

United States has outside chances for medals

Innsbruck — The glamor of the Winter Olympics are pine skiing, figure skating and ski jumping, and Americans would be filling a big upset to win many medals in any of these events. Generally underfinanced and, as some claim, unappreciated, U.S. teams come closer to competing for the fun of it, which is what these games are supposed to be about.

Uncle Sam's biggest hope in the Big Three events is figure skater Dorothy Hamill, 19, of Riverside, Conn., who could very well win a silver medal in figure skating and a gold if she can overcome Dianne de Leeuw, who lives in Los Angeles but skates for The Netherlands because she has dual citizenship.

Here is a rundown on the Winter Olympics' events and favorites:

Cup leader, in the slalom. For the women, it's Miss Nadig in the downhill and Miss Morerod in both slalom events. Cindy Nelson of Lutsen, Minn., has an outside chance in the slalom and could be in the top 10 in the downhill.

FIGURE SKATING

Miss de Leeuw must be considered a strong favorite. If Miss Hamill can take it, she will follow American

gold medalists Tenley Albright, Carol Heiss and Peggy Fleming. U.S. men's hopes are slim. The favorite is John Curry of Britain, who lives in New York and trains in Denver. Russia's Vladimir Kovalev, Toller Cranston of Canada, and East Germany's Jan Hoffman are strong contenders.

The Russians and East Germans should dominate the pairs, the Russians and British should win in the dance.

Colleen O'Connor and Jim Mills of

Colorado Springs are given a chance for a bronze medal in the dance. Tai Babilonia, 15, and Randy Gardner, 17, of Los Angeles, carry U.S. hopes in the pairs, where the Soviet team of Aleksandr Zaitsev-Irina Rodnina is overwhelmingly favored.

SKI JUMPING

The Austrians and East Germans are favored, with no American even in contention. Surprisingly, Austria's 17-year-old whiz, Toni Innauer, who dominated the jumping contests earlier this season, is not expected to place high. The youthful Austrian has done poorly in training so far and may not even make the Austrian four-man team.

ALPINE SKIING

There are only five persons who have won more than two World Cup races so far. Austria's Franz Klammer won four downhills, Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark won four slaloms, Switzerland's Lise-Marie Morerod won three slaloms and three giant slaloms, Italy's Gustav Thoeni won two giant slaloms, and West Germany's Rosi Mittermaier won one slalom but leads the World Cup standings with consistently high placings.

Stenmark is the men's World Cup leader.

The favorites are Klammer in the men's downhill; Thoeni in the giant slalom; Stenmark, the men's World

favorites are Austria's Karl Schnabl, Willy Puerstl, Rudi Wanner and Reinhold Bachled; East Germany's Jochen Danneberg, Hans Georg Aschenbach and Henry

Glass; Norway's Johan Saetre; Poland's Stanislaw Bobak; Czechoslovakia's Jindrich Balcak; Switzerland's Walter Steiner and Hans Schmid, and West Germany's Alfred Grosche.

NORDIC SKIING

The Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, the Soviet Union and East Germany are expected to dominate the men's competition. For women, it will be Finland, East Germany and Russia.

Americans in contention are Bill Koch, 20, of Guilford, Vt.; Martha Rockwell, 31, of West Lebanon, N.H.; and Jana Hlavaty, 32, of Chicago.

SPEED SKATING

The Americans have their best chance in this event with Sheila Young and Leah Poulos in the 500-, 1,000- and 1,500-meter events, and Peter Mueller in the men's 1,000 and 1,500 meters and Dan Carroll in the 5,000 and 10,000.

Miss Young set a world record in the 500 in Davos, Switzerland, last weekend, leaving Soviet ace Tajana Averina with records only in the 1,000 and 1,500.

Norwegian Sten Stenseh could win gold medals in both the men's 5,000 and 10,000. Russian Evgeni Kulikov is the world record holder at 500 meters with 37 seconds which is not likely to be bettered this year.

ICE HOCKEY

The Soviets are an overwhelming favorite after returning from the United States with a 5-2-1 record against National Hockey League

competition. The strong Russian Spartak team will contribute players to the Russian Army and Moscow Wings, who played in the North American series.

Czechoslovakia should be in the finals with the Russians, and the American team was considered to have an outside chance before 9-3 and 9-2 losses to Finland last week. However, the Americans scored a convincing 8-4 victory over Yugoslavia in the pre-Olympic tournament in Innsbruck and have some chance at a bronze medal.

LUGE

In this 100-mile-per-hour event in which the racer lies on his back on a tiny sled, East Germany, Sweden and Norway are expected to excel. The Americans are not in contention.

BIATHLON

In this strange event, cross-country skiing with four pauses for target shooting, the Finns, Russians and East Germans are favored. No Americans are expected to place.

BOBSLED

The East Germans raised eyebrows this week with record-shattering performances in the two-man event and have become favorites along with the West Germans, who set a record Tuesday. Others are the Swiss, Austrians, and Italians.

The refrigerated track has come under considerable criticism for being too easy or too short.

In this 90-mile-per-hour event, an American two-man crew led by Jim Morgan has an outside chance.

Innsbruck appears ready to handle Olympic Games

Innsbruck — The Simple Games are here.

Nestled beneath beautiful Tyrolean Alps, the people of Innsbruck and Austria succeeded today in staging the Olympics without spending a billion dollars, without failing to complete their facilities and without any internal hassle. The spectre of unprecedented security — 5,000 police and soldiers — as a reminder of the threat of terrorist attack. Otherwise, this citadel winter sport was picturesque and fun as it began a 12-day festival of international competition on snow and ice.

The XII Winter Games, expected to be dominated by Russia and East Germany and Austria's seasoned skiers, open today with the centuries-old tradition of the Olympic flame being carried into a colorful, snow-covered stadium.

The ceremony at the base of the 100-meter ski-jump slope on towering Engelberg Mountain marked the opening of competition among 1,040 athletes representing the hopes of 37 nations.

American hopes for medals were limited to a few events, with speed skaters Sheila Young and Leah Poulos and figure skater Dorothy Hamill appearing to have the best opportunities. Each of them could in the treasured gold that will elude the United States here.

Two torches carried into the stadium to light two flame towers signify both these Winter Games and the ones that were held here in 1964. The designated torch bearers: Austrian Josef Feistmantl, who won a gold medal in 1964, and Christl Haas, gold medalist in the women's downhill the same year.

Cindy Nelson, 20, a skier from Lutsen, Minn., who carries America's slim medal hopes in Alpine skiing, was nominated to carry the United States' colors into the stadium.

The only actual athletic events scheduled yesterday were the first in the single-seat luge event and compulsory competition in ice dancing. Men's downhill skiing trials continued.

Today's schedule called for a full slate of Olympic events.

American, Russian and Finnish key teams won preliminary games Tuesday to qualify for Olympic medal competition. The Soviet Union and the United States meet in first-round game Friday in the double-elimination tournament and the Russians are heavily favored.

The United States beat Yugoslavia 4 with Steve Sertich, 20, a forward from Virginia, Minn., scoring three third period goals.

The mighty Russians, who had a 5-2-1 record against National Hockey League teams last month, walloped Austria 16-3. Finland beat Japan 11-2, with Matti Rautiainen scoring five goals, and Czechoslovakia, Poland and West Germany won preliminary tournament games Monday.

By winning preliminary games, these six teams earned the right to compete for the gold, silver and bronze medals when the Olympic hockey tournament begins Friday. Losers in the pre-Olympic meet go into a consolation tournament in which they are not eligible for medals.

In other first-round medal division games Friday, West Germany plays Poland and Czechoslovakia meets Finland. The Czechs are favored to win the silver medal and the United States is considered to have an outside chance at the bronze, although it lost twice to Finland last week.

The Austrian ski team, expected to dominate the skiing events, was selected Tuesday and 17-year-old Anton Steiner made it for the downhill despite a fall in practice Tuesday.

Steiner broke the course record, previously held by teammate Franz Klammer, by 6.5 seconds Monday but had a poor time in one run Tuesday.

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