

## Women's Ski Jumping USA

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### Press Release

## Visa members take 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> in Schonach event overshadowed by tragedy

Jan. 8, 2011 – Two members of the Visa Women's Ski Jumping Team finished in the top five Saturday in a Continental Cup event that was overshadowed by the tragic and unexpected death of a young Italian jumper.

The Italian Winter Sports Federation confirmed that Simona Senoner, just 17, died suddenly Friday in Schonach, Germany after feeling ill in her hotel room. The Associated Press reported that Senoner was airlifted to a local hospital after her roommate discovered her collapsed, but she was declared dead upon arrival. No cause of death was given, though early reports cite cardiac arrest. Senoner finished 10th in the 2008 junior worlds.

All Italian winter sports athletes plan to wear black armbands on Sunday to mourn Senoner. Visa team member Jessica Jerome said all the women jumpers wore armbands over their jumpsuits during competition Saturday in memory of Senoner and they observed a moment of silence at the prize ceremony.

Jerome finished 4th, Lindsey Van was 5th, Alissa Johnson was 22nd and Abby Hughes was 24th. Austria's Daniela Iraschko won the event.

"It is absolutely unfathomable what the Italian girls are going through right now," Jerome said. "I didn't know Simona well, but she was very well loved by her teammates. She was always smiling and happy. All the jumper girls are still in shock. I admire the Italian girls' ability to come together and perform the way they did Saturday."

Hughes said she plans to wear her armband in honor of Simona for the remainder of the COC season. "I really admire the Italian girls for competing this weekend. Evelyn Insam finished 7th and she told me she did it for Simona," Hughes said. "It's amazing how this community has come together for her team, friends and family. It has definitely given me a different perspective."

Higher than normal temperatures gave way to rain this week in Schonach, causing training delays, though Saturday's comp was smooth. Van was third after her first jump of 95 meters on the 106-meter hill and Jerome was sixth with 92 meters. Jerome edged forward after her second jump of 97.5 meters — highest of the round.

"My second jump was exactly what I wanted, much better technically and flying in the air and I hope to carry that into competition on Sunday," Jerome said.

The COC continues Sunday for a second day of competition in Schonach and then on to Hinterzarten, Germany on Jan. 12.

“It has been very difficult for women’s ski jumping with the loss of Simona and our hearts go out to her family and the Italian team during this difficult time. They have shown amazing strength and they are an inspiration,” said Alissa Johnson.

**Continental Cup**  
**Schonach, Germany**  
**Jan. 8, 2011**  
**Women’s HS106**

1. Daniela Iraschko, AUT, (96.0, 96.5) 239.6
2. Coline Mattel, FRA, (96.5, 95.5) 235.8
3. Melanie Faisst, GER, (97.5, 94.5) 231.9
4. Jessica Jerome, USA (95, 90.5) 227.9
5. Lindsey Van, USA, (88.5, 91.0) 222.9
22. Alissa Johnson, USA (82.5, 83.5) 182.8
24. Abby Hughes, USA (82.5, 83.5) 178.6

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