MICHIGAN SNOWBOARDER CHRISTINE ALIX CAPTURES SECOND PLACE HONORS IN TWO OVERALL COMPETITIONS AT THE USASA NATIONAL SNOWBOARDING CHAMPIONSHIPS; COMPLETES RAPID COMEBACK FROM KNEE INJURY

April 4, 2008; Copper Mountain, Leadville, Colorado: One year ago, Christine Alix hobbled off Northstar Mountain at Lake Tahoe, California, with dashed hopes and a torn ACL and meniscus in her right knee, suffered in the third of her five events at the 2007 USASA National Championship. This week, thanks to a new ACL, extensive training, and the determination to comeback and restart competing just seven months after reconstructive surgery, Chrissy has achieved her 5 year dream of National Championship recognition, placing 2nd in both the National “combined overall” competition (Alpine and Freestyle) as well as in the “triple overall” competition (Alpine, Freestyle and Bordercross®) among a large field of nationally ranked competitors.

The United States of America Snowboarding Association (USASA) competitors work through regional competitions all season by gender and age group, earning the national ranking needed to qualify for the National Championships. Nationally, over 125 “junior women” division competitors from across the U.S. qualified for the USASA National Championship in one or more of the five individual snowboarding skills events.

Additionally, of the 125 nationally ranked junior women competitors, only six of them qualified for all five skill events in the USASA Junior Women’s Division (16-17) National Championship. Alix is one of the six snowboarding pentathletes who qualified nationally in all five events leading to the showdown this week with Championship
competition in each of the individual events as well as in the highly demanding and endurance testing “combined overall” and “triple overall” competitions.

“You’ve got to be really heads up and totally switched on all the time, and Chris has certainly shown a lot of that this season,” said Travis McLain, a former X-Games champion and owner of Radio Snowboard Shop in Aspen, Colorado and Coach at the Aspen Valley Snowboarding Club (AVSC).

Today ended the week of intense competition at Copper Mountain which started off for the Junior Women last Sunday competing in the Giant Slalom, leading to the Half Pipe competition on Monday and then followed by the Slope Style (jumps and rails) on Tuesday.

Wednesday was a peak day of tension and tight competition in the Bordercross®, racing down a newly designed, highly technical and gnarly course, side-by-side with other racers, inches apart at top speed, through gates and rollers peppered with ramps, jumps, berms, step-ups and hairpin turns. The course was littered with injuries and broken dreams across all divisions and hundreds of competitors by the end of the five day competition. “The Bordercross® event is both the champion maker and the heart breaker,” said Chris Brockman, Chris Alix’s 10-year coach from Snowmass, Colorado, himself a USASA national snowboarding champion as well as the lead snowboard instructor at Snowmass Mountain at Aspen/Snowmass, Colorado. “The Bordercross® is where it all comes together – both downhill/Alpine skills as well as Freestyle skills due to all the jumps and obstacles, combined with a lot of luck,” Brockman said.

Alix turned in a personal best in the Bordercross®, placing seventh among all 34 nationally-ranked and qualified junior women riders, while beating three of the top five national qualifiers, including the number one and two qualifiers. Alix finished up the five event National Snowboarding Championship pentathlon today with the Slalom event where she turned in another personal best finish to clinch her overall silver medal national championship status. In addition to her personal best in the Slalom and Bordercross®
events, Alix also turned in personal bests in the Half Pipe, Giant Slalom, and Slope Style competitions throughout the week.

Alix earned her “combined overall” 2nd place by combining top finishes in the Alpine (Slalom and Giant Slalom) and Freestyle (Half Pipe and Slope Style) events. Her “triple overall” silver was her overall scores in all of the four events above, plus Bordercross®, thus placing 2nd in a pentathlon of all snowboarding events scored across all competitors.

“Competing in all five snowboarding events against 125 different competitors requires great physical stamina and crisp mental focus all day, every day, for more than a week and therefore is the most unpredictable competition with all the jumps, bumps, gates, features and close racing with other riders including the inevitable physical contact that happens when four, five, or even six riders are racing just inches apart at high speeds,” said McLain of Aspen. McLain went on to say, “All the riders are super-charged by competitive desires mixed in with adrenaline flowing through them day after day; anything can happen with course conditions and weather changing daily; being the best technically or the fastest doesn’t always win in the overall; it takes so much more; it takes everything you’ve got; and you’ve got to bring it all just to be competitive -- let alone place near the top. It’s gnarly!”

A year ago, Alix tore her ACL in the Slope Style event National Championship competition after successfully completing two earlier events in the overall competition at the USASA Nationals at Lake Tahoe. She left Tahoe and flew directly to Vail to see the legendary U.S. Ski Team Doctor, Dr. Richard Steadman, at the world-renowned Steadman Hawkins Clinic at Vail, Colorado, where she underwent ACL replacement surgery six weeks later in May, 2007. The trainers at the Howard Head Sports Medicine Clinic at Vail, as well as JonAnn MacKenzie, PT in Michigan, helped Chris speed her rehab and regain full strength and get back to snowboarding in a record six months and resumed a full competition schedule in just seven months.
Alix trained and competed continually this winter in both the USASA Middle Earth Regional Series in Michigan where she dominated and qualified for this week’s Nationals, as well as competing in the Michigan High School Snowboarding League representing Detroit Country Day School, where she is both the Founder and the Co-Captain of the DCDS Varsity Snowboarding Team. In some weeks, she competed in 4 or 5 different competitions to prepare for the pentathlon, traveling hundreds of miles to do so.

In the eight high school league competitions, Chris had a regular season record of six wins and two seconds at Alpine Valley. After qualifying first for the High School Girls State Championship in Bordercross® and winning the East League title, Chris was taken out in the state semi-final round at Mt. Brighton in a spectacular crash involving a gate inside a triple roller feature. “She walked away bruised, but not broken, and determined to comeback,” said Mr. Glen Shilling, Headmaster at DCDS who both witnessed the event and has strongly supported snowboarding in Michigan high schools as well as Alix’s own development.

When asked about her season and the combined and triple overall championship results, Alix first thanked everyone who has helped her over all the years and concluded by saying “This was a big comeback year for me and it reminded me why I love snowboarding. Snowboarding makes me so happy.”

This was Chris’ fourth time qualifying for the USASA National Championships and her second time being qualified in all five events. Chris, who is 17 and a high school junior at Detroit Country Day School, lives in West Bloomfield, Michigan, and competes in the Middle Earth Snowboard Series in Michigan and other USASA sanctioned events as well as in “open” competitions. “Chris is a leader in our league, a role model competitor, and a very impressive young woman,” said Middle Earth series Director, Monique (“Mo”) Shorr, who is also the Milford High School snowboarding coach and a founder and director of the Michigan High School Snowboarding League where Alix competes for DCDS.
Chris rides “goofy” stance and is sponsored in USASA events by Oakley Eye Wear, Radio Snowboard Shop, and Sunset Ski Rentals. Chris will be working this summer at Radio Snowboard Shop in Aspen and snowboarding in New Zealand with the AVSC where she plans to compete in the New Zealand Open Snowboarding Competition in August. Chris can be reached through the above contact information.

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