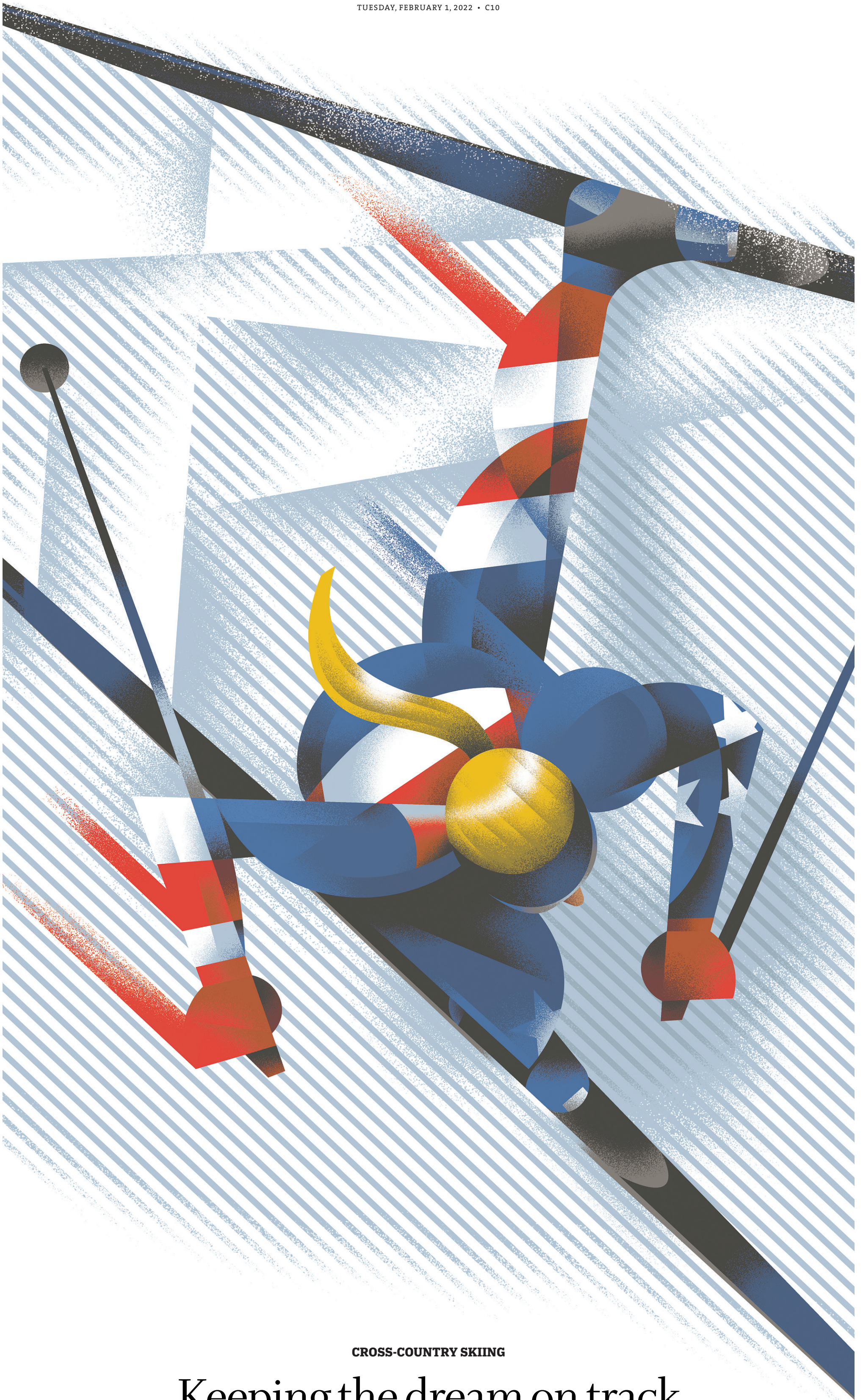


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CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Keeping the dream on track

When winter's chill brings so much of the world to a standstill, the cross-country skiers come out — especially in Minnesota. Whether it's a solitary trek through the woods, or jostling in a crowded race with fellow enthusiasts, it's one of the recreational rewards that comes with living here. That big piece of our winter culture is where the competitive fire of Afton's Jessie Diggins was first sparked, then nurtured, all the way to gold-medal success four years ago. The former Stillwater state champion will look to build on that Olympic legacy in Beijing, deepening her home state's ties to the Nordic sport.