

# Shiffrin dominates GS for 63rd career win

Dominik Paris claims back-to-back downhill wins in Bormio

LIENZ, Austria, Dec 28, (AP): Mikaela Shiffrin wrapped up an eventful return from her 11-day break from World Cup racing on Saturday, dominating a giant slalom for her 63rd career victory.

After nearly arriving too late for the opening run, Shiffrin posted the fastest time in both legs to win by a big margin of 1.36 seconds.

Marta Bassino of Italy, who won the GS in Killington last month, finished second, while Austria's Katharina Liensberger finished 1.82 back in third.

The victory moved Shiffrin into outright second place on the women's winners list. Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell won 62 times in the 1970s and '80s. Lindsey Vonn holds the women's record of 82 wins.

Having misread the local start time of 10:15 am, Shiffrin was preparing for a 10:30 start.

The American three-time overall champion had to interrupt her usual warmup routines to make it to the start gate in time but made no mistake once on the course and carved out a commanding lead over Italian rivals



Shiffrin

Shiffrin

Shiffrin

## SKIING

Bassino and Federica Brignone by 0.61 and 0.74 seconds, respectively.

Shiffrin built on that lead and extended her advantage in a flawless second run.

Shiffrin opted out of the Val d'Isere races last weekend after finishing a disappointing 17th in a mid-week GS in another French resort, Courchevel.

The events in Val d'Isere were then canceled because of bad weather.

Shiffrin trained a few days in Courchevel, took three days off, and had a four-day training camp in Italy to get ready for the final races of the calendar year.

Meanwhile, in Bormio, Italy, Dominik Paris continued his dominance on the Stelvio course on Saturday, winning a men's World Cup downhill for the second straight day.

In perfect, sunny conditions, the Italian sped down the 3.27-kilometer course in 1 minute, 55.37 seconds for his 18th career victory, and 14th in a downhill.

Paris has won five of the seven Stelvio downhills he has competed in, only failing to win the classic race in his first two attempts – in 2010 and 2011.

"Bormio is my favorite course," Paris said. "The start of the season has been fantastic. I am more than satisfied."

His latest win came a day after Paris triumphed in a shortened race on the same course, which replaced the downhill that was canceled in another Italian resort, Val Gardena, last Saturday due to heavy snowfall.

Paris also won two speed races on the Stelvio course on back-to-back days last year.



United States' Mikaela Shiffrin competes in an alpine ski, women's World Cup giant slalom, in Lienz, Austria, on Dec 28. (AP)

While other pre-race favorites failed to match Paris' pace again on Saturday, unheralded Urs Krienbuehl came close to upsetting the Italian.

Starting 26th, the Swiss skier led Paris by 0.12 seconds until the last check point but came up 0.08 short at the finish.

Krienbuehl had failed to get a top-20 result in the World Cup until Friday's race, where he placed 13th.

"I don't know what happened, but this is fantastic," said Krienbuehl, who missed much of last season due to a concussion after a crash in Beaver Creek, Colorado.

"I recovered well from that and have been feeling good this season," he added.

His Swiss teammate Beat Feuz trailed by 0.26 in third on Saturday.

Matthias Mayer led Paris by 0.33 at the third intermediate time but the Austrian lost time in the bottom part of the course and finished 0.84 behind in fifth.

Paris overtook Feuz at the top of the downhill season standings, and also went top of the overall standings for the first time in his career.

"The overall lead doesn't mean anything to me. The standings only matter in March (end of season)," Paris said. "I live from race to race."

The race was interrupted for 20 minutes after Hannes Reichelt crashed and slid into the safety netting.

## Rapinoe, Schiffrin place 2nd and 3rd

# Biles named 2019 AP Female Athlete of the Year

NEW YORK, Dec 28, (AP): They're called "Simone Things," a catchall phrase for the casual ease with which Simone Biles seems to soar through her sport and her life.

The irony, of course, is that there's nothing casual or easy about it. Any of it. The greatest gymnast of all time and 2019 Associated Press Female Athlete of the Year only makes it seem that way.

Those jaw-dropping routines that are rewriting her sport's code of points and redefining what can be done on the competition floor? Born from a mix of natural talent, hard work and a splash of ego.

The 25 world championship medals, the most by any gymnast ever? The result of a promise the 22-year-old made to herself when she returned to competition in 2017 after taking time off following her golden run at the 2016 Olympics.

The stoicism and grace she has shown in becoming an advocate for survivors – herself included – and an agent for change in the wake of the Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal that's shaken USA Gymnastics to its core? The byproduct of a conscious decision to embrace the immense clout she carries.

"I realize now with the platform I have it will be powerful if I speak up and speak for what I believe in," Biles told The Associated Press. "It's an honor to speak for those that are less fortunate. So if I can be a voice for them in a positive manner, then of course I'm going to do whatever I can."

And it's that mission – combined with her otherworldly skill and boundless charisma – that's enabled Biles to keep gymnastics in the spotlight, a rarity for a sport that typically retreats into the background once the Olympic flame goes out. She is the first gymnast to be named AP Female Athlete of the Year twice and the first to do it in a non-Olympic year.

Biles edged US women's soccer star Megan Rapinoe in a vote by AP member sports editors and AP beat writers. Skiing star Mikaela Schiffrin placed third, with WNBA MVP Elena Delle Donne fourth. Biles captured the award in 2016 following a showstopping performance at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics, where she won five medals in all, four of them gold. She spent most of the following 12 months taking a break before returning to the gym in the fall of 2017, saying she owed it to herself to mine the depth of her talent.

Check social media following one of her routines and you'll find people – from LeBron James to Michelle Obama to Chrissy Teigen – struggling



In this Oct 13, 2019, file photo, Simone Biles of the United States shows her five gold medals at the Gymnastics World Championships in Stuttgart, Germany. (AP)

to distill what they've witnessed into 280 characters or fewer, with whatever they settle on typically followed by multiple exclamation points and a goat emoji, a nod to Biles being considered the Greatest Of All Time.

Her triple-twisting double-flip (the "triple double") at the end of her first tumbling pass on floor exercise is a wondrous blur. Her double-twisting double-flip beam dismount (the "double double") is so tough the International Gymnastics Federation made the unusual decision to downplay its value in an effort to deter other gymnasts from even trying it.

This is both the blessing and the curse of making the nearly impossible look tantalizingly attainable. When Biles learned about the FIG's decision, she vented on Twitter, her palpable frustration highlighting the realism she's maintained even as her first name has become synonymous with her sport's royalty.

It can lead to a bit of a balancing act. In some ways, she's still the kid from Texas who just wants to hang out with her boyfriend and her dog and go to the grocery store without being bothered. In

other ways, she's trying to be respectful of the world she's built.

Take the GOAT thing. It's a title she embraces – Biles wore a goat-themed leotard during training at the national championships in August – but also takes with a grain of salt, determined to stay grounded even as the hype around her grows. Yes, GOAT happens to be the acronym for her planned post-Olympic "Gold Over America Tour," but ask her where the inspiration came from and she laughs and gives credit to a friend, Kevin, who came up with it in a group chat. It is both paying tribute to and winking at her status at the same time.

Biles has become well aware over the last three years that her every word and action carries far greater weight than she ever imagined. Her most impactful moment of 2019 might not have come during a meet but sitting for an interview on the eve of winning her record sixth national title, when she fought back tears while talking about how USA Gymnastics, the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the FBI failed to protect athletes during an investigation into Nassar's abusive behavior.

The moment went viral, as most things surrounding her tend to do these days. "I'm starting to realize it's not just the gymneternet anymore," Biles said, using the term for her sport's dedicated fans. "It's an overall thing. It's weird to get that kind of attention, but at the end of the day, I feel gymnastics has been overlooked in non-Olympic years. Yeah, it puts pressure on me. But I'm not trying to think about all the attention from the outside world."

The attention figures to only grow in the run-up to Tokyo, where she will attempt to become the first female gymnast in more than half a century to repeat as Olympic champion. Her smiling face serves as the exclamation point at the end of every television promo for the Summer Games.

Let it be known: The smile is real. That might not have always been the case, but is now. Heading into the final months of a singular career, she is trying to revel in the journey while anxiously awaiting what's next. Add it to the list of Simone Things.

"I feel like this is the beginning of my life and I don't want gymnastics to be my whole entire life," she said. "I'm definitely going to soak in the moment and enjoy it so 10 years from now I can look back and say 'I had the time of my life out there' ... rather than 'I was good, but I was miserable'."



Italy's Dominik Paris (center), winner of an alpine ski, men's World Cup downhill, celebrates on the podium with second-placed Switzerland's Urs Krienbuehl (left), and third-placed Switzerland's Beat Feuz, in Bormio, Italy, on Dec 28. (AP)

## Dobey proves too strong

# Female darts star loses at PDC World Championship

LONDON, Dec 28, (AP): Fallon Sherrock's run at the darts PDC World Championship ended in the third round on Friday with a 4-2 defeat to 22nd-seeded Chris Dobey.

The 25-year-old Sherrock became the first woman to win a game in the tournament when beating Ted Evtets before following it up by stunning No. 11 Mensur Suljovic.

But Dobey proved too strong, fighting back from 2-1 down in sets to set up a clash with Glen Durrant in the

fourth round.

Sherrock was cheered throughout by the crowd at a raucous Alexandra Palace, with supporters singing "There's only one Fallon Sherrock."

Dobey made his scoring count, averaging 101.09 to Sherrock's 90.45, while he also hit eight maximum 180s compared to Dobey's 11.

## DART

Sherrock is a former runner-up at the women's world championship.

Organizers decided for the first time last year to allocate two of the 96 places in the world championship field to women. Previously, women could attempt to qualify for the event, but now spots are guaranteed.



Sherrock



Kuwaiti shooters celebrate during the Arab shooting tournament awarding ceremony. KUNA photo

## Saudi claim gold and bronze

# Kuwaiti shooters win 2 silver 'medals' in Arab tournament

ABU DHABI, Dec 28, (KUNA): Kuwaiti shooters have won two silver medals in the Arab shooting tournament bringing total trophies earned by the national team to five.

## SHOOTING

Hamad Al-Nemshan won the silver medal in the ten-meter air pistol competition against the Saudi Atallah Al-Enezi who took the gold trophy. Mohammad Al-Ameri, also of Saudi Arabia, took the bronze

medal in this game.

The other silver medal for Kuwait was grabbed in the teams' competition in which the Saudis took the gold one and the Omanis grabbed the bronze medal.

The Kuwaiti team has totally won four silver and a single bronze medals in this tournament, held in Sharjah.

The championship that kicked off Dec 20 grouped shooters from Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Sudan, Syria and the host country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).