

ERIC BERGOUST

Eric Bergoust was a trampoline loving teenager, growing up in Missoula Montana, who, inspired by a television show, flew to the very top of the freestyle aerials world. He won three national championships, the World Cup Championship, World Championship and Olympic Championship before retiring in 1996.

Born in 1969, he witnessed his first World Cup in freestyle on ESPN in 1985. He was so charged up by what he saw legend has him being the first person through the gates to watch the freestyle aerials at the 1988 Olympic Games in Calgary.

That summer he started training with the US Freestyle Team in Lake Placid even though he wasn't a team member. The coaches adopted him anyway and the following winter he justified their judgment and investment in him by winning the Noram Freestyle title.

In 1990 he began a sixteen-year career with the US Ski Team that saw him compete at four Olympic Games, the most in U.S. ski team history.

Over that time, one commentator has noted, he "folded, spindled and mutilated the World Cup aerials scene."

Two years after making the US Team he won his first World Cup event. Over the course of his career he would make the podium 30 times, reaching the top for 17 of them.

He would win three U.S. National Championships.

In 1997, he fractured his collarbone in 6 pieces. He was back on his skis within a month and won his first World Championship medal, a silver, in Nagano Japan.

He returned to Japan the following year, 1998, and claimed the Olympic Championship. In 1999, he used his same Olympic gold medal skis to win the World Championship.

He competed at the inaugural World Goodwill Games in 2000 and was the aerials champion. At one point in his career he held the three highest scores in aerials skiing.

Like his teammate, Hall of Fame Class of 2006 Honored Member, Trace Worthington, he studied his sport in detail, visualized the movements and pushed the limits of freestyle aerials further.

