

1992 WINTER OLYMPICS

In 1986, the International Olympic Committee voted to separate the Summer and Winter Games, placing them in alternating even-numbered years, starting in 1994. The 1992 Winter Olympics were the last to be staged in the same year as the Summer Olympics.

Albertville, France was the location chosen for the 1992 Winter Games, which hosted 64 countries and 1,801 athletes from Feb. 8 to Feb. 23. This was the first time the Winter Olympics and Winter Paralympics were held at the same site. Competition for hosting the 1992 Games included Anchorage, Alaska; Berchtesgaden, Germany; Sofia, Bulgaria; and Lillehammer, Norway.

Due to the collapse of the U.S.S.R., there were a number of new nations that participated, including Croatia, Slovenia, and six former Soviet Republics that made up the Unified Team. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania all had their own teams. Germany competed as a



Figure 1 Donna Weinbrecht at the 1992 Winter Olympics with her gold medal, earned in the women's mogul freestyle event

unified team for the first time since 1936. Other countries new to the Winter Olympics were Algeria, Bermuda, Brazil, Honduras, Ireland, and Swaziland.

Freestyle skiing moguls, short track speed skating, and women's biathlon were added as medal disciplines, bringing the total number of events to 57, in seven sports. Ski jumper Toni Nieminen from Finland became the youngest male gold medalist in the Winter Games at age 16. Anneliese Coberger of New Zealand won the Southern Hemisphere's first Winter Olympic's medal when she placed second in the women's slalom.

The U.S. brought home 11 medals, which put them in fifth place in the medal tally. Cathy Turner won gold in the women's 500-meter short track speed skate, as did Bonnie Blair in both the women's 500-meter and 1,000-meter speed skate events. Kristi

Yamaguchi was awarded gold for her performance in the ladies singles figure skate, while Nancy Kerrigan was given bronze, and Paul Wylie earned silver in the men's singles figure skate. Another silver medal was won by the women's 3,000-meter short track speed skate relay team, comprised of Darcie Dohnal, Amy Peterson, Cathy Turner, and Nikki Ziegelmeyer.

The rest of the medals were earned in ski events. Donna Weinbrecht won the women's mogul freestyle ski race. Hilary Lindh and Diann Roffe both took silver medals in the women's downhill and giant slalom contests, respectively. Nelson Carmichael won a bronze medal for the men's team in the mogul freestyle ski event.

After moving from New York to Steamboat Springs at age 11, Nelson Carmichael joined the Steamboat Springs Winter Sports Club. He first began alpine racing, then freestyle – specifically moguls. In

Figure 2 Nelson Carmichael shown during Sprint Bumps & Jumps at Breckenridge, CO in 1996. Photo credit: Nathan Billow.

1983, Carmichael made the U.S. Development Team and competed nationally, and a year later, made the U.S. Ski Team and competed on the World Cup tour for the next nine years. He won the overall title twice (in 1988 and 1989) and collected a dozen victories.

Carmichael won six National Championships, was a two-time Olympian in 1988 and 1992, and Colorado's first Olympic moguls medalist. In 1999 he founded 1080 Degrees, Inc, a ski and snowboard soft goods company and was inducted into the Colorado Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2004. Currently, Carmichael is involved with promotional efforts for the Steamboat Ski area and other companies.



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To adjust to the new Olympic schedule, Lillehammer, Norway hosted the Winter Games from Feb. 12 to Feb. 27, 1994. Sixty-seven nations brought 1,737 athletes to partake in six sports and 61 events.

These were the first Winter Games following an implementation of stricter qualifying standards, which prevented some developing countries from competing without meeting minimum standards. Eleven "mostly warm-weather" nations signed up to participate but their athletes did not qualify.

A heavy emphasis on environmental respect was present at these Olympics, which were baptized the "White-Green Games." Numerous environmental projects were undertaken, including edible plates, unbleached paper for all printed material, and a covered stadium that boasted a heat-retrieval system. All facilities were designed to maximize current and long-term use.

In memory of Sarajevo, at the time in the midst of a war, the President of the International Olympic Committee appealed to the world with an emotive call: "Our message is stronger than ever: Please stop the fighting. Stop the killing. Drop your guns." Although the Lillehammer Games were held during the Bosnian War, the Bosnia and Herzegovina 4-man bobsled team was comprised of a Croatian, 2 Bosnians, and a Serbian, an example of true Olympic spirit.

The U.S. accumulated 13 medals – consisting of six gold, five silver, and two bronze – from these Winter Games and placed fifth in the medal tally. Cathy Turner won gold in the women's 500-meter short track speed skate; Dan Jansen won gold in the men's 10,000-meter speed skate; and Bonnie Blair earned two gold medals in the women's 500- and 1,000-meter speed skate events. The other two gold medals were given to Tommy Moe in the men's downhill, and Diann Roffe-Steinrotter in the women's super-G.

Nancy Kerrigan was awarded silver for the ladies singles figure skate, despite a scandal in which fellow figure skater Tonya Harding's ex-husband hired someone to club Kerrigan in the knee one month prior to the Winter Games. Harding was subsequently banned from competitive figure skating for life.

Another silver medal was given to the men's 500-meter relay short track speed skate. Both Picabo Street and Liz McIntyre won silver in the women's downhill and freestyle moguls, respectively, as did Tommy Moe in the men's super-G. Finally, Amy Peterson finished third in the women's 500-meter short track speed skate, as did the women's 3,000-meter relay short track speed skate team.



Figure 3 1994 U.S. Olympic Freestyle Team

Liz McIntyre, who competed on the U.S. Ski Team from 1986 to 1998, has acquired four podium finishes at World Cup events, as well as 18 top-10 finishes. She placed sixth in the freestyle moguls at the 1992 Olympics, second in 1994, and 8th in 1998. After retiring from competition in 1998, McIntyre was the U.S. moguls coach until 2006. She helped to coach Olympic medalists Shannon Bahrke, Toby Dawson, and Travis Mayer and led many freestylers into a new era, when inverted maneuvers were made legal in competition. McIntyre is currently a resident of Winter Park, Colorado.

1998 WINTER OLYMPICS

The Winter Games returned to Japan after 26 years when Nagano won the bid to host the Olympics from Feb. 7 to Feb. 22, 1998. This competition held 68 events in seven sports, and 72 nations and 2,176 athletes arrived to participate. Azerbaijan, Kenya, Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, and Venezuela all joined for the first time.

Schoolchildren were offered a 50% discount on regular Olympic tickets, and all staff uniforms were made from fully recyclable materials, keeping with the environmental concern Lillehammer began in 1994.

Women's ice hockey and snowboarding (halfpipe and giant slalom) debuted as new contested sports, and curling for men and women returned as official events after being a demonstration since 1924.

Additionally, men's ice hockey was open to all professionals for the first time. NHL players were finally able to compete due to a three-week suspension of the NHL season.

Hermann Maier of Austria fell in the downhill race but came back to win the super-G and giant slalom events. Cross-country skier Bjørn Dæhlie of Norway won three gold medals in Nordic events, and became the first Winter Olympian to earn eight career gold and 12 total medals.

With 13 medals (six gold, three silver, and four bronze), the U.S. was able to place 5th in the medal tally. At age 15, Tara Lipinski won the ladies singles figure skate event to become the youngest champion in an individual event in Olympic history. The women's ice hockey team went undefeated, claiming the gold medal.

Americans dominated in the skiing freestyle contests: Eric Bergoust won the men's aerials, Jonny Moseley won the men's moguls, and Nikki Stone won the women's aerials. Picabo Street added another gold medal in the women's super-G.

Michelle Kwan placed second to Lipinski in the ladies singles figure skate. Chris Witty won silver in the women's 1,000-meter speed skate and bronze in the 1,500-meter event. The U.S. placed second and third in the doubles luge: Gordon Sheen and Chris Thorpe won silver, while Mark Grimmette and Brian Martin took bronze.

The final two bronze medals were received in the new snowboarding event. Ross Powers placed third in the men's halfpipe, as did Shannon Dunn-Downing in the women's halfpipe.

COLORADO CONNECTION

As the first woman to win a snowboarding medal, bronze at the 1998 Olympics, Shannon Dunn-Downing has been one of the most influential women boarders. She began snowboarding in 1988 at Steamboat Springs, and started competing in the early 90's.

After taking gold at the first X-Games in 1997, again in 2001, and placing fifth at the 2002 Olympics, Dunn-Downing is known for being the first woman to land several difficult halfpipe tricks in competition, including a frontside 540 in 1991, backside 540 in 1994, McTwist in 1994, frontside 720 in 1995, and frontside rodeo 720 in 2001. A graduate of the University of Colorado, she is a co-founder of Boarding for Breast Cancer and retired from competition in the mid-2000's to focus on her husband and two sons.