

Calgary's Pain wins World Cup crown

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The Calgary athlete retained his overall World Cup men's skeleton title Friday by racing to his third gold medal of the season. "It feels pretty good to do it twice in a row," said Pain. "It was a really good race for me on a track that's kicked my butt in the past, so it felt great to have two good runs."

Pain's success came a day after Mellisa Hollingsworth-Richards of Eckville, Alta., won the women's overall World Cup title and comes just two weeks before the Turin Olympics.

"I don't know if Canada winning both the men's and the women's titles makes a statement going into the Olympics, other than that we're still around," said Pain. "We've had a strong team with this crew of people for a while now - hopefully it means we have the momentum going in."

The 35-year-old Pain raced to an Altenberg track record in Friday's gold medal performance, whipping down in 57.49 seconds in the World Cup circuit's final race of the season.

His two-run combined time of 1:55.08 was good enough for gold.

Germany's Sebastian Haupt took the silver medal in 1:55.78, while Austria's Markus Penz raced to bronze in 1:55.85.

Pain, whose victory was his fourth World Cup medal this season, won the overall title with 580 points. Switzerland's Gregor Staehli, Pain's toughest competition all season long, was second with 425.

Hollingsworth-Richards, who made the podium in each of her seven World Cup races this winter, including two victories, edged out Swiss rival Maya Pedersen by 10 points to claim the women's crown Thursday.

"It's always been like that between us and the Swiss team," said Pain. "(Staehli) is such a great slider, and so is Maya, that it can be anybody winning on any given day."

Pain's title leaves Canada atop the international rankings with 503 points in men's competition, 15 ahead of the United States.

Canada also topped the women's team rankings with 386 points, 37 more than second-place Switzerland.

Calgary's Paul Boehm and Duff Gibson finished sixth and 14th respectively in the overall standings. Boehm continuing to build on what's been a breakout season, finishing fifth Friday with a two-run time of 1:56.10.

Pain and Hollingsworth lead a strong Canadian team in Turin that includes Boehm and Gibson and Lindsay Alcock of Calgary.



Jeff Pain from Canada starts for the second run of the men's Skeleton World Cup competition in Altenberg, Germany, Friday. (AP/Matthias Rietschel)

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