

Top world athletes fight for gold at XXII Winter Olympics

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For all of the reported subpar conditions on the mountain and all of the oddities associated with the hotels in the Russian city Sochi, the XXII Winter Olympic Games has successfully delivered the high level of athleticism and excitement one would expect from the Olympics.

Just five days into the 17-day competition, the United States of America sits in fourth place with six total medals and plenty of time to overtake the top three countries, Canada, Netherlands and Norway.

America's two golds came in men's slopestyle snowboarding and women's slopestyle snowboarding.

Colorado is well-represented in the games as 19 Coloradans are competing. California is the only state to send more athletes with 20. The U.S. team of 230 athletes is the largest team in Winter Games history.

While winter sport mainstays such as figure skating, curling and ice hockey return to the schedule, a dozen new categories will make their Olympic debut this year. Seven of the additions to the Olympics include gravity-defying jumps mixed with graceful flips and spins for those who prefer their sports extra dangerous.

The halfpipe event welcomed both men and women skiers to competition this year, joining snowboarders who had already competed in the event at the Olympics since 1998. In the event, competitors make their way down a semi-circular ditch, completing tricks as they fly into the air, moving from side to side.

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