

NEWS RELEASE

March 9, 2010

VISA Women's Ski Jumping Team ends winter COC season with top rankings

March 9, 2010 – The VISA U.S. Women's Ski Jumping Team placed three in the top 15 overall in the 2009-10 International Ski Federation Continental Cup, ranking the team second just behind Germany, which placed four jumpers in the top 15.

Fifteen-year-old Sarah Hendrickson took sixth overall in her first full COC season, even though she missed a few competitions due to school responsibilities. Hendrickson also took bronze at the FIS Nordic Junior World Championships in Hinterzarten, Germany in late January — the first American jumper to earn a medal at the Nordic Junior Worlds.

Alissa Johnson finished ninth and Jessica Jerome took 12th overall capping off a tough emotional season for the two veterans who saw another Winter Olympics go by without women's ski jumping being included in the Games. Team member Abby Hughes finished 25th. World champion Lindsey Van did not compete internationally this season, opting to work on healing some nagging past injuries.

"This season, for the team, I think we were set on doing a little better than we had on a whole, but we have high expectations," Jerome said. "The fact that Sarah held on to sixth in her first full year of competing on the tour — despite missing some comps — was phenomenal."

Jerome, reigning national champion, is optimistic about this summer's COC tour and said they've heard rumors that the next winter season has the potential for great venue stops given that it's another Nordic World Championship year. The 2011 Worlds is set for Oslo, Norway Feb. 26-March 6 and marks the second time women's ski jumping is on the program.

The VISA team finished the winter COC season in Zakopane, Poland and Zao, Japan in early March with six top-10 finishes over four days of competition. Jerome took sixth in Zakopane and a 10th in Zao; Johnson took 10th each in Zao and Zakopane; and Hendrickson placed ninth in Zao and Zakopane.

Johnson, who said her legs felt like chewing gum after four days of airplane travel, was pleased with her top-10 finish in Zakopane. "I have always had issues in Zakopane but this was by far the best I have ever jumped here so I am happy with that. Technically I felt like I had better jumps than the results show, which is a positive thing for me. Last year I struggled to even make the cut so being 10th felt really good for me," Johnson said.

The next COC tour starts up again in late spring/early summer. As part of their continued effort to grow the sport, members of the VISA Women's Ski Jumping Team are planning a Summer Friendship Camp in Park City, Utah for developing young female jumpers across the nation and they have invited the Russian Women's Ski Jumping Team to attend. The 2014 Olympic Winter Games will be in Sochi, Russia and hopes are high that the International Olympic Committee will add women's ski jumping to the program.

For more information on the Summer Friendship Camp, please go to www.wsjusa.com.

###