



Up Close With Travis Cabral

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World Cup Champion Travis Cabral, the world's number-one mogul skier and youngest U.S. mogul champ, gives a winner's-eye look at the Whiteface Mogul course, venue for the 1991 Freestyle World Championships and host of the World Cup events since 1984.

Why do I love the mogul course at Lake Placid? It's definitely one of the top two or three courses in the world, and not just because the hill itself is challenging. The snow conditions are always unpredictable – usually hard, sometimes soft on places, often a combination of the two.

Out of the start, the course is pretty flat, and it can be hard to get your speed up for the first jump. At the same time, you don't want to be going too fast. The table-top landing after the jump is usually hard and icy. The middle section between the jumps is the toughest part of the course. The moguls are tight and uneven because guys are trying to slow down after landing the first jump, and you have to be really quick on your feet through the first five moguls. After the first five moguls, the line starts to even out, but it's a fairly long section before you hit the second jump, so you can't relax. You want to be carrying good speed over the second jump, but again, not too much. There's another table-top landing that's easy to overshoot. That's a challenge at Lake Placid, those table-top landings. Airs are something I've really had to work on. At Lake Placid, I did two 360 maneuvers – a 180 cross 180 on the first jump, and a 180 cross, 180 spread on the second jump. I think I stunned people a little bit. I grew up in California where the Sierra snow is different than the snow in Lake Placid, but I've had no problem adapting. The toughest thing about mogul skiing is keeping your balance, and that's especially true in Lake Placid. If the moguls are hard, you really have to keep your feet under you or you'll lose in a hurry. But I've been mogul skiing I was six, and I've been through a lot of different experiences. Mentally that's made me stronger, and I know what I have to do to win. On a hard and unpredictable course like Lake Placid, skiing in front of U.S. fans who really want an American to win, and with the temperature about minus-30, being tough mentally was a key to my victory last year. I'm hoping to be back on top of the podium when the World Cup comes back to Lake Placid.