

## Sochi Spotlight: Zimbabwe's first Winter Olympian

ALPINE SKIER TO MARK AFRICAN COUNTRY'S DEBUT AT GAMES, SEVERAL OTHER NATIONS MAKING FIRST TRIP

By Eric MacKenzie

SOCHI 2014  
ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS  
PIQUE | 

At long last, Zimbabwe will have its first Winter Olympian to cheer for next month in Sochi.

Luke Steyn is set to become the African nation's first competitor at a Winter Games, as the alpine ski racer is scheduled to compete in slalom and giant slalom.

According to the *New York Times*, the 20-year-old Steyn was born in the nation's capital, Harare, but moved to Switzerland when he was two years old. Though he's lived all over Europe and attended school at the University of Colorado, Steyn said he keeps his place of birth close to his heart.

"Though I have moved from Zimbabwe, I still feel very much connected to it," Steyn told the *Times*. "As they say, it's in your blood, and I hope to live and work in Africa again one day."

Based on the most recent FIS points list, Steyn is currently ranked 1,659th in the world in GS and 2,860th in slalom, so don't be expecting Zimbabwe to also collect its first-ever Winter Olympic medal. Zimbabwe has won a total of eight medals from past Summer Games, seven of which have been won by swimmer Kirsty Coventry.

However, Zimbabwe isn't the only country that will be making its first-ever appearance at a Winter Olympics this year.

Malta has qualified alpine skier Elise Pellegrin, American-raised slopestyle skier Julia Marino is set to be Paraguay's first Winter Olympian, and Yohan Goutt Goncalves will ski in the men's slalom event for Timor-Leste. Togo has also never

been to a Winter Games, but could be sending two athletes this year — cross-country skier Mathilde-Amivi Petitjean and slalom skier Alessia Afi Dipol.

Meanwhile, Bruno Banani, the

year's World Cup stop in Whistler.

Finally, a number of countries that sent athletes to the 2010 Games won't have representatives in Sochi this year. That includes Ghana, as "The Snow Leopard"

**The U.K.'s Mirror reports that it took a 7,400 kilometre flight spanning seven time zones to transport the two orcas from Vladivostok to Sochi.**

Tongan luger who changed his name to match a German lingerie company as a marketing ploy, has qualified for the Games through his results on the World Cup tour this year and will be Tonga's first representative at the Winter Olympics. Banani finished 31st at this

Kwame Nkrumah-Acheampong, a slalom skier who endeared himself to Sea to Sky residents during the last Winter Olympics, won't be back. Ethiopia, Colombia, North Korea, Senegal and South Africa also aren't sending any competitors this year.

A focus on excellence.  
A commitment to the future.



Supporting B.C.'s young athletes

Teck is proud to be the title sponsor of Cross Country B.C.'s skier development program. Through our partnership with Cross Country B.C., we are supporting excellence in sport and providing youth with experiences that will help prepare them for the future.

Come out and support these skiers at the Teck Coast Cup 2 & 3 on Jan 18-19, 2014, at Whistler Olympic Park. For start times and more information, visit [www.whistlernordics.com](http://www.whistlernordics.com)

For more information on Cross Country B.C.'s skier development program go to [www.crosscountrybc.ca](http://www.crosscountrybc.ca)

# Teck