

## **ATHLETE BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Stefania Belmondo (Italy/Cross Country Skiing)**

Stefania Belmondo is a former member of the Italian Olympic cross country skiing team. At the Salt Lake City Games in 2002, she won the gold medal in the 15km free and the silver medal in the 30km. Belmondo also won two bronze medals at the 1994 Olympic Games and silver and bronze medals at the 1998 Olympic Games. At the 1992 Games, Belmondo finished fifth in the 15km, fourth in the 5km, second in the combined pursuit and third in the relay. At the final women's cross-country event, she won a gold medal in the 30km. Belmondo is a member of McDonald's Italy's Balanced, Active Lifestyles Team.

### **Bonnie Blair (U.S./Speed Skating)**

At 19, Blair competed in her first Olympic Games at the 1984 Olympic Winter Games in Sarajevo, finishing eighth. Over the next three Olympic Winter Games, Blair won five gold medals and one bronze. Retired in 1995, Blair remains the most decorated Olympian in U.S. Olympic Winter Games history.

### **Janet Evans (U.S./Swimming)**

Throughout her Olympic career Evans won four gold medals tying Mark Spitz as the only U.S. swimmer to win four individual Olympic titles. Evans burst onto the Olympic scene at the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea winning gold and at the 1988 Olympic Games, she broke her own world record by four seconds.

Evans returned to the Olympic Games in 1992 in Barcelona, Spain and again, in 1996 in Atlanta. In her career, Janet set three world records that still stand today. Evans is also the only woman to win back-to-back Olympic and World Championship titles in any event (800m freestyle).

### **Vonetta Flowers (U.S./Bobsled)**

In 2001, Flowers finished eighth with veteran Bonny Warner at the 2001 World Championships in Calgary, Alberta. The Warner-Flowers duo finished in the top 10 in all seven 2001 World Cup races and closed the season with four consecutive top three finishes. In 2002, Flowers became the first African-American to win a gold medal at the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City with driver Jill Bakken in women's bobsledding. In 2005, Flowers and driver Jean Prahm came in fourth in the World Cup standings and fifth at the world championships. Flowers will compete in Torino.

### **Dan Jansen (U.S./Speed Skating)**

Dan Jansen is a four time U.S. Olympic team member in speed skating, competing at the 1984, 1989, 1992 and 1994 Olympic Games. At the 1994 Games, Jansen won a gold medal in the 1000m. Other honors Jansen has received include, eight time World record holder in the 500m and 1000m, 46 World Cup victories and more than 75 World Cup medals, winner of 20 World Championship medals, seven time Overall World Cup Champion, and two time World Sprint Champion.

In 2004, after receiving his gold medal, Jansen became an inductee into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame. A year later, he was named Skating Coach for the NHL Chicago Blackhawks. At the Torino Olympic Winter Games, Jansen will take on the role of announcer for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games on NBC.

### **Johann Olav Koss (Norway/Speed Skating)**

Johann Olav Koss holds three world record victories. Koss won a gold medal in the 1,500m and a silver medal in the 10,000m at the 1992 Albertville Olympic Winter Games. At the 1994 Lillehammer Games, Koss broke his own world record in the 5,000m and set another world record in the 1,500m. Koss also won a gold medal in the 10,000m, setting a new world record over his old one.

### **Carolina Kostner (Italy/Figure Skating)**

Carolina Kostner will make her Olympic debut at the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games. At the recent 2005 World Championships in Moscow, Kostner won a bronze medal and became the first Italian in almost 30 years to win a medal in the ladies' singles event. Kostner received another great honor when the young Italian figure skater was asked by the Italian Olympic Committee to be Italy's flag-bearer for the Opening Ceremony of the Torino Games.

### **Paulina Ligocka (Poland/Snowboarding)**

Paulina Ligocka is a very promising athlete, as she recently competed at the Swiss Leysin World Cup and won in halfpipe. In addition, Ligocka is ranked third in the world in halfpipe. In Torino, Ligocka will represent Poland by competing in the halfpipe events. Ligocka's cousin is Polish men's snowboarder Mateusz Ligocki.

### **Mateusz Ligocki (Poland/Snowboarding)**

Ligocki is the only person on the Polish Olympic snowboarding team to compete in two disciplines, snowboard cross and halfpipe, and he is looking forward to competing in both events in Torino. Ligocki has won 20 Polish Championships, and his latest success is first place in the Europe SBX Cup in Austria. He is ranked fifth in the world in snowboard cross. Ligocki's cousin is women's snowboarding hopeful, Paulina Ligocka.

### **Deborah Scanzio (Italy/Freestyle Skiing)**

Deborah Scanzio is a member of Italy's freestyle skiing team, and she is a twice Italian champion in the event. She recently was awarded the "Rookie of the Year" award given to a promising World Cup athlete. Torino marks her first Olympic Winter Games.