

## Women's Ski Jumping USA

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### Press Release

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## Last day of training helped with confidence, athletes say

Oslo, Norway (Feb. 24) – Women ski jumpers had their final day of official training Thursday at the Holmenkollen venue in advance of Friday's normal hill competition at the Nordic World Ski Championships.

A spattering of onlookers watched the women during training jumps as tens of thousands lined the ropes nearby to view a Cross-Country Sprint comp, a favorite of the Norwegians. Organizers expect Friday's competition to exceed 10,000 spectators – one of the largest crowds to attend a women's ski jumping event.

Youngest Visa Team member Sarah Hendrickson, 16, had a strong training day with jumps of 91.5, 95.5 and 96 meters, matching Lindsey Van's furthest jump, also at 96. Van elected not to take a third jump. Jessica Jerome stayed consistent with a pair of 95.5 jumps; Alissa Johnson improved with two 92-meter leaps; and Abby Hughes's longest jump was 87.5.

"Technically, I jumped a lot better today and I was really happy with the distances. I had three solid and good jumps and that gives me a ton of confidence for tomorrow," said Hendrickson, who is the 2010 Junior Worlds bronze medalist. "Now that I have had good jumps it is time to have fun and see what happens."

Japan's Sara Takanashi had the longest jump of the day again, hitting 103 meters and quit while she was ahead – electing to only jump once. Back in the line-up Thursday was Continental Cup leader Austria's Daniela Iraschko, who skipped the previous trainings because of a knee injury she suffered two weeks ago. She finished strong in training with a 102.3-meter leap. The official FIS start list for Friday has 43 jumpers from 15 nations – up from 36 jumpers and 13 nations in the 2009 Worlds.

Alissa Johnson, who's competing in her second World Championship, said her confidence is growing with each jump.

"At the top of the hill today I just took a moment. I could hear the cheering from the Sprint races in the background and knew how lucky I was to be here," Johnson said. "It's in that humbling and emotional moment that makes you realize that despite the outcome of the next day, you can still be proud of your accomplishment."

"Tomorrow is just like any other day of the week for me — it's Friday and I plan on treating it like that."

Friday's event uses a new wind-compensation system, which monitors wind conditions and compensates for headwind (advantage) and tailwind (disadvantage) in a jumper's final score.

Van said she thinks the idea of the wind rule is good, but it is hard to understand.

"I also think it's hard to quantify the wind. For spectators, I think it's really hard when you just expect the farthest jump to win."

The event begins at 3 p.m. Oslo time (9 a.m. EST) and may be viewed at [www.fromsport.com](http://www.fromsport.com).

- SEE <http://www.wsjusa.com/> for additional information and press releases about the Visa Women's Ski Jumping Team.

- Get regular updates at the WSJ-USA Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/letwomenjump](http://www.facebook.com/letwomenjump)

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*The Visa Women's Ski Jumping Team is sponsored and organized by Women's Ski Jumping USA, a 501c3 nonprofit foundation. To learn more, go to [www.wsjusa.com](http://www.wsjusa.com).*