

**U.S. National Cross Country Championships  
January 1-7, 2007  
Michigan Tech Nordic Training Center  
Houghton, Michigan**

**For Immediate Release**

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**U.S. Olympians Competing in Houghton**

Houghton MI – Several members of the 2006 U.S. Olympic team will join more than 400 other skiers at the U.S. National Cross Country Championships in Houghton, Michigan, this week.

Andy Newell, one of the top sprinters in the world, will have two opportunities to show his speed, with an individual sprint and a two-person team sprint scheduled during the week. Last year in China, Newell earned the first U.S. cross country skiing podium finish in 23 years with a third place finish. Overall in 2006, he had six top-15 sprint finishes in World Cup competition.

Two-time Olympian Kris Freeman currently leads the Super Tour, a multi-race competition with \$130,000 in prize money on the line. The six-time U.S. champion also earned gold in the 30km classic race at the inaugural Under-23 championships race in Italy in 2003. He went on to place fourth at the 2003 World Championships (the best U.S. result in 21 years).

Kikkan Randall stormed through last year's U.S. championships, winning three titles, including her first two distance gold medals. She went to the 2006 Olympics, teaming with Wendy Wagner to grab a top-10 in the inaugural team sprint and then finishing ninth in the sprint – the all-time U.S. women's top Olympic cross country performance.

Also expected at this year's races are three members of the 2006 Olympic team who did their collegiate skiing at Northern Michigan University, just down the road from Houghton. Lindsay Weier and Lindsey Williams, both from the Minneapolis/St. Paul area, will return "home." Both are concentrating on college plus major domestic ski races this year. Chris Cook, who hails from Rhinelander, Wisconsin, was the 2003 collegiate classic champ and the 2006 U.S. sprint champion.

These Olympic veterans, other members of the U.S. Ski Team, and more than 400 other top national and collegiate racers, will compete in four separate races during the week-long competition.

The first race day is Wednesday, January 3, with the classic distance competition. Male skiers will cover a 10 kilometer course, with the women skiing 5 km. Thursday, January 4, brings the freestyle competition, with the men skiing 15 km and women skiing 10 km.

After a rest/training day, competitors will have the opportunity to ski in two sprint races. The individual classic sprint takes place Saturday, January 6. Skiers who qualify during the morning-long series of heats will move on to the afternoon quarterfinals, semi-finals and finals.

On Sunday, January 7, the competition will end with a team sprint. Two-person teams will alternate, with each skier completing three laps of the 1 km course.

Sponsors of the event include the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association, Michigan Technological University, Portage Health, the Boss Snowplow, Plum Creek timber company, the Keweenaw Tourism and Convention Bureau, Sayen's Business Equipment and Sayen's Auto Sales.

Complete information on the event, including links to three webcams, is available at [www.seniornationals.org](http://www.seniornationals.org)