



More than half of Twitter's nearly 200 million users have signed up in the past 18 months. And the spike in ski racing-related tweets was likewise plain for even the most casual observer. Many of our sport's most prominent athletes are now regularly employing the

platform to communicate with fans and each other. Here, we bring you the year's best North American ski racing tweets in five very serious categories:

Best Twitter bio: For household names like Lindsey Vonn, the Twitter bio requires little attention. For everyone else, it's an art in itself — it must concisely, accurately identify both the author and the style of tweet he or she executes, or it risks alienating potential followers.

Runner up: @skifastfish <http://twitter.com/skifastfish>

U.S. Ski Team speedster Erik Fisher's bio eschews the winter-take-all attitude, paying homage to his favorite season with a killer kiteboarding background pic and the following declaration: "The Ski Racer That Loves The Summer, Nope Don't Make Sense To Me Either!"

Winner: @annagoody <http://twitter.com/annagoody#>

Canadian slalom ace Anna Goodman understands brevity is paramount — her bio says it all in five words, leaving no question about where she's from: "i'm a ski racer eh?"

Best single tweet from Vancouver Games: Everyone on earth knows who won and what happened in Vancouver, so criteria for this honor was mostly about making the Olympic experience more visceral for those of us who couldn't know it first hand.

Runner up: @lizstephen <http://twitter.com/lizstephen#>

U.S. Ski Team nordic skier Liz Stephen is small in stature but big in heart. Earnest and excited, she tweeted the following on Feb. 11 upon arriving at her first Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver: "Would you

Swimming Pool of Awesomeness: The Waxroom's 2010 Twitter Awards

The year's best athlete blurbs (or at least the best ones we could find in between races) in 140 characters or less

like some deodorant, a rice krispie treat, or perhaps you just need a hug? Imagine anything you need and the athlete village has it"

Winner: @simihamilton <http://twitter.com/simihamilton#>

Simi Hamilton was equally earnest and inspired by his first Olympic experience, but he gets the edge over Stephen for having scripted this golden ticket on Feb. 13: "Opening Ceremonies: Imagine diving naked into a swimming pool of awesomeness. And then winning the lottery. That's what it was like"

Best celebrity encounter tweet: A very important category, one which featured nominees ranging from tweets about meeting President and Michelle Obama to ... the Hoff?

Runner up: @kikkanimal <http://twitter.com/kikkanimal#>

Kikkan Randall is the first-ever American woman to win a World Cup cross country race: a class act from start to finish. But she was not above kindly razzing — by way of a departed cross country running legend — an unsuspecting Canadian World Cup skier after his Movember 17 workout: "OMG, I just saw Prefontaine in the weight room. Oh wait, false alarm, just @devonkershaw <http://twitter.com/#!/devonkershaw> rockin' the moustache!"

Winner: @simihamilton <http://twitter.com/simihamilton#>

You've heard the stories about Baywatch star David Hasselhof's pop-star status in Germany, right? Well, we can't verify that Germans listen to his music, but at least we know it's true that he flies there. More from the prolific Hamilton on Nov. 8: "David Hasselhoff on my flight from Dulles to Munich, sporting a 'Don't Hassle the Hoff' shirt. N. Hoff sitting a few rows from me. holys**t"

Most curious case of a world-class athlete tweeting in the night time: Okay, we confess we created this category just for Mr. Nyman.

Winner: @BelieveinSteven <http://twitter.com/BelieveinSteven#>

Not sure if U.S. Ski Team downhill Steve Nyman was really on a "late-night utah pow" excursion with friends, or if the following is some kind of coded buddy-speak. Either way, we thought this stream — posted on Nov. 22 — was pretty entertaining.

6:55 p.m.: "I am a teacher, just taught @jdunkl his liners come out of his ski boots. Late night utah pow expedition, forgot headlamp, going hawk eye"

7:12 p.m.: "Hey @cjgold1 get bent! Hop in the canyon transporter and let's go!"

9:27 p.m.: "Where am I? Face plant, hawk eyes more like bat eyes. Still alive but lost @cjgold1 and @jdunkl"

9:29 p.m.: "Think I landed in @SnowbirdSki if you can read me @cjgold1 @jdunkl come pick me up."

9:38 p.m.: "Trying to get into the cliff lodge @SnowbirdSki no luck doors are frozen shut lights out! Storm is setting in. It ... [continued via tweet extension] was nice knowing you @jdunkl hey @cjgold1 GET BENT!"

10:34 p.m.: "Been rescued-good night-happy trails @jdunkl @cjgold1 may another adventure be in our future"

Best overall twitter feed in 2010: This is like the Best Picture Oscar category and we expect it to get more competitive as still more talented ski racers begin tweeting (and as we pay greater attention to them). We admit that the criteria was a little loose, but the general aim was to find a tweet that adeptly marries ski racing news with high entertainment value. Like so many Best Picture winners, the mastermind behind this tweet was recognized in other categories, too.

Winner: @simihamilton <http://twitter.com/simihamilton#>

Some athletes tweet "it's been very cold lately" while Hamilton writes, "First time I've seen the whole shape of the sun in 8 days. I feel like Gallivare is the bahamas of Sweden. It might have even broken 0 deg F." (Nov. 16.) Other tweets exchange inside jokes that followers can't, uh, follow. Hamilton, on the other hand, is prone to elegantly and accessibly slighting teammates with nuggets such as, "You're so beautiful, you could be a part time model. But you'd probably still have to keep your normal job." (March 13.) And though Hamilton may brush up against the profane from time to time, it typically happens at moments in which all ski racers can identify. Take this tweet from Dec. 18 for example: "Dear clouds, Either start dumping or get the hell out of colorado. Sincerely, Simeon"