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Olympics Wrap-Up

Article By: Thomas Grandi

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Commentator Thomas Grandi reflects on an emotional Olympics

It's incredible that the Games passed so quickly. At the beginning, it felt like it was going to be a long stretch and maybe a little challenging. But it went by so fast and there were so many great moments.

I'm Canadian, but I was born in Italy and speak Italian, so I was covering the Games for Italy's Sky TV. And I have to say as a Canadian, it was

terrific to cap off an incredible Olympics with a gold medal in hockey, which is our national sport. And to beat the US was extra special. Of course, getting our 14th gold to lead the gold medal count was amazing too.

I've been part of four Olympics as a competing skier, and I would say this was one of the most fun. I think every time there's another Olympics, it's bigger and better than the one before. I really believe Vancouver was able to deliver a bigger, better and more fascinating Olympics than ever.

And in the end, I think all Canadians feel more proud to be Canadian than ever before. After the hockey game, I walked through the city, and there were so many people walking with flags and painted faces and honking horns. It was one happy mob.

Emotion and Coincidence

There was plenty of emotion during these Olympics, starting when we lost Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili before the Games began. The opening ceremonies were actually dedicated to him.

Then, Canadian Joannie Rochette lost her mother just two days before her event, women's figure skating, yet she managed to put in one of her best performances ever, with her father watching her in the stands. It was really heart-wrenching to see that, and to see her carry the flag at the closing ceremonies was a great moment.

And on that same day, Italy finally got its first gold medal. It's a coincidence that the Olympic slalom has been run on February 27 only three times in Olympic history, and Italy has won two golds and a silver on those days. Alberto Tomba won the gold in '88 and the silver in '92, and Giuliano Razzoli—who Alberto was mentoring—won the gold this year. That was a pretty incredible moment for myself and my colleagues at Italian Sky TV, where I have been sitting in as a commentator.

My Wife's Last Race

My wife Sara Renner was the 2006 silver medalist in women's cross-country skiing; she took a break when our daughter Aria was born. Eventually, she went back to competing for a while, but she decided to retire after these Olympics. We knew this was the end of the road, so when it finally arrived, it was quite emotional. Sara definitely had some tears, I had some tears, the coaches had tears, the ski technicians had tears. With my commentator's credentials, I was able to get quite close to the finish line. When Sara got there, I lifted Aria up over a fence and told her to run over to mum. (I think some of the officials weren't thrilled, but it was a special moment for our family.)

Sara and I have been athletes as long as we've known each other. Now that we're both retired, it's going to be an adjustment to fill that void in our lives. But I'm certain we'll take up some new goals and work towards them, and at the same time really enjoy being a family.

I'm actually looking forward to getting back into my at-home routine, getting more regular exercise and eating healthy again. It's definitely part of who we are. I don't think you need to be an elite-level athlete to take care of yourself. It's great to feel good about your body and what you're putting into it.

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