

BAHRKE, SHANNON (525 words)

In her career, Lake Tahoe native Shannon Bahrke won multiple Olympic medals and pioneered a new era for moguls skiing. Known for her pink hair and as the exuberant face of moguls skiing, Bahrke won Olympic silver at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, then returned from injuries to win bronze in 2010. In a 12-year career with the U.S. Ski Team, Bahrke won the 2003 World Cup title, claimed 27 World Cup podiums with seven victories, and earned six U.S. titles. She competed in three Olympics and was on six World Championship teams.

Bahrke grew up in an outdoor-oriented family. Recreation was an integral part of her life. Local freestyle coach Ray DeVre recruited her for moguls skiing at the age of 12, but she initially declined. His persistence eventually won her over, and she began progressing as a young freestyle athlete in a community that was electrified watching one of its own, Jonny Moseley, win Olympic gold in 1998.

She moved to Salt Lake City in 1998 to attend the University of Utah and achieve her dream of making the U.S. Ski Team. Balancing school with her budding role on the national team, she got her debut World Cup start in January 1999. Six weeks later, she scored her first podium.

A steady performer, Bahrke continued to find herself on World Cup podiums. But her big breakthrough came in the leadup to the 2002 Olympics. On New Year's Eve 2001 at Deer Valley Resort, Bahrke outskied a strong U.S. women's field to win the Gold Cup, earning the title and a guaranteed start spot on the Olympic Team.

A jubilant Bahrke used the momentum to win her first World Cup the following week. A month later, she opened the Games with a silver in moguls - the first Team USA medal of the Games!

The next years were a time of transition for moguls skiing, with inverted aerial maneuvers approved for competition. Bahrke took advantage of the opportunity, bumping, flipping, and twisting her way to the 2003 World Cup season-long title – pioneering a new era in the sport as the first woman to throw a D-spin. She also picked up bronze in dual moguls at the FIS Freestyle World Championships on her home run of Champion at Deer Valley Resort.

Her hard-driving skiing style also came with injuries, creating speed bumps in her career. Despite the setbacks, she persevered through it all, winning silver in dual moguls at the 2007 World Championships in Madonna di Campiglio, Italy.

She capped her career at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver. Under the lights on opening day, she won her second Olympic medal, a bronze behind gold-winning teammate Hannah Kearney. The two medals kicked off the best overall Winter Olympics finish ever for Team USA.

Bahrke retired in July 2010 to raise a family. True to her style, she remained active after her career, motivating others through her Team Empower Hour, a successful corporate

team-building and inspiration company, working as a celebrity skier, and mentoring young athletes. Her book, *Mommy, Why Is Your Hair Pink?*, is an inspiring story for children.