

UPSTATE NY IN THE WINTER OLYMPICS

By Jenna Caputo

The Olympics are a beloved tradition every year they're on, but this year felt extra special as we watched our nation's athletes rise up to new standards even while the pandemic continues to rage around the world. They are a shining example of what dedication, hard work, and passion can accomplish.

We are extra proud of the nine athletes that competed in Beijing from upstate NY. While their competitions were not yet complete at the time of this printing, here is where each of them stood at our deadline.

We congratulate them all on making their country—and New York State—proud!

Hunter Church

Sport: Bobsled

Hometown: Cadyville

Only a few people in the country can call themselves part of a bobsled family, and Hunter Church is one of them.

A third generation bobsledder from Cadyville, New York—an hour north of Lake Placid's bobsled run—Church was introduced to the sport through his dad and uncle, who were both bobsledders in the 1980s. *No results at printing.*



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Jonny Gustafson

Sport: Luge, singles

Hometown: Massena

First-time Olympian Jonny Gustafson, 24, managed to stay in the top 20 after his third run despite a tough start (only the top 20 sleds moved into the fourth and final heat). In his fourth run, he moved up to finish 19th overall.

Chris Mazdzer

Sport: Luge, singles

Hometown: Saranac Lake

Chris Mazdzer had a tough year. Starting with a shattered foot last September, he crashed in January at the Olympic trials race-off and again crashed at the Olympics, but still managed to **place eighth in the Mens' Singles Bobsled Run** and was part of the American Relay bobsled team that finished seventh overall as well.

Sean Hollander

Sport: Luge, doubles

Hometown: Lake Placid

Team USA's youngest luge competitors, 21-year old Sean Hollander and 20-year old Zack DiGregorio, **finished in eleventh place in the doubles competition** this week in Beijing. This after their teammates,

Chris Mazdzer and Jayson Terdiman, gave them their own doubles sled after they beat them in the qualifiers due to a crash. Then together, **the American sliders' relay team finished seventh**, just 2.335 seconds behind the Germans.

Chris Lillis

Sport: Freestyle Skiing

Birthplace: Rochester

Hometown: Pittsford

Pittsford native Chris Lillis **wins the gold in Olympics** after an incredible run in the mixed team aerials event. Lillis had the top jump in the event helping the United States to victory with his quintuple jump. *His Singles standings were not yet in at printing.*

Dylan Walczyk

Sport: Skiing, Moguls

Hometown: Rochester

Dylan Walczyk competed in the men's freestyle skiing mogul finals, passing his first test in his first Olympics, finishing 10th out of 30. Walczyk put up a total score of 75.13, putting him in **16th place out of 20**. Unfortunately, only the top 12 finishers qualified. That means Walczyk's run for a medal was over. Walczyk grew up in the Finger Lakes and trained at

Bristol Mountain before moving to Colorado to continue his training.

Hagen Kearney

Sport: Men's Snowboard Cross

Birthplace: Buffalo

Buffalo native Hagen Kearney was eliminated in the snowboard cross finals after **finishing third** in his heat, missing the qualifying spot to move on to the quarterfinals.

Hayley Scamurra

Sport: Ice Hockey

Birthplace: Williamsville

Hometown: Getzville

Hayley Scamurra is a women's ice hockey player who is the daughter of former Washington Capitals player Peter Scamurra. As of printing, she was waiting to compete for **Gold** on the US team vs Canada.

Karen Chen

Sport: Figure Skating

Birthplace: Fremont, CA

College: Cornell University, NY

Karen Chen helped the US team event win a **silver medal**, and was waiting to compete in the Ladies Singles as of printing.

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