

Sochi Snowboarding Course Deemed Too Dangerous After Accident

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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U.S. snowboarder Shaun White practicing a jump on the course Monday. **Lucas Jackson**

KRASNAYA POLYANA — Norwegian snowboarder Torstein Horgmo's crash in practice and complaints from other athletes that some jumps were too steep have prompted organizers to modify the slopestyle course for the Sochi Olympics.

Horgmo, a strong medal contender, was treated in a hospital after crashing Monday while attempting a difficult trick on a rail near the top of the course.

Team manager Thomas Harstad said the 26-year-old Horgmo landed heavily on his face and right shoulder. The Norwegian media later reported Horgmo had fractured his collarbone and was likely to be ruled out of the Olympics.

There was no official update on the injury. The Olympic News Service reported earlier that Horgmo was put in a neck brace, carried down the slope and taken to the athletes' hospital.

at Krasnaya Polyana.

Qualifying runs in men's slopestyle are scheduled for Thursday at the Rosa Khutor Extreme Park course, the day before the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Games.

International ski federation official Roberto Moresi, the assistant snowboard race director at Sochi, said organizers had responded to feedback from the athletes and were trimming some jumps at the top of the course "in order to make it more smooth."

Moresi said the course was not a factor in Horgmo's crash, saying it happened because "he was just trying a really hard trick."

Course designer Anders Forsell said the changes were minor.

"On a nontested course you are always nervous, but it worked out fine," he said of the reaction from athletes.

Riders discussed the course design at a meeting after the first practice session. Some thought some of the jumps were dangerous, others thought the course was OK.

"It looks pretty sketchy, the rails are sticky," said Roope Tonteri, the 2013 world champion in men's slopestyle. "I think they wanted to make big kickers, and it is not really good for riders, and it is not really safe. I just don't want to get injured. It is not a really fun course to ride."

Sebastien Toutant of Canada told the Olympic News Service, "It is like jumping out of a building."

But U.S. rider Sage Kotsenburg compared the jumps with those at the X Games.

"It is what we should be jumping at this level. It is the Olympics," he said. "They need a little bit of work. That is how it happens. We ride, and after the first day the riders give feedback on the course. Then they work on it."

Irish snowboarder Seamus O'Connor described the course as "pretty dangerous" and called for changes to be made.

"It is pretty dangerous at the moment," the 16-year-old said, the Irish Times newspaper reported. "I think it is definitely going to be a problem for the women."

"The riders need to speak up about the conditions," he said. "We may see some injuries."

Material from Reuters is included in this report.

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