

10 moments from the Winter Olympics

BY SALLEE ANN HARRISON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILAN — With 116 medal events over 16 days spread across northern Italy, the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics delivered many unforgettable moments. Here are 10 of the biggest, from heartbreak to triumph.

LINDSEY VONN'S GUT-WRENCHING CRASH

U.S. skier Lindsey Vonn's Olympic story was supposed to be one of redemption. She came out of retirement at age 41, battled a torn ACL in her left knee days before competition, and was ready to conquer the downhill. Instead she got hooked on a gate 13 seconds into her run, resulting in a terrifying crash in Cortina d'Ampezzo.

After receiving treatment for about a week in Italy for a complex tibia fracture, Vonn flew back to the U.S. She's had at least four surgeries.

Her skis did not release during the crash, raising safety issues among the skiing circuit.

KLAEBO'S HISTORIC GOLD MEDAL SWEEP

Heavy is the head that wears the crown, heavy is the neck that wears all of Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo's gold medals.

The Norwegian won all six gold medals in the men's cross-country competition, setting a new record for most golds at a single Winter Olympics.

The previous record was set by American speed skater Eric Heiden with five golds in the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics.

Norway dominated the Olympics overall, leading the medal count with 41. They chalk it up to their way of life.

THE FALL OF ILIA MALININ

The overwhelming favorite to win gold in men's figure skating, Ilia Malinin fell twice in his free skate program. The falls sent him tumbling from



Francisco Seco | AP Photo

Alysa Liu of the United States competes during the women's figure skating free program at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Milan, Italy on Thursday.



Kirsty Wigglesworth | AP Photo

Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo, of Norway, crosses the finish line to win the gold medal during the cross country skiing men's 50km mass start Classic at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Tesero, Italy on Saturday.

first place all the way off the podium.

"Honestly, yeah, I was not expecting that," Malinin said. "I felt going into this competition I was so ready. I just felt ready going on that ice. I think maybe that might have been the reason, is I was too confident it was going to go well."

THE JOY OF ALYSA LIU

Alysa Liu won the U.S. its first women's figure skating

gold medal in 24 years with a joy-filled, near-flawless free skate.

The 20-year-old had walked away from skating before finding her way back again, and found herself in the process.

"I think my story is more important than anything to me," Liu said, "and that's what I will hold dear, and this journey has been incredible, and my life has just been — I have no complaints."

U.S. POLITICS SEEP INTO THE GAMES

American athletes faced persistent questions about President Donald Trump's immigration enforcement agenda and their comfort in representing a country whose policies are increasingly controversial on the world stage.

American freeskier Hunter Hess said he didn't back the U.S. president's immigration crackdown, prompting Trump to call him a "loser." Chloe Kim, Eileen Gu and Hess' teammates called for unity in response. Hess responded during halfpipe qualifying by flashing an "L" on his forehead, saying he stands by his statement and loves the U.S.

U.S. figure skater Amber Glenn also said she received threats on social media after saying during a pre-Olympics news conference that the queer community is going through a "hard time" amid the political climate under Trump.

UKRAINIAN SKELETON RACER'S HELMET TRIBUTE

Ukrainian skeleton athlete

Vladyslav Heraskevych was barred from competing when he refused to not use a helmet that honored more than 20 athletes and coaches killed in the Russia-Ukraine war.

The International Olympic Committee said wearing the helmet would break rules against making statements on the field of play. The IOC asked Heraskevych to wear a different helmet in races. It offered concessions, such as wearing a black armband or letting him display the helmet once he was off the ice.

"I believe, deeply, the (The International Bobsled and Skeleton Federation) and IOC understand that I'm not violating any rules," Heraskevych said. "Also, I would say (it's) painful that it really looks like discrimination because many athletes already were expressing themselves."

CHEATING ALLEGATIONS IN CURLING

The seemingly quaint and cordial sport of curling was rocked by cheating allegations during the Winter Games. First Canada was accused, then Britain. The main infraction? Double-touching.

After a wild few days with expletives and a brief rule change, tensions simmered and teams and players more or less moved on.

"It's the Olympics," said Canadian curler Ben Hebert. "It'll be over in two weeks and everyone will go back to covering curling in four years."

A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHEATING

Sturla Holm Laegreid, one of Norway's top biathletes, finished third in the 20-kilometer individual race at the Olympics, and then gave one of the most bizarre interviews that quickly went viral.

Laegreid, full of remorse,

told Norwegian broadcaster NRK — and the whole world — he had been unfaithful to his girlfriend.

He later said he regretted airing his personal business and overshadowing his teammate's Olympic gold medal. But the meme damage had already been done.

NORTH AMERICAN SHOWDOWN IN HOCKEY

Hockey was always going to be a big deal at the Milan Cortina Olympics. Even before the first puck dropped, there were worries about the new arena and excitement about the Olympic return of NHL stars. As many had predicted, Canada and the United States made the final of both the men's and women's tournaments. The U.S. won both gold medal games in overtime.

SOUTH AMERICA'S FIRST WINTER GAMES MEDAL

While Brazil was reveling in Carnival, Alpine ski racer Lucas Pinheiro Braathen gave the country another reason to celebrate — an Olympic gold medal in giant slalom.

It was the first-ever medal at the Winter Games for any country in South America.

"I've tried over and over again to put words into what it is that I'm feeling," Pinheiro Braathen said. "But it's simply impossible."



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13-year-old signed to long-term driver deal

BY JENNA FRYER
AP AUTO RACING WRITER

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — A familiar name may be introduced at the 2031 Daytona 500 when Keelan Harvick will be old enough to enter "The Great American Race" his father won 24 years ago.

Toyota Racing Development said Monday it has signed the 13-year-old third-generation driver to a long-term deal as Kevin Harvick's son has fully committed to a NASCAR career.

"My main goal is to be just like my Dad and just try to make it to the Cup Series," Keelan Harvick told The Associated Press.

It's a slight change of direction for Keelan, who had been pursuing a career in Europe until a jarring incident at a karting event in Italy attended by Formula 1 star Charles Leclerc made him realize he was likely more suited for a career in the top motorsports series in the United States.

"I was in Italy racing and Charles Leclerc's nephew raced on my team, and (Leclerc) came to watch the race and all the fans followed him there and they broke down the tent," Keelan said. "It was just a lot of people and just not for me. There was like hundreds of people at a go-kart race just trying to meet him."

Toyota has a detailed schedule for the teenager and will partner him this year with



Kevin Harvick, Inc. | AP Photo

Keelan Harvick, center, poses with his family, from left, sister Piper, father retired NASCAR driver Kevin Harvick and mother DeLana Harvick following a victory.

RACKLEY W.A.R. and Kevin Harvick, Inc., to compete in dozens of late model races nationwide. Keelan will drive the No. 62 Toyota Camry with ExxonMobil as his primary sponsor for many of the races.

It's an interesting twist for the Harvick family as Kevin Harvick spent his 23-year career driving for Chevrolet and Ford, never for Toyota. Kevin Harvick retired after the 2023 season with 63 career Cup Series wins and the 2014 championship. He became an analyst for Fox Sports in 2024.

"We've concentrated a lot on development and have a

theory on how it should go, and I felt like the Toyota process matched what we would do," Kevin Harvick explained. "I think that the effort that Toyota puts into, not only the driving piece of it, but the human piece of it is very important to us as a family. That was really one of the biggest reasons on why we went this direction."

The Toyota Driver Development program has promoted current NASCAR Cup drivers Christopher Bell, Corey Heim and John Hunter Nemechek, who compete with Toyota partner teams.

Other drivers such as Erik Jones and Daniel Suarez worked with Toyota but now compete for rival manufacturers.

TRD provides on-and-off the track opportunities to support development and gives its drivers access to the Toyota Performance Center, which provides support with physical fitness, sports psychology, recovery and nutrition.

"Everyone at Toyota and TRD are excited to welcome Keelan into the Toyota Racing family," said Tyler Gibbs, president, TRD, U.S.A. "Keelan has proven himself

on-track, and despite his young age, has continued to be wise beyond his years with his professionalism and work ethic off of it.

"TRD is thrilled to partner with Keelan and his family as Keelan continues to develop his racing craft. We see a bright future ahead for him, and everyone at Toyota is proud to be part of his journey."

Keelan Harvick has already found success across multiple racing series and in December scored the biggest victory of his career to date when he became the youngest-ever winner of the Snowflake 125 at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola, Florida. He followed it with a victory in Florence Motor Speedway's Icebreaker in early February, where he was the youngest winner of that event while also earning his first career Late Model victory.

He was the 2024 INEX Young Lions National Champion and transitioned from Legends to Late Models, where he won four zMAX CARS Tour Pro Late Model events and two CARS Tour West Pro Late Model Series races in 2025. Keelan is the first driver to win PLM events in both series in the same season.

As for his aspirations to reach the Cup Series and follow in his father's footsteps?

"I think whatever Toyota thinks I'm capable of, the talent that they think I have, and whenever they think I'm ready to move up," he said.

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