

LOPPET CUP

Star-studded field at Loppet Cup

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World Cup cross-country skiing returns to the United States for the first time in more than 20 years with races Saturday and Sunday at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis, where Minnesotans will have the chance to watch the world's best skiers compete in sprint and 10K freestyle races. This is the 11th stop of the World Cup season, which began in late November and runs through March 17. The skiers are coming from five days of competition in Canmore, Alberta, which wrapped up on Tuesday. Here are the top competitors in the World Cup standings and some Minnesotans besides Afton's Jessie Diggins for spectators to keep their eyes on this weekend:

Women's standings



1. JESSIE DIGGINS
UNITED STATES • 2,103 PTS.

The Afton native arrives in Minnesota as the most decorated American cross-country skier ever. Last month, she won the prestigious Tour de Ski for the second time, and she has added two victories since. Diggins won her fifth race of the season Friday in Canmore.



2. LINN SVAHN
SWEDEN • 1,843 PTS.

Svahn has picked up wins in Oberhof, Germany; Goms, Switzerland; and Canmore, giving her six total victories and 10 podium finishes. The 24-year-old has rebounded well from an injured shoulder and is improving on her previous best World Cup overall finish of seventh.



3. FRIDA KARLSSON
SWEDEN • 1,675 PTS.

Fellow Swede Karlsson fell to Diggins by only 0.6 seconds in the 20k free in Goms but rebounded with a victory in Canmore in the 20k classic. She, along with Svahn, helped Sweden to a relay victory in Oberhof. Karlsson earned an Olympic bronze medal in 2022.



4. ROSIE BRENNAN
UNITED STATES • 1,524 PTS.

At 35 years old, American Brennan is poised for the highest World Cup overall finish of her career this year. She has four podium finishes to her name, her most since she had five in the 2020-21 season, including two first-place finishes, and ranks third in distance events.

Men's standings



1. HARALD OSTBERG AMUNDSEN
NORWAY • 1,919 PTS.

He claimed the first Tour de Ski title of his career on Jan. 7. The 25-year-old has finished first in three World Cup events, among eight podium finishes. He has made the podium once since then. Amundsen has eight podium finishes in 2024.



2. ERIK VALNES
NORWAY • 1,643 PTS.

Less than 300 points behind Amundsen, Valnes won both races in Oberhof following the Tour de Ski. He's made the leap to second in the world after finishing 10th in last season's overall standings. Valnes has 10 podium finishes this season.



3. JOHANNES HOSFLOT KLÆBO
NORWAY • 1,543 PTS.

The 27-year-old star has five Olympic gold medals, nine world championships and four overall World Cup titles, including the past two. He has found his way back into the top three after missing the Tour de Ski because of the flu.



4. PÅL GOLBERG
NORWAY • 1,422 PTS.

Golberg, second in the overall standings last year, picked up his second World Cup win of the season in the 20k classic on Sunday, edging Klæbo by two-tenths of a second. He also helped Norway win relays in Gällivare, Sweden and Oberhof.

Minnesotans to watch



Zak Ketterson • Bloomington
The 26-year-old, who is seventh among Americans in the World Cup standings, is the only Minnesota man racing at the Loppet Cup. Ketterson skied the second leg on the United States' first-place mixed relay team, anchored by Diggins, in a 2022 World Cup event. He finished 18th in Tuesday's classic sprint final.



Alayna Sonnesyn • Plymouth
A 27-year-old Wayzata graduate, Sonnesyn is seventh among American women in the World Cup standings. She has taken off in recent weeks on the U.S. SuperTour, winning her past three races on the top national circuit. She is ranked second overall in the SuperTour despite missing the first four races of the season.



Margie Freed • Apple Valley
The current leader on the U.S. SuperTour, Freed, who went to Eastview, finished on the podium in three of her past four races. The 26-year-old is particularly strong in distance events, with over 30 points more than the closest SuperTour racer. Freed was named to the National Collegiate All-Academic Team in 2017.



Erin Bianco • Ely
At 25 years old, Bianco is 11th in U.S. SuperTour points, having not raced on the tour since the U.S. National Championships in Soldier Hollow in Midway, Utah, on Jan. 7. But she qualified for the World Cup event in Germany last month and finished 35th in the sprint classic, fifth among American women.



Rena Anderson • Golden Valley
A Hopkins High grad, the 25-year-old won a sprint SuperTour race in Lake Placid, N.Y., on Jan. 20, beating Sonnesyn by less than a second. She's finished in the top 10 in three of her last four competitions. Anderson made her World Cup debut last weekend in Canmore. She earned one podium finish in 2023.