She even made snowboarder Eric Cohen fall asleep—he was practically drooling on the bed. Her magic hands help athletes on the mend and helps them to bounce back quicker, pushing them toward the ultimate goal of Deaflympic Gold. Currently in her 5th year as Head Athletic Trainer at the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD), Ilana coaches ice skating and plays ice hockey for fun. Team USA is fortunate and grateful for Ilana, and thankful for all she does for our athletes.



Anders Wollan and his son Jake share a moment--in this picture, Anders is telling Jake how proud he is of him on Wednesday Dec 18, 2019 in Santa Caterina, Italy. (Photo: Danny Lacey)

## *Skiing Their Way Home*

Stacy Nowak and Danny Lacey

SANTA CATERINA--- USA Deaf Skiing closed out their 2019 Winter Deaflympics campaign in the Slalom event. The trio of American rookies took to the Santa Caterina mountains one last time in their Deaflympics debuts. Witt Williams led the USA with a 15th place finish—timing in at 1'44'05, 12 seconds behind the Skiing King of the 2019 Winter Deaflympic, Giacomo Pierbon, who hauled in 6 golds. Artem Novoselov finished in 26th place with a total time of 2'03.16. Jakob Wollan did not finish (DNF).

All three skiers had an incredible experience here in Italy, and are ready to return home to begin training for the next Winter Deaflympics.

## YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

### CURLING

USA lost to Hungary, 4-9

### ALPINE SKIING

Williams:

15th place

First run - 52.25

Second run - 51.80

Total - 1'44.05

Novoselov:

26th place

First run - 1'00.64

Second run 1'02.52

Total - 2'03.16

Wollan: DNF

### SNOWBOARDING

Weibert:

1st place - Women

**First run - 81**

Second run - 78

Third run - 63

Wheatcroft:

5th place

**First run - 51.66**

Second run - 16.33

Third run - 36.33

Benedict Mowl:

6th place

First run - 42.00

Second run - 26.33

**Third run - 46.66**

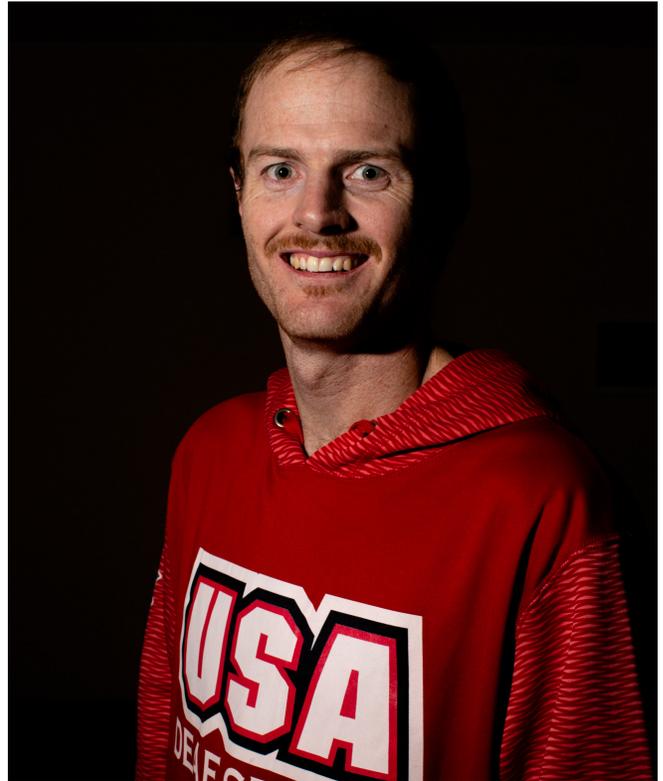
Esson:

1st place - Men

First run - 80.33

**Second run - 88.33**

Third run - 36.66



## ATHLETE OF THE DAY

Every day, USADSF celebrates a USA Deaflympic star. For December 18, the star is snowboarder Sean Esson, whose dream of Deaflympic gold came true at long last when he captured the Snowboarding Slopestyle Gold medal yesterday morning. Sean has two Deaflympic medals in his collection already—a silver and a bronze, but yesterday's Gold medal led to a barrage of emotions and tears—all the years of dedication, training and commitment to his craft finally came to fruition. A resident of Auburn, California, Sean is the proud father of a 26-month old daughter and is eagerly awaiting the birth of his second child in three months. He enjoys competing with international elite deaf riders, and is beloved by his own snowboarding team, and by Team USA. Keep on shredding, Sean!



From top to bottom, Hannah Wheatcroft, Sean Esson, Lauren Weibert, and Lauren Benedict Mowl. (Photos: Hugh Carey)

Eric Cohen, left, and Lauren Benedict-Mowl, right, embrace Sean Esson during the medal ceremony after the slopestyle event at the 19th Winter Deaflympics on Wednesday Dec 18, 2019 in Chiesa in Valmalenco, Sondrio, Italy. (Photo: Hugh Carey)