

Concussion can't stop Canadian star from joining moguls sweep

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VAL SAINT-COME, QUE. --- With a podium sweep on the women's side and another World Cup win for Mikael Kingsbury, there was plenty for the Canadian moguls team to celebrate here on Saturday.

But everyone was particularly thrilled for 21-year-old Andi Naude, who came in second place, sliding between winner Justine Dufour-Lapointe and her sister Chloe Dufour-Lapointe, who finished third.

Just two weeks ago, Naude was in a nearby hospital. She over-rotated a back flip in training and landed on the hard-packed snow, head first. She was rushed to the hospital and diagnosed with a concussion.

It was such a dramatic crash that Kingsbury, who was supposed to ski another training run, changed his mind.

"It was scary to see her land on her head and I decided to stop skiing after I saw that," Kingsbury said. "It's nice to see her back on the podium, there's going to be more of that for sure."

Kingsbury's victory here returned him to the yellow leader's jersey, which he promptly put on his two-month-old niece Florence, and raised his World Cup win record to 35.

For Naude, it was just her fourth trip to a World Cup podium. "To be standing on a podium with my two teammates, that's just unbelievable. I couldn't have asked for a better day," said the Penticton, B.C., skier.

Naude, on the national team for five years, had a bit of a breakthrough last season with two World Cup podiums and an increase in self-confidence.

"I definitely struggle with that, in the gate especially. I love training --- no stakes really --- but when I'm in the gate I doubt myself," Naude said. "But this year after a strong off-season I was feeling really, really good."

Then came her terrible training crash, which was on the heels of a fall on a jump at the first World Cup of the season in Ruka, Finland.

"I've managed to stand up after every smackdown that I've had so I'm hoping that the training that I did in the off-season and the confidence that I have now will pay off and I'm sure it will but we'll have to see," she said, the day before she stepped on the podium here.

Canada's women started things off well, with all six national team members making it through the qualifying round. But the dream of a podium sweep for the three Dufour-Lapointe sisters, who achieved that here last year, ended in the round of 16 when Maxime, who is perfecting one of the toughest jumps in the women's field, crashed on her landing.

"It's part of the learning process, I need to push my limits and reach in every competition. I do this for next year," she said, referring to the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. "I know once I get (that jump) down it will be really hard to beat."