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Four Canadians Sprint into Olympic Pursuit Race
Runnalls continues steady shot with strong skiing to place amongst world elite

ANTHOLZ-ANTERSELVA, Ita. – Adam Runnalls, Zachary Connelly, Logan Pletz and Benita Peifer all qualified for the pursuit race, thanks to finishing in the top 60 of the men's and women's sprint competitions at the Olympic Winter Games.

The 27-year-old Runnalls led the Canadian charge, mixing together strong skiing with sharp shooting to complete the 10-kilometre men's sprint test in a time of 25:02.5 for 31st spot.

"The skis were great today. I did my first lap with Zach (Connelly). It was perfect timing with him coming out of the range exactly as I started so we did good work together and were both able to put down a good ski time," said Runnalls.

Athletes make two stops at the range where they are required to hit five targets each. For every missed shot, they are forced to do a 150-metre penalty loop. Runnalls, who hails from Calgary, went clean in his prone round of shots. He left one target up in standing.

"The shooting was really solid today. I just missed the follow through on that last shot," he added. "I'm a little disappointed but also happy to have a good race. Things are looking good for the pursuit on Sunday.

All three men on the podium shot clean. Quentin Fillon Maillet, of France, took the gold with a time of 22:53.1. Norway's Vetle Sjaastad Christiansen was second at 23:06.8 while his teammate, Sturla Holm Laegreid, won the race for the bronze medal with a time of 23:09.0.

Runnalls, along with teammates Zachary Connelly and Logan Pletz, qualified for Sunday's 12.5-kilometre men's pursuit race with the top 60.

Ottawa's Connelly placed 48th at 25:33.5 (0+4); while Logan Pletz of Regina, finished 55th at 25:46.7 (1+1). Jasper Fleming of Squamish, B.C., was the only other Canadian male, placing 80th with a time of 26:46.1 (3+1).

Benita Peiffer was the lone Canadian to punch her ticket into the women's 12.5-kilometre pursuit race following a career-best finish on Saturday. The Whistler, B.C. resident marked her Olympic debut by finishing 56th in the 7.5-kilometre sprint event on Saturday.

"It is a bit crazy to have my best result at the Olympics and make the pursuit," said Peiffer, who has been ill since the opening of the Games. "I wasn't sure what was possible after being sick for a week in an endurance sport, but I'm really proud of myself. This is super exciting."

Peiffer clocked a time of 23:04.9 (1+0) after missing one shot in her first stop at the range.

"I think sometimes when there is less pressure on your ski speed you are able to hone in on the shooting," added Peiffer. "It is cool to have so many Canadian fans out here. It kind of feels like a regular World Cup but when you see the Olympic rings everywhere it is pretty special."

Norway's Maren Kirkeeide won the women's sprint test with a time of 20:40.8 (0+0). Oceane Michelon, of France, placed second at 20:44.6 (0+0). Lou Jeanmonnot, of France, battled through the foggy, snowy conditions to claim the bronze medal with a time of 21:04.5 (0+1).

Nadia Moser, of Whitehorse, missed three in her standing round of shots, placing 61st at 23:22.6 (0+3). Calgary's Pascale Paradis missed three in prone, dropping her to 67th at 23:46.7 (3+0). Shilo Rousseau, of Thessalon, Ont., was 80th at 24:32.0 (2+1).

[Complete Results:](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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