

What To Watch From Pyeongchang — Day 3

BY MAGAN CRANE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — Don't let the Monday blues get you down — the Olympic Games are going strong in Pyeongchang. Here are some things to watch for to take your mind off the weekday grind. All times Eastern:

SNOWBOARDING

The women will hit the halfpipe at 8 p.m. with the gold medal final run scheduled for 9 p.m. U.S. women have never swept a Winter Games event, but they sure look strong in this one. The heavy favorite is Korean-American Chloe Kim, who couldn't compete in Sochi because she was too young. Just 17, she is the only X Games athlete to win three gold medals before the age of 16. Teammate Maddie Mastro also is only 17. They will be joined by veteran Kelly Clark, who is the most decorated Olympic snowboarder ever. At 34, she is competing in her fifth games. Watch for the way the riders execute tricks, including rotations and grabs, while they propel themselves up off the 22-foot-high halfpipe wall. Judging is subjective, based on height, technique and degree of difficulty. There are six judges and the highest and lowest scores are dropped. Ranking is based on the highest score after two rides.

FREESTYLE SKIING

The men will hit the mogul hill looking for gold starting at 8:10 a.m. Mogul skiing is judged on style and skill as well as speed. Skiers use the bumps to make sharp turns

while keeping to a fall line. Watch for flips, grabs or rotations in their two jumps off the "air bumps" on the slope. Current world No. 1, Canada's Mikael Kingsbury, finished first in qualifiers. American Troy Murphy is in the medal hunt, coming in fourth in qualifying.

SPEEDSKATING

The women's 1,500-meter race is at 7:30 a.m. The dominant Dutch painted the podium orange and swept the 3,000 on Sunday, but there are other contenders at the shorter distances, especially Japan's Miho Takagi. Watch for the way the skaters kick their skates out at the finish. Times are marked when their skates, not their bodies, cross the line, so they push their feet forward instead of their chests like a sprinter would.

SKI JUMPING

Women will take to the normal hill with the final round starting at 8:45 a.m. Jumpers are scored on two rounds and going the farthest isn't enough — there are also points awarded for style.

Women's ski jumping became an Olympic sport four years ago in Sochi when American Sarah Hendrickson fought back from injury to get up onto the hill. She has endured four knee surgeries since then, but still hopes to contend.

In windy Pyeongchang, watch for points being added or deducted based on the wind. It is so windy on the ski jump hill that organizers put up giant netting at the back and side of the venue to cut it down. Ski jumpers want wind velocity below three meters per second, but the winds here are often three times that.

BIATHLON

Both the men and women will race for medals in the pursuits. The women race at 5:10 a.m. and the men at 7 a.m. Pursuit begins with staggered start times, which are based on the results from earlier sprint races. After stunning upsets in the men's race on Sunday, overall gold medal favorite Martin Fourcade will start the race 24 seconds behind the sprint winner.

Johannes Boe, who is ranked No. 2 in the world, had a terrible night so he will start the race 1 minute, 24 seconds back, essentially putting him out of medal contention. Racers shoot four times during the race, twice from the ground and twice standing. They take five shots per round. Watch for skiers to hit the 150-meter penalty loop if they miss a shot.

CURLING

The first-ever medal in mixed doubles will be awarded after the 7 p.m. bronze medal match.

ALPINE SKIING

Alpine fans may finally get a taste of Olympic racing when the men hit the hill for the downhill portion of the combined starting at 9:30 p.m. Medals in that event will be awarded after the slalom portion, which is set to start at 3 a.m. Tuesday.

Unfortunately for U.S. fans, star Mikaela Shiffrin and the rest of the women were prevented from racing Monday because of high winds. The giant slalom has been rescheduled for Thursday. Shiffrin will now make her Pyeongchang debut on Wednesday in the slalom, in which she is the defending Olympic champion.

Red Alert: Gerard Wins United States' 1st Gold Of Games

BY DENNIS WASZAK JR.
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea (AP) — A blustery morning wind had just about everyone scrambling in the men's slopestyle event. Except for Red Gerard, who kept his footing all the way to the podium.

Kicking off the second day of full events at the Pyeongchang Olympics, the 17-year-old snowboarder won the United States' first gold medal of the games.

"Everyone in the contest was worried about the wind and stuff," said Kyle Mack, Gerard's friend and Olympic roommate. "I kept telling him, 'Don't think about it. Do the run you know you have to do.'"

"He went out and put it down flawlessly."

Also Sunday, Dutch speedskater Sven Kramer broke his own Olympic record in the men's 5,000 meters to win his third straight medal in the event, Felix Loch missed his shot at a third straight luge title with a wobble on the last run and, in a biathlon stunner, Martin Fourcade and Johannes Thingnes Boe missed their targets and both missed out on medals.

Earlier, Simen Hegstad Krueger led a Norwegian sweep and won the men's 30-kilometer cross-country skiathlon — despite crashing on the first lap.

The men's downhill was postponed until Thursday because of strong winds. But other medals were scheduled to be awarded in the men's 10-kilometer sprint in biathlon, the ladies' moguls in freestyle skiing and men's luge singles.

Swirling winds blew from the bottom of the mountain during the slopestyle, and the 5-foot-5, 116-pound Gerard took advantage of the quick reflexes he honed while growing up just outside of Breckenridge, Colorado. He took a risk on the second-to-last jump by trying a 1080-degree jump off the quarterpipe side of the kicker instead of going straight through the jump and flying higher. Gerard then closed with a backside triple-cork 1440.

It all added up to a first-place score of 87.16 — and a gold medal.

"Just having fun snowboarding," Gerard said.

Canadian teammates Max Parrot (86.00) and Marc McMorris (85.20) took bronze and silver, respectively.

RECORD BREAKER

Kramer won the 5,000 in 6:09.76, besting the mark of 6:10.76, which he set in 2014 in Sochi.

He also became the first man to win three golds in the event, using a late kick to beat Canada's Ted-Jan Bloemen.

Kramer has a chance at winning two more golds in other events: the 10,000 next Thursday and the team pursuit.

NO LOCH IN THE LUGE

Loch's reign came to a sudden and shocking end, with David Gleirscher a surprise men's luge gold medalist and Chris Mazdzer giving USA Luge its first men's singles medal. Germany's Johannes Ludwig took third.

Gleirscher, who had never medaled in a World Cup singles race, finished his four runs in 3:10.702 for the gold, Austria's first in men's luge in 50 years.

Loch struggled in the final run and slipped all the way to fifth, ending his bid to become the second slider to win the event three consecutive times.

TARGETING BIATHLON

The 10-kilometer biathlon, expected to be a two-man race between Martin Fourcade and Johannes Thingnes Boe, sent shockwaves through the biathlon world.

Arnd Peiffer of Germany connected on all 10 of his targets to win gold, ahead of Michal Kreml of the Czech Republic and Dominik Windisch of Italy.

The top-ranked Fourcade missed three of five shots from the prone position, forcing him to do three penalty laps.

The Frenchman finished eighth overall. Thingnes Boe, a Norwegian ranked No. 2, missed three from the prone position and one from the standing position to finish a distant 31st.



Red Gerard, of the United States, jumps during the men's slopestyle final at Phoenix Snow Park at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea on Sunday.

MOGULS GOLD FOR FRANCE

Perrine Laffont gave France its first women's gold medal in the moguls in the 26-year history of the event, landing both her jumps without a bobble in the snow and cold.

The 19-year-old Laffont's score of 79.72 was more than two points better than 2014 gold medalist Justine Dufour-Lapointe of Canada, who had to settle for silver. Yulia Galysheva of Kazakhstan won bronze.

CRASH AND BURN — THE FIELD

An early crash couldn't keep Krueger from gold. His Norwegian teammates then helped complete a sweep in the cross-country ski race.

Krueger slipped when the mass start began and his right ski came out from under him, causing him to fall. Russian athletes Andrey Larkov and Denis Spitsov toppled over Krueger and the three ended

up at the rear of the field by the time they untangled.

Krueger stormed back, though, and took the lead with 5 kilometers remaining and powered his way to gold. Norwegian teammates Martin Johnsrud Sundby and Hans Christer Holund completed the 1-2-3 finish.

NOT SO FAST

The men's downhill was supposed to be the first race of the 11-event Alpine program, and it had been scheduled for Sunday. But race organizers ruled that it needed to be rescheduled three hours before it was supposed to start because the gondola lift used to carry teams and officials up the mountains couldn't operate.

The first race of the Alpine program will now be the women's giant slalom on Monday.

Keselowski Leads 1-2 Team Penske Sweep At Daytona

BY JENNA FRYER
AP AUTO RACING WRITER

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Brad Keselowski opened Speedweeks, before he turned a single lap, as the 7-1 favorite to win the Daytona 500.

Now that he has the first victory of the season, Keselowski is shaping up to be a safe bet.

Keselowski led a 1-2 Team Penske sweep Sunday in the exhibition The Clash at Daytona International Speedway. The race marks the opening of Speedweeks and is the first chance for teams to show their offseason work.

"I have never won anything here during Speedweeks and I feel like I have choked them away to be quite honest," Keselowski said in victory lane. "You need one to break through. Hopefully, this is

our breakthrough."

Indeed, Keselowski is one of the best restrictor-plate racers in NASCAR. Although he's a five-time winner at Talladega in Alabama, his lone victory at Daytona International Speedway was in the 2016 summer race.

When it comes to Speedweeks — The Clash, the Thursday twin qualifying races, and finally the season-opening Daytona 500 next Sunday — Keselowski always came up empty. His best finish in the Daytona 500 was third in 2013, and he finished fourth a year earlier. In his prior appearances in the all-star Clash, Keselowski finished inside the top-nine in four of his five races.

"It was a good day, a great start to Speedweeks, and now there's two more to go," Keselowski said. The 17-car field is set

by a draw and Keselowski started last. He had 75 laps to race his way to the front, which was easy enough for the three-car Penske contingent. Keselowski had the race in control as the Penske drivers closed in on the checkered flag.

He had a piece of garbage stuck to the front of his Ford, and that appeared to be his only challenge.

"I was worried about the (competitors) but the car was way overheating there at the end and I was more worried about it blowing up than anything else," he said.

Ryan Blaney pulled out of line from behind

Keselowski on the final lap in an attempt to beat his teammate, but he was left alone in the bottom lane and faded into traffic. Joey Logano didn't have enough help to mount a challenge on Keselowski and had to settle for second.

"It is fun when you are up there running and you don't know what is going to happen," Logano said. "The suspense keeps building as you are running single-file: three to go, two to go, here comes the white flag — when do you make the move? Do you make a move? Sometimes you make and it is never the right thing. "You are waiting to see

what everyone else is going to do and you are thinking about the type of people they are and what the possible moves are they will make. Then as soon as we hit the white flag Blaney was able to go to the bottom, I had to stay on top because I would have gotten passed."

Kyle Larson made contact with Jimmie Johnson on the final lap to trigger an accident that allowed Keselowski an easier route to victory lane.

Blaney faded to fourth, behind defending Daytona 500 winner Kurt Busch, as Ford drivers took the top four spots. It was a nice rebound from

qualifying earlier Sunday when the fastest Ford driver was Kevin Harvick at eighth.

In a race that means nothing beyond an early glimpse of who might contend in the Daytona 500, Blaney was disappointed with his finish.

"I thought we were in a good spot. Even though Brad is one of the best at doing this, I thought we had a good chance at it," Blaney said. "I probably didn't pull out at a very good time. I thought it was enough, but I got hung out."

"I should know better than that. I need to learn from that."

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