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## U.S. Cross-Country Skier Kris Freeman Named to 2014 Olympic Team

### Role model overcomes setbacks to inspire children and adults with type 1 diabetes with 4th Olympic bid

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#### News Highlights

- #T1DiabetesChamp and #Lilly #Diabetes spokesperson Kris Freeman @TeamFreeBirdXC named to #Sochi2014 @USOlympic cross-country ski team
- #Lilly #Diabetes and @LillyHealth celebrate @TeamFreeBirdXC Kris Freeman's naming to 4<sup>th</sup> @USOlympic team
- @TeamFreeBirdXC Kris Freeman doesn't let T1 #diabetes stop him from chasing #Olympic gold, named to 4<sup>th</sup> @USOlympic team

Today 33-year-old U.S. cross-country skier and [Lilly Diabetes](#) ambassador [Kris Freeman](#) was named to the 2014 Olympic team. When he travels to Sochi, Russia, in February, it will mark the fourth consecutive Winter Olympics for the top-ranked skier, a remarkable achievement for a man whose career nearly ended when he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 19.

#### Competing with Diabetes

Freeman is the only known U.S. Olympic cross-country skier to compete with diabetes. He goes up against the best in the world, and does so with the added pressure of managing his disease across multiple countries with changing cuisine, altitudes, and time zones. Freeman does this over and over in races that can last up to two hours, during which his body burns through the energy from his carefully planned meals, using insulin he receives through the small pump he wears to keep his blood glucose stable.

As someone with type 1 diabetes, Freeman's body does not produce insulin, the hormone required to regulate blood glucose, which is influenced by what we eat, how we exercise, how often we hydrate, stress and other factors. The smallest fluctuation, therefore, can have a major impact on how well Freeman competes.

#### A Step Back to Go Forward

During the 30 km pursuit at the 2010 Vancouver Olympics, Freeman was just 11 seconds off the leader, when his blood glucose dropped rapidly and he collapsed, his dreams vanishing before him. Rather than quit, he quickly drank a sports drink given to him by a spectator, picked himself up and finished the race. He did this, not for himself, he says, but for all his fans with type 1 diabetes.

"There was no way I was going to have a 'Did Not Finish' after my name," Freeman said. "I thought about all the people with diabetes who were watching and rooting for me, so I made myself get up. It was incredibly important to cross the finish line."

Looking back, he attributes the episode to incorrectly gauging his insulin given his high level of stress. Now having reassessed his insulin regimen and incorporating yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises into his routine, Freeman knows how to deal with the anxiety that comes with being an Olympian and hopes to win the first men's Olympic cross-country skiing medal for the U.S. since Bill Koch won silver in 1976.

#### Inspiration from Coast to Coast

Freeman has long been a role model for the 25.8 million children and adults in America living with diabetes—nearly 3 million with type 1 diabetes. For nearly 10 years, Freeman has been an ambassador for Lilly Diabetes, traveling to diabetes summer camps as part of its [Lilly Camp Care Package](#) initiative. From Maine to Montana, Rhode Island to Texas, Freeman has shared his story and mentored thousands of children facing the same struggles he has.

"A lot of the kids I visit through my work with Lilly Diabetes tell me I'm an inspiration to them, but the truth is, these kids are the real inspiration," says Freeman.

#### Heart of a Champion

His most recent challenge came in April 2013, when Freeman was removed, after 12 years and 16 national titles, from the U.S.

Ski Team. New Olympic Nordic sports and a static budget meant the team had to prioritize their young hopefuls, and Freeman, a veteran competing in a specialty not widely supported in the U.S., found himself cut from the team, though ranked No. 1 in the sport.

Not only did he lose a major source of funding and training support, Freeman also lost his health insurance.

Today, things are looking up. Freeman was recently named the Nordic racing coach at his hometown mountain ski club in New Hampshire, a role that comes with health care benefits.

"Kris is an outstanding role model with an incredible talent for his sport and a gift for staying positive in the face of challenges," says Enrique Conterno, president, Lilly Diabetes. "His outlook is inspirational, and the impact he's had on so many here in the U.S. is immeasurable. As he gets ready to step out of the solitude of training one more time, we are excited to help him share with the world his remarkable story of perseverance, excellence and hope -- the story of true Olympic spirit."

Freeman begins his quest for a medal on February 9, and will compete in four races, including a return to the 30 km pursuit.

#### **About Lilly Diabetes**

Lilly has been a global leader in diabetes care since 1923, when we introduced the world's first commercial insulin. Today we are building upon this heritage by working to meet the diverse needs of people with diabetes and those who care for them. Through research and collaboration, a broad and growing product portfolio and a continued determination to provide real solutions—from medicines to support programs and more—we strive to make life better for all those affected by diabetes around the world. For more information, visit [www.lillydiabetes.com](http://www.lillydiabetes.com).

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