

# Sports

## Swiss skier wins 1st Alpine gold medal

CALGARY, Alberta (AP) — Swiss skier Pirmin Zurbriggen won the first Alpine medal of the Winter Olympics Monday, using the men's downhill as a first step in his quest for an unprecedented five gold medals in skiing.

Zurbriggen won the race by a half-second over teammate Peter Mueller in a battle of past and present on the slopes, while preventing an Eastern European sweep of medals during the third day of the Games.

"It was my biggest goal, and I'm so happy," Zurbriggen said. "It was a great feeling."

Alexei Prokourorov of the Soviet Union won the men's 30-kilometer cross-country skiing race, and Jens Mueller of East Germany won the men's luge in the day's two other medal events.

The Soviet Union leads the medal standings with five — two gold, two silver and one bronze. East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Finland and Switzerland are tied with two apiece. Both of East Germany's medals are gold.

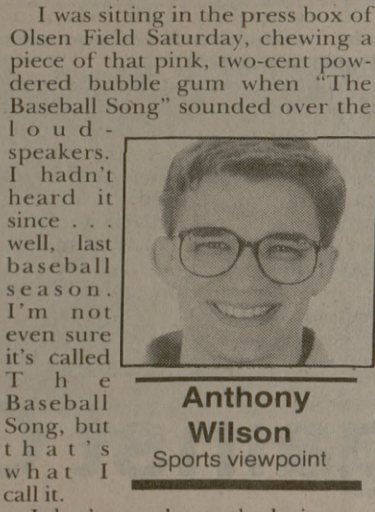
The United States has yet to win a medal, but that could change Tuesday night in pairs figure skating, where American couples stood third and fourth after the short program.

In hockey, the United States, a big winner against Austria in its first match, took on Czechoslovakia, a first-round upset victim to West Germany, as the B Pool teams got back into action. Two other matches had Norway against West Germany and the Soviet Union against Austria.

Mueller, 30, the best downhiller in the world in 1979 and 1980 and a silver medalist at the 1984 Sarajevo Games, started first on Mount Allan, where the downhill was postponed from Sunday because of winds that reached 98 mph.

Skiing in calmer winds with a little fresh snow on the course, Mueller finished in 2:00.14. Judging by prac-

## No one does it quite like 'The Ueck'



Anthony Wilson  
Sports viewpoint

I was sitting in the press box of Olsen Field Saturday, chewing a piece of that pink, two-cent powdered bubble gum when "The Baseball Song" sounded over the loudspeakers. I hadn't heard it since... well, last baseball season. I'm not even sure it's called "The Baseball Song," but that's what I call it.

I don't even know the lyrics except for the last line: "Will-eeee, Mickey and the Duke."

What's that? That's not how the song goes? You say it's "Will-eeee, Mickey and the Duke" — as in Hall of Famer Duke Snider. Are you sure? I thought for sure the song was paying homage to the self-proclaimed Mr. Baseball — Bob Uecker.

Uecker was the type of baseball talent who comes around only once in a lifetime — a blessing managers can count every spring training.

To be blunt, Uecker stunk. He was the kind of player who wouldn't have been allowed to carry Willie Mays' jockstrap. The Ueck lowered mediocrity to new depths. But unlike most perpetual losers, Uecker made the most of his ineptness and is now turning a hefty buck because of it.

The Ueck's most impressive vehicle these days is the Miller Lite beer commercials in which he stars. Each spot always begins with Uecker expounding on the benefits of his celebrity status. Each ends with Uecker wiping a proverbial pie off his face.

Case in point:  
• Before entering a bar, Uecker says how great it is to be an ex-major leaguer because the fans really look up to you and are always buying you free beer. Meanwhile, the patrons of the bar are locking him out.

• Uecker sits down at a ballgame. An usher tells him he's in the wrong seat and to follow him. Uecker boasts, "I must be in the front rowwwww!" (A phrase that continues to retain its popularity.) Ueck ends up sitting in the left field corner of the upper deck. He unsuccessfully tries to save face by saying, "Great seats, ay, buddy!"

• After watching a guy do a perfect impersonation of him

complete with loud, plaid sports jacket and obnoxious behavior, Uecker huffs, "Amateur!" in disgust.

• In the latest ad, Uecker wins Olympic gold medals in the downhill slalom (while flashing a cheesy grin), the ski jump (while nonchalantly checking his nails) and hockey (while being swarmed by admiring teammates as he coolly winks at the camera). He wakes up from his daydream just in time to watch the real Olympics.

Uecker then parlayed his fame into his own television series, "Mr. Belvedere." The only character Uecker plays really well is Uecker and since that isn't the character he plays, the show is sort of reminiscent of his playing days. However, I do remember one classic line. Uecker's character's teenage son walked through the living room carrying a six pack of beer and said, "Hey Dad, want a brewski?"

An angered Uecker replied, "No, son. Want a pop in the eyes-ki?"

Most of Uecker's faithful followers don't realize that he is also a respected play-by-play announcer for the Milwaukee Brewers.

ice times, it didn't look like it would hold up, but it did — until Zurbriggen came down, 15th in the starting order.

Zurbriggen had better times at every interval — combining his giant slalom genius on the twisting upper section of the course with his deftness in downhill on the flat lower section — to finish in 1:59.63.

Franck Piccard, who skied right behind Zurbriggen, won the bronze medal in 2:01.24, becoming France's first Alpine medal-winner since Killy. The best the United States could do was 26th by 19-year-old A.J. Kitt of Rochester, N.Y., who fin-

ished in 2:04.94. Jeff Olson of Bozeman, Mont., was 28th in 2:05.09.

Four years ago at Sarajevo, the Soviets went 1-2 in the 30-kilometer cross-country race with Nikolai Zimyatov and Aleksandr Zavalov, the famed "Z Boys." In a postscript to '84, the Soviets did it in 1988 with the "P.S. Boys," Prokourorov and Smirnov.

Prokourorov won in 1:24:26.3, followed by teammate Vladimir Smirnov, the early leader who finished finished 8.8 seconds back. Vegard Ulvang of Norway won the bronze in 1:25:11.6.

Gunde Sván of Sweden, winner of

two gold, a silver and a bronze in 1984, finished 10th, more than three minutes behind Prokourorov.

At the bob and luge run, Mueller said he overcame a sleepless night to give the East Germans their second gold medal, capturing the luge with an aggregate time of 3:05.548 over four runs. Mueller set a course record in the first of two runs Sunday and held the lead all the way.

"I was so excited last night I got less than six hours' sleep," Mueller said.

Georg Hackl of West Germany, who beat Mueller in the European championships last month, won the

silver in 3:05.916, and Soviet Iouri Khartchenko won the bronze in 3:06.274.

Frank Masley of Newark, Del., finished in 3:07.943, falling from 10th to 12th after the wind disrupted his fourth run.

In figure skating, the Soviet pair of Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov took the lead after Sunday's short program, followed by 1984 Olympic gold medalists Elana Valova and Oleg Vasiliev.

Jill Watson and Peter Oppegard, three-time U.S. champions, were third, followed by Wachsmann and Waggoner.

## Rockets face Sampson, G.S. in The Summit

HOUSTON (AP) — Former Houston Twin Tower Ralph Sampson faces his former Rockets teammates in The Summit Tuesday for the first time since being traded to Golden State on Dec. 12.

The Rockets defeated the Warriors 120-113 Jan. 7 at Oakland in the first meeting after the trade that brought Sleepy Floyd and Joe Barry Carroll to the Rockets.

It will be the Houston fans' first opportunity to see Sampson as a Warrior. And the Warriors will be facing the Rockets at a season high.

The Rockets have won six of their last seven games, including a solid victory over Boston in The Summit and a road victory at Portland Sunday night.

The Rockets start the game with a 14-6 record for the month, third best in the NBA behind Los Angeles and Boston.

"A year ago, we didn't have the maturity or the personnel to win a game like this," Houston Coach Bill Fitch said following Sunday's 115-103 victory over the Blazers.

"Last year, when they made that last run, we would have given in to it."

The Blazers rallied in the closing minutes for a 96-95 lead but the Rockets refused to fold.

"We've got a lot of veteran players, guys who know how to win," reserve Purvis Short said. "We kept our composure. We never panicked."

The win boosted the Rockets to a 28-18 record, putting them 10 games over .500 for the first time this season.

Houston's only loss in its last seven games came at Seattle, 120-115, on Thursday night. The Rockets missed 17 free throws, four in the final 2:58 of the game.

"Right now, we feel like we're playing well enough to beat anybody," forward Jim Petersen said.

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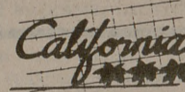
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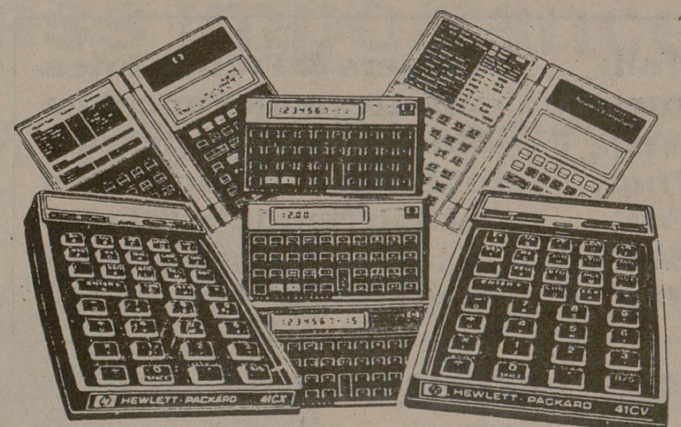
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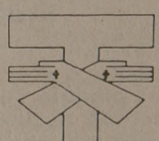


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