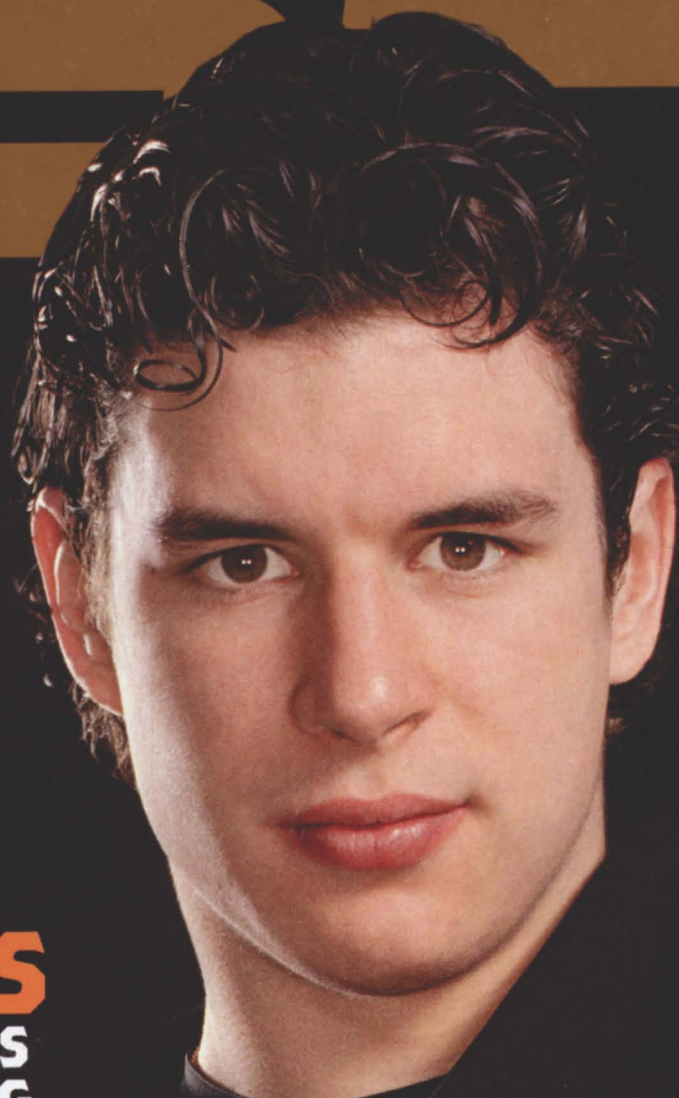


**THE ROAD TO XL** THE PATS ARE DEAD. LONG LIVE THE ...

# ESPN



## THE FACE OF THE NEW NHL

**TRUST US**  
SIDNEY CROSBY IS  
WORTH WATCHING

THE TWO  
SIDES OF  
**MELO**

THE SAD  
DECLINE OF  
**MAURICE  
CLARETT**

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**YOU CAN'T SEE  
CUBAN BASEBALL,  
BUT WE DID**

**18-PAGE SPECIAL SECTION  
WINTER X GAMES PREVIEW**

The Magazine  
espn.com **9.02**  
January  
**30** 2006  
\$4.99 US/\$5.99 CAN/FOR



WINTER X GAMES  
2006

# THE BUZZ

THE ASPEN TEMPS ARE DROPPING, BUT THE PREGAMES TALK IS ALREADY HEATING UP

BY ALYSSA ROENIGK  
(ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY MARY FENTON,  
VINCE CASTELLANOS AND MICHELLE HURNI)

## FOUR STAR

A TRIO OF SNOWBOARDERS WILL ATTEMPT THE ELUSIVE WINTER X QUAD

The four-peat is the spilled mercury of Winter X: riders reach for it; they just can't catch it. Four have tried—skiers Tanner Hall and Aleisha Cline, sledster Blair Morgan and snowboarder Shaun Palmer—and failed. Cline sums up her 2004 try: "Everyone was fired up to beat me. I had a bull's-eye on my back." Athletes, take aim.

EVENT

CASE FOR FOUR

Snowboard Slopestyle

Meyen, 28, says this may be her last year at Winter X, and she wants to ride out on top. "The young kids want it more now," she says. "But I will make every run my best." →

Snowboard Slopestyle

With seven X Games medals, an eighth—a four-peat, to boot—would be the cherry in this 19-year-old's Shirley Temple. If he wins, White says he'll "hug my parents, build a robot and shave my back. You know, normal stuff."

Snowboarder X

Only 20, Jacobellis already boasts more World Cup titles (seven) than any other female, and went undefeated in the 2003-'04 World Cup season. Now this snow star is shooting for Winter X and Olympic gold. →

JANNA MEYEN

SHAUN WHITE

LINDSEY JACOBELLIS



## WX WHISPERS

Tricia Byrnes was 22 when she first competed at Winter X in 1997. But during a recent *ESPN The Mag* interview, she tried to convince our reporter she is now 26. Her EXPN.com bio lists her at 31; her U.S. Snowboard Team bio says 26. Which is correct? Consider this: Byrnes' 2006 WX song requests for her halfpipe runs: "Any Way You Want It" by Journey and Prince's "Let's Go Crazy" ... Blair Morgan beware: the kids are coming. The average age of the SnoCross field is 22, youngest in WX history. When the sport debuted in 1998, the average age was 27 and 10 of 28 riders were older than 30. Note to four-time champ

Morgan, who turned 30 on Oct. 9: no 30-plus sledster has won at Winter X ...

By day, Shaun Palmer will return to WX Snowboarder X on Jan. 27. That night, he'll prescreen his unfinished documentary, *The Miserable Champion*, at the Wheeler Opera House. Later, Red Bull

and Amstel will host a party at the Sky Hotel with skier Tanner Hall ... Is Nate Adams the next Metal Mulisha madman? Evidence: one of the cleanest-cut riders in freestyle recently sat for two rib cage-covering tats and trains with friend and MM member Jeremy Stenberg. Want more? On Feb. 15, Adams becomes owner of Brian Deegan's Temecula, Calif., compound. Deegan, whose wife just delivered their second child (a boy), is moving his family to a larger spread in Corona, Calif. But he left Adams a housewarming gift: his \$50,000 foam pit.

## RELATIVE RETIREMENT

THE BROTHERS CRIST SIGN OFF FROM SKIER X

At Winter X in 2005, Reggie Crist, 37, and little bro Zach, 34, finished one-two in a Skier X race for the first time in their careers. "There's no way to top that," says gold medalist Reggie (below, right). Following the Skier X

final this year, the Crists will retire. With eight WX medals between them, they will focus full-time on filming, seeking out never-been-skied terrain in the Himalayas, Alaska and Greenland. Now that's active retirement.



## FAMILY TIES

THE CRISTS AREN'T THE ONLY RIDERS BATTLING FAMILY FOR FACE TIME IN ASPEN

### SISTER, SISTER

Jamie and Joanie Anderson, Snowboarder X

### O, BROTHERS

Paul-Henri and Xavier de Le Rue, Snowboarder X; Jason and Matt Boron, SnoCross; Kurtis and Shaun Crapo, SnoCross

### MIXED SIBS

Mason and Molly Aguirre, Snowboard Superpipe

### KISSING COUSINS

Tucker Hibbert and Garth Kaufman, SnoCross

### LOVE CONNECTION

Eric Andersson and wife Magdalena Jonsson (Skier X); Seth Wescott and girlfriend Tanja Frieden (Snowboarder X), who paired up at a World Cup race.

# BRING BLING

A LOOK AT WHAT WINTER X ATHLETES PAY TO SHOW UP AND THROW DOWN



**BRIAN DEEGAN**  
FREESTYLE MOTO X

**TODD RICHARDS**  
SNOWBOARD SLOPESTYLE (AND ESPN COMMENTATOR)

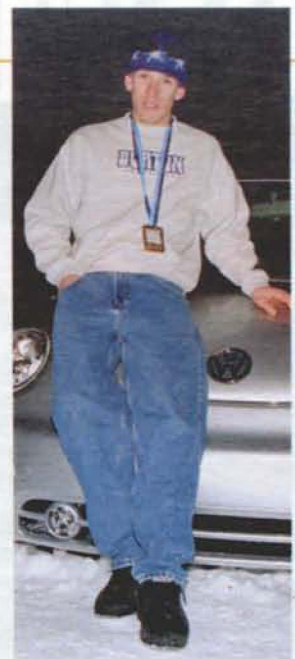
**PEP FUJAS**  
SKI SLOPESTYLE

**D.J. ECKSTROM**  
SNOCROSS

	BRIAN DEEGAN	TODD RICHARDS	PEP FUJAS	D.J. ECKSTROM
<b>FLIGHT</b>	\$1,500 (for Deegan, his wife and two kids)	\$0 (drives from Breckenridge)	\$600 (for two family members; sponsors pay for Pep's flight)	\$1,100 (for his girlfriend; sponsors pay for D.J.'s flight)
<b>FOOD</b>	\$800 (eating in and out)	\$4,000 (nightly sushi dinners)	\$300 (sushi)	\$0 (sponsors feed him)
<b>GAS</b>	\$600 (bike trailer); \$100 (bike)	\$40	\$0 	\$0 (sponsors pay for drive to Aspen, sled and generator)
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	\$200 (special tires with winter spikes)	\$0 (sponsors supply boards)	\$0 (sponsors provide skis, boots, bindings and poles)	\$0 (sponsors pay more than \$10,500 for the Aspen setup)
<b>LODGING</b>	\$4,000	\$0 (ESPN picks up the \$1,500 tab)	\$0 (sponsor housing)	\$0 (sponsors pick up the \$10,800 tab)
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	\$500 (snowboard rentals)	\$1,000 (booze)	\$200 (Pep's "party fund")	\$0 ("We race and head out the next morning.")
<b>EXTRAS</b>	\$2,950 (mechanic, tractor rental, trainer)	\$325 (massages and valet fees)	\$150 (extra-baggage charges)	\$0
<b>POCKET DRAIN</b>	\$10,650	\$5,365	\$1,250	\$1,100
<b>POSSIBLE PAYOUT</b>	\$20,000 for gold, plus sponsor incentives	\$20,000 for gold, plus TV deal and incentives	\$20,000 for gold, plus incentives	\$20,000 for gold, plus incentives
<b>WHY IT'S WORTH IT</b>	"You go for TV, not money. God forbid I get hurt. That's another 100 grand."	"It's about proving something to myself. And I keep getting invited back."	"This will be my last X. I want to ski for fun without the rigors of contests."	"I have a burning desire to win every race. To say you've won X is huge."

# PERFECT 10

ONLY TWO COMPETITORS HAVE APPEARED IN EVERY WX GAMES: SNOWBOARD PIPE RIDERS TRICIA BYRNES AND ROSS POWERS



## WE REMEMBER WHEN ...

**TB:** That first year, there was concern about how athletes would be portrayed. No one wanted us to be seen as sellouts or a bunch of monkeys.

**RP:** They had supermodified shovel racing. I stood at the bottom of their course to watch. The crashes were insane. They'd explode.

**TB:** I learned frontside 540s at Winter X that year. That was my hardest trick.

**RP:** A pond on the Boarder X course was dyed green because Mountain Dew was a sponsor. Jim Rippey did a backflip over it in the middle of a race.

**TB:** I did Slopestyle in '97, and the biggest jump on that course was smaller than the smallest jump now. No way would I do Slopestyle this year.

**RP:** I won two golds in 1998 and was named Athlete of Winter X. I won a Volkswagen Beetle (above) and gave it to my mom for Mother's Day.

# RING LEADERS



OF NEARLY 250 ATHLETES INVITED TO ASPEN, 20 HAVE OLYMPIC CREDENTIALS AND SEVEN HAVE SCORED HARDWARE. MEET THE MEDALISTS AND THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE '06 U.S. TEAM

	WX DEBUT BEST FINISH	OLYMPIC DEBUT BEST FINISH
<b>SNOWBOARD SUPERPIPE</b>		
<b>MEDAL WINNERS</b>		
<b>KELLY CLARK</b>	2000 2002 GOLD	2002 GOLD
<b>DORIANE VIDAL</b>	2000 2005 SILVER	2002 SILVER
<b>ROSS POWERS</b>	1997 1998 GOLD	2002 GOLD
<b>DANNY KASS</b>	2001 2001 GOLD	2002 SILVER
<b>JJ THOMAS</b>	1999 2002 GOLD	2002 BRONZE
<b>FIRST-TIMERS</b>		
<b>GRETCHEN BLEILER</b>	1999 2003, 2005 GOLD	2006
<b>SHAUN WHITE</b>	2000 2003 GOLD	2006
<b>SNOWBOARDER X</b>		
<b>MEDAL WINNERS</b>		
<b>KARINE RUBY</b>	2004 2004 SILVER	1998, GS GOLD
<b>UELI KESTENHOLZ</b>	2003 2003, 2004 GOLD	1998, GS BRONZE
<b>FIRST-TIMERS</b>		
<b>LINDSEY JACOBELLIS</b>	2001 2003-2005 GOLD	2006
<b>NATE HOLLAND</b>	2002 2004 GOLD	2006
<b>SETH WESCOTT</b>	1998 2002 GOLD	2006

The complete U.S. Olympic snowboard team will be named Jan. 21.



# RIDING RICH

HEADED TO ASPEN? GRAB A FRIEND AND PLAY IN STYLE. (HEY, YOU DESERVE IT)

- Fly in on a Sentient jet: \$8,200
- A night at Little Nell's 2,500-square-foot Paepcke Suite: \$4,400
- Ultimate Taxi ride to breakfast (3-D glasses, toys and spinning disco ball included): \$150
- Breakfast at Jour de Fete: \$25
- A Unicorn hot-air balloon ride over Aspen: \$850 ↑
- Winter X event tickets: FREE
- Buttermilk Mountain lift ticket and snowboard rental: \$236.50
- Two Winter X souvenir sweatshirts: \$100
- Stretch limo for the day: \$485
- Dinner at Matsuhisa: \$1,000
- Junior Gong at Apres X concert: FREE
- A bottle of 1989 Cristal at Caribou Club (skip the \$1,550 Dom): \$2,500

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BRIAN BARRIBETTY IMAGES; ALLEN KEF/SHAZAMM/ESPN; JED JACOBSON/BARRIBETTY IMAGES; SHAZAMM/ESPN; PAUL BUCKLEY/SHAZAMM/ESPN; CHRIS O'CONNELL; MATTHIAS BILLOW; COURTESY OF UNICORN HOT AIR BALLOON; COURTESY OF JON BARRIBES; SHAZAMM/ESPN (2)