

Switzerland's Podladtchikov Ousts Shaun White as Half-Pipe Golden Boy

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ROSA KHUTOR — U.S. star Shaun White failed in his bid to become the first three-time Olympic snowboard champion Tuesday, the crown passing to Switzerland's Iouri Podladtchikov.

Moscow-born Podladtchikov, the reigning world champion, laid down a breathtaking run in the half-pipe final to score 94.25 points for the win, while White remained without a medal in fourth after twice stumbling on his last run.

Podladtchikov is the second athlete to win gold in Sochi after having switched allegiance from Russia to another country. The first was Slovakia's Anastasia Kuzmina in the women's 7.5-kilometer biathlon sprint on Sunday.

The silver and bronze both went to Japanese riders, Ayumu Hirano and Taku Hiraoka, who scored 93.50 and 92.25 respectively to become the first snowboarders from any Asian country to win Olympic medals.

The buildup to half-pipe qualifying was marred by controversy over the pipe, which had come in for sustained criticism from riders and required spraying with water and salt to firm it up shortly before qualification began earlier Tuesday.

Criticism had focused on slushy snow at the bottom of the pipe and what many riders felt was too much vertical angle at the top of the pipe, something which appeared to contribute to White crashing on his first run when he landed on the lip of the pipe, nearly snapping his board.

To focus on the half-pipe, White pulled out of the inaugural slopestyle event last week citing the risk of injury. His compatriot Sage Kotsenburg won gold in his absence.

The women's snowboard half-pipe event is Wednesday.

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