

= Apolo Ohno =

Apolo Anton Ohno ( / ˈpʰoʊ ˈæntʰoʊ / ; born May 22 , 1982 ) is a retired American short track speed skating competitor and an eight @-@ time medalist ( two gold , two silver , four bronze ) in the Winter Olympics .

Raised by his father , Ohno began training full @-@ time in 1996 . He has been the face of short track in the United States since winning his medals at the 2002 Winter Olympics . At the age of 14 , he became the youngest U.S. national champion in 1997 and was the reigning champion from 2001 ? 2009 , winning the title a total of 12 times . In December 1999 , he became the youngest skater to win a World Cup event title , and became the first American to win a World Cup overall title in 2001 , which he won again in 2003 and 2005 . He won his first overall World Championship title at the 2008 championships .

Ohno 's accolades and accomplishments include being the United States Olympic Committee 's Male Athlete of the Month in October 2003 and March 2008 , the U.S. Speedskating 's Athlete of the Year for 2003 , and was a 2002 , 2003 and 2006 finalist for the Sullivan Award , which recognizes the best amateur athlete in the United States . Since gaining recognition through his sport , Ohno has worked as a motivational speaker , philanthropist , started a nutritional supplement business called 8 Zone , and in 2007 , competed on and won the reality TV show Dancing with the Stars . Ohno later became host of a revival of Minute to Win It on Game Show Network and served as a commentator for NBC 's coverage of the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi .

= = Early life = =

Ohno was born in Seattle , Washington , to a Japanese @-@ born father , Yuki Ohno ( ?? ? , ?no Yuki ) and a European American mother , Jerrie Lee . He attended Saghalee Middle School in Federal Way . Ohno 's parents divorced when he was an infant , and he was raised in Seattle by his father . He has had little contact with his biological mother and as of 2002 had expressed no interest in knowing her or his older half @-@ brother . Ohno 's father , a hair stylist and owner of the salon Yuki 's Diffusion , often worked 12 @-@ hour shifts , and with no family in the United States , found it hard to balance career and family . His father chose to name his son Apolo after the Greek words apo , which means to " steer away from " and lo , which means " look out ; here he comes . "

When Ohno was very young , his father meticulously researched childcare providers to care for his son during his long work hours . As he grew older , his father became concerned his son would become a latchkey kid , so he got his son involved with competitive swimming and quad @-@ speed roller skating at age 6 . He later switched from the instruction of Benton Redford , a National Champion , to a team in Federal Way , WA called Pattisons Team Extreme and became a national inline speedskating champion and record holder himself . His father used Inline Speedskating to fill his spare time . Ohno 's days were spent with morning swimming practices , followed by schooling , and finally skating practices in the afternoon .

When Ohno was 12 , he won the Washington state championship in the breaststroke but preferred inline speed skating over swimming . He has stated that by the time he turned 13 years of age he attended parties with older teenagers if he did not have competitions on the weekends . His father has stated that it was a struggle balancing his son 's desire for independence while helping him reach his potential as a young athlete .

= = Career = =

= = = Beginnings = = =

When he was 12 years old , Ohno became interested in short track speed skating after seeing the sport during the 1994 Olympics in Lillehammer . His father capitalized on this interest by driving him to short track competitions throughout the northwest United States and Canada , and Ohno won

several competitions in his age divisions . His father wanted to encourage Ohno to develop his skills and , although Ohno was underage , he got him admitted to the Lake Placid Olympic Training Center in 1996 to train full @-@ time for short track . At 13 years of age , Ohno was the youngest skater admitted to the center .

At first , Ohno 's commitment at Lake Placid was low until his teammates nicknamed him " Chunky " , which motivated him to train harder . In January , he failed to make the 1997 U.S. Junior World Team . Ohno adjusted his training and made a comeback winning the 1997 U.S. Senior Championships overall title , taking a gold medal in the 1500 m , a silver in the 300 m , and came in fourth in the 500 m races . At the age of 14 , he became the youngest person to win the title . Ohno then relocated to the Colorado Springs Olympic Training Center to begin training with the senior level skaters , despite being only 14 years old .

However , Ohno would struggle at the 1997 World Championships in Nagano , Japan , finishing 19th overall . After this disappointing defeat at his first appearance at a world championships , Ohno returned home to Seattle . He did not train from April to August 1997 , so he gained weight and was ill @-@ prepared for the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics . As a result , he finished last in the Olympic trials and did not qualify for the Olympic team . Because of his losses at the World Championships and his failure to qualify for the Olympic team , Ohno recommitted himself to the sport and returned to junior @-@ level skating at Lake Placid , rather than at Colorado Springs .

At the 1999 World Junior Championships , Ohno won first overall , placing first in the 1000 m and 1500 m , and winning silver in the 500 m . He won his second senior U.S. national championship in 1999 . He finished fourth overall at the 1999 World Championships and earned a silver medal in the 500 m . At the 2000 U.S. Championships , Ohno was unable to defend his title and finished third overall . At the 2000 World Championships , Ohno finished ninth overall . In the 2000 ? 2001 season , Ohno won his first World Cup overall title , regained his National title , and finished second overall in the World Championships , losing to Chinese skater Li Jiajun .

= = = 2002 Winter Olympics = = =

= = = = Qualification race controversy = = = =

In December 2001 , during the U.S. Short Track Speed Skating 2002 Olympic Trials , speed skater Shani Davis was racing for a position on the short track team . Ohno and fellow skater Rusty Smith had already earned slots on the six @-@ man team due to points earned from earlier races . In order for Davis to qualify , he had to place first in the final race ? the 1000 m ? by overcoming stronger skaters Ohno , Smith , and Ron Biondo . Since Ohno had been dominant in the meet to this point by winning every race he entered , a win by Davis seemed to be unlikely .

Though Ohno , Smith and Biondo were heavily favored to win the 1000 m , the race ended with Ohno finishing third , Smith second , and Davis at the top of the podium . Prior to crossing the finish line , Ohno started celebrating for Davis and Smith . Davis ' first @-@ place finish earned enough points to move past Tommy O 'Hare in the final point standings and to qualify for sixth place . By finishing second , Smith earned the opportunity to skate individually in the 1000 m . The victory celebration was short @-@ lived as rumors began that Ohno and Smith , both good friends of Davis , intentionally threw the race so Davis would win .

After returning to Colorado Springs , O 'Hare , who did not skate in the 1000 m , filed a formal complaint . The complaint was founded on Ohno 's seemingly deliberate attempt to stop Biondo from being able to pass Smith . Because of that blocking move on Biondo , Smith finished in second place and Davis finished first . For three days , Ohno , Smith , and Davis stood before an arbitration panel of the United States Olympic Committee . During the hearing , Davis was never accused of being at fault and Smith made the statement : " Any allegation that there was a fix , conspiracy or understanding between Apolo and me , or anyone else , to let Shani win the race is completely false . Shani is a great athlete , skated a great race , and deserves to be on the team . " The final verdict was that O 'Hare 's claims went unproven , all three were absolved of guilt , and the claim was

dismissed . After the dismissal , Ohno stated , " I am thrilled that the arbitration process has officially vindicated me ... As I 've said since the moment of these accusations , they were untrue and I did nothing wrong " .

= = = = Games = = = =

At the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City , Utah , Ohno emerged as the face of short @-@ track speed skating among American fans . He was a medalist in two events but there was controversy associated with the results .

After a disqualification in the 500 m race , he was leading the skaters in the 1000 m race . During a turn around the final corner , Ohno , Ahn Hyun Soo , Li Jiajun and Mathieu Turcotte all fell in a series of collisions . The last man standing was Steven Bradbury from Australia , who was trailing behind at the time , and skated through to win the gold medal , becoming the first person from the southern hemisphere to win a gold medal at a Winter Olympics . Ohno quickly got to his feet and crossed the finish line to win silver with Turcotte winning the bronze . Ohno , coincidentally was wearing skates , made by Bradbury 's own boot company , Revolutionary Boot Company . Bradbury had given them to Ohno , expecting for Ohno to win wearing them . Rather than the other way around .

In the 1500 m final race , with one lap remaining and currently in second place , Ohno attempted to make a pass on the leader Kim Dong @-@ Sung , who then drifted to the inside and as a result , Ohno raised his arms to signal he was blocked . Kim finished first ahead of Ohno but was disqualified for impeding , awarding the gold medal to Ohno . Fourth @-@ place finisher of the race , Fabio Carta of Italy , showed his disagreement with the disqualification decision saying it was " absurd that the Korean was disqualified " . China 's Jiajun Li , who moved from bronze to silver , remained neutral saying : " I respect the decision of the referee , I 'm not going to say any more " . Steven Bradbury , the 1000 m gold @-@ medal winner , also shared his views : " Whether Dong @-@ Sung moved across enough to be called for cross @-@ tracking , I don 't know , he obviously moved across a bit . It 's the judge 's interpretation . A lot of people will say it was right and a lot of people will say it 's wrong . I 've seen moves like that before that were not called . But I 've seen them called too " .

The South Korean team immediately protested the decision of the chief official of the race , but their protests were denied by the International Skating Union ( ISU ) . The Korean team then appealed to the International Olympic Committee ( IOC ) and the Court of Arbitration for Sport ( CAS ) . The IOC refused to see the case , stating , " This is a matter for the ISU to decide on . At this time , the IOC has received no proposal and taken no action " . The CAS sided with the officials of the race as " there is no provision in the short @-@ track rule book for overturning a judgment call by the referee " after the Korean team asked to have a video replay be used to determine whether or not there was a rule violation .

The disqualification upset South Korean supporters , many of whom directed their anger at Ohno and the International Olympic Committee . A large number of e @-@ mails protesting the race results crashed the Olympic Committee 's email server , and thousands of accusatory letters , many of which contained death threats , were sent to Ohno and the committee . Ohno shared his thoughts on the Koreans ' hostile reaction by saying , " I was really bothered by it . I grew up around many Asian cultures , Korean one of them . A lot of my best friends were Korean growing up . I just didn 't understand . Later on I realized that was built up by certain people and that was directed at me , negative energy from other things , not even resulting around the sport , but around politics , using me to stand on the pedestal as the anti @-@ American sentiment " . Earlier the same year , President George Bush had named North Korea as one of three members of the Axis of Evil , which had upset some South Koreans ; directing their anger at Ohno was a less direct way of voicing anger against Bush 's decision . The controversy continued at the 2002 FIFA World Cup , held jointly in South Korea and Japan several months after the Olympics . When the South Korean football ( soccer ) team scored a goal against the U.S. team , Korean players Ahn Jung @-@ Hwan and Lee Chun @-@ Soo made an exaggerated move imitating the move Ohno had made during the

speed skating event to indicate the other athlete had drifted into his lane .

= = = After Salt Lake = = =

Ohno continued to perform well in the sport after the 2002 Winter Games . He declined to participate in a 2003 World Cup short @-@ track event in Korea for security reasons . Despite the absence , he successfully defended his World Cup title during the 2003 season . He continued his dominance by winning the World Cup title again in the 2004 ? 2005 season .

At the first event of the 2005 World Cup event in China , Ohno severely sprained his ankle and withdrew from the event . At the second event in South Korea , an estimated 100 riot police stood guard at Incheon International Airport to prevent harm from happening to Ohno . Their concern stemmed from a possible lingering negative reaction from the 2002 Olympic Games disqualification controversy .

Ohno won two gold medals , as well as the overall title at the meet despite suffering from a severe stomach illness , and was surprised when the Korean crowd cheered his victories , saying , " I was really happy with the crowd 's reaction . It was pretty positive right from the time we landed . I was really happy it wasn 't ( hostile ) . Everything went really smooth . We were happy . " He was unable to defend his World Cup title from the previous three seasons , finishing third in the 2005 ? 2006 overall standings . At the 2005 World Championships , he finished second overall , winning the 1000 m and 3000 m races .

= = = 2006 Winter Olympics = = =

In the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin , Italy , Ohno stumbled during a semifinal heat in the 1500 m . Finishing fifth , he was unable to defend his 2002 gold medal in the event . Ohno was able to win the bronze medal in the 1000 m , with Korean skaters Ahn Hyun Soo and Lee Ho @-@ suk finishing before him .

After two false starts from other skaters , Ohno won gold in the 500 m when he took the lead with an explosive start and held it until the finish . Despite criticism that he appeared to move before the start , a violation of the rules , the race start was validated by the officials . Afterward , Ohno said , " I was in the moment at the time . I thought I timed the start just perfect . The starter had been pretty quick all day , so that 's why there were so many false starts at the beginning . But that was really good for me . "

On the same day as his 500 m gold win , he earned a bronze medal in the men 's 5000 m relay , with an inside pass on Italian skater Nicola Rodigari on the final leg to put the United States in third position . Later , during the medals ceremony for the event , the winning South Korean team and the Americans embraced , followed by a group picture featuring the medalists .

= = = Post @-@ Olympic hiatus and return = = =

Taking a year off from competitive skating when the 2006 Winter Olympics ended , Ohno returned to win his eighth national title , placing first in every event during the U.S. Championships held from February 23 ? 25 , 2007 . On April 26 , 2007 , he was inducted into the Asian Hall of Fame , an award which honors achievements of Asian Americans .

From March 9 ? 11 , 2007 , he competed at the 2007 World Championships held in Milan , Italy , winning gold in the 1500 m due to the disqualification of Song Kyung @-@ Taek , who had blocked a passing attempt made by Ohno . He won bronze in the 1000 m , 3000 m , and the 5000 m relay with teammates , Jordan Malone , Travis Jayner , and Ryan Bedford . Because of his wins , he became the overall bronze medalist , behind silver medalist Charles Hamelin and Ahn Hyun Soo , who became the first man to become a five @-@ time World Champion .

On December 24 , 2007 , in Kearns , Utah , Ohno won his ninth national title , finishing first in the 1000 m and the 1500 m . He also finished first in the 500 m , but was disqualified for crosstracking . In the 3000 m , he finished second . At the 2008 World Championships in Gangneung , South Korea

, Ohno won his first overall title , placing first place in the 500 m , second in the 1000 m , and third place in the 3000 m . He defeated South Koreans Lee Ho @-@ Suk , silver medalist and Song Kyung @-@ Taek who finished third in points . In 2009 , he won his 10th national title and qualified for the world team . Unable to defend his championship , he finished fifth in the overall rankings at the 2009 World Championships in Vienna , Austria , placing second at the 1000 m , and winning gold with the 5000 m relay team .

= = = 2010 Winter Olympics = = =

In preparation for the 2010 Winter Olympics , Ohno lost over 9 kilograms ( 20 pounds ) of weight from when he appeared at the 2002 Winter Games . He went down to a 65 @.@ 7 kg ( 145 lb ) bodyframe and a 2 @.@ 5 % Body fat percentage enduring a 5 @-@ month 3 @-@ a @-@ day training program combined with a strict nutritional program . As a result , he could lift double the weight he could before the training . With respect to his training regimen , Ohno said : " Come these Games , there 's no one who 's going to be fitter than me . There 's just no way . Whether I can put it together on the ice or not and feel good , that 's a different story . But I know , from a physical training standpoint , nobody 's even close ... I 've never prepared like this in my life ? for anything . I want to leave nothing on the table . "

= = = = Trials = = = =

During the U.S. Olympic Trials held September 8 ? 12 , 2009 , in Marquette , Michigan , Ohno won the overall meet title and defended his national title . He won the finals during the 500 m , 1000 m , and 1500 m races . However , during the 1000 m time trial , Ohno came in second to J. R. Celski despite skating a personal best of 1 : 24 @.@ 500 to Celski 's personal best of 1 : 23 @.@ 981 . Celski , who finished second overall and was leading in points after the first two nights of the trials , was injured during a crash in the semifinals of the 1000 m race when his right skate sliced into his left leg ; he did not skate in the 1000 m finals . Ohno had a narrow victory in the 500 m , beating out the silver place finisher Jeff Simon by only .039 of a second . Ohno , Celski , Jordan Malone , Travis Jayner , and Simon Cho were the top five finishers at the trials . Afterwards , Ohno said of the nominated team : " This is the strongest team we 've ever had . I feel really good about how we will do in the next Olympics . "

= = = = Games = = = =

In the 1500 m final , Ohno placed second after two Korean skaters , Lee Ho @-@ Suk and Sung Si @-@ Bak , made contact and crashed into the wall during the final turn of the final lap . He was in fourth place leading into the crash , and as a result , moved into second place , earning the silver . Fellow American skater J. R. Celski finished with the bronze medal . The gold medal went to South Korea 's Lee Jung @-@ Su . This win allowed Ohno , with six career medals , to tie Bonnie Blair for most medals won by a U.S. Winter Olympian .

Heading into the 1000 m final , Ohno had won the overall silver medal for the 1000 m during the 2009 ? 10 World Cup by competing in three of the four competitions during the season . During the finals of the 1000 m , Ohno finished in third place , making a comeback from a slip with less than three laps remaining . With the bronze medal win , he became the most decorated American athlete ever at the Winter Games with seven career medals . Bonnie Blair , the former record holder , said she was happy for his accomplishment , adding : " It 's a great feat for him , U.S. speedskating , and the United States of America . We hope that more kids will see his accomplishments and want to try our great sport that has been so good to us and taught us so much about what it takes to be successful in life . "

In the 500 m final , Ohno finished the race in second place behind Canada 's Charles Hamelin . However , he was disqualified after impeding François @-@ Louis Tremblay of Canada around the final turn . The silver medal went to Sung Si @-@ Bak , with Tremblay taking the bronze .

The 5000 m relay team for the United States finished with the bronze medal . The team , consisting of J. R. Celski , Simon Cho , Travis Jayner , Jordan Malone , and Ohno , were in the fourth position for the majority of the race . With a strong push from Celski with two laps to go , Ohno as the anchor leg was able to pass the Chinese team for third place ; Canada won the gold and South Korea took silver . This bronze medal was the eighth Olympic medal of his career .

= = Personal life = =

In the United States , Ohno is credited with popularizing and being the face of his sport . He said it is amazing being a role model to younger skaters . Growing up , he did not have that influence within his sport , but looked up to other athletes outside his sport , such as Muhammad Ali , Joe Frazier , and Lance Armstrong . Training for short track has been the main focus of Ohno 's life , but he has been able to work on other endeavors . He studied business at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs . Believing in healthy eating habits , Ohno worked with his training coach John Schaeffer during preparations for the 2010 Winter Games to develop a nutritional supplement business called 8 Zone . The supplements consist of eight @-@ hour segments where a dose is administered . He hopes this business will be able to be a sponsor for future Olympic Games .

After the 2010 Winter Games , he created the Apolo Anton Ohno Foundation and partnered with the Century Council 's Ask , Listen , Learn Program to discourage underage drinking of alcohol and to promote a healthy lifestyle . Furthering his goal of promoting healthier food choices and working with the endorsement of the Washington State Potato Commission , he will be working on a cookbook with top Seattle chefs in 2010 .

He has an interest in pursuing a career in the entertainment world . He participated and won the fourth season of the U.S. reality show Dancing with the Stars . He returned for the 15th Season which features all @-@ star celebrities . Ohno 's interests in fashion led him to be a guest judge on the fashion reality show Project Runway in 2008 , and to an endorsement deal with Omega , the maker of luxury watches , in 2010 . Omega President Stephen Urquhart said , " We are very proud to support Apolo here in Vancouver and congratulate him on his outstanding performance . He is poised to make history of his own here and we are thrilled that he is part of the Omega family " . He also appeared on Minute to Win It as the host of the GSN revival in 2013 since he is a fan of the show .

Ohno has an interest in being a philanthropist . He participated in GAP 's campaign to fight the spread of HIV / AIDS in Africa by joining Product Red . Half of the proceeds went to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS , Tuberculosis and Malaria . Besides working with The Salvation Army and the Clothes off our Back Foundations , he used his fame to help raise funds for a Ronald McDonald House in Seattle after the 2002 Winter Games . He helped raise \$ 20 @,@ 000 for Nikkei Concerns , a provider of care and services for Japanese elders living in the Pacific Northwest . Later that year , Ohno joined Senator Ted Kennedy in Washington , D.C. to show the importance of math and science education by helping launch the " Math Moves U Hippest Homework Happening " program , which gave students the opportunity to do math homework online with celebrities and athletes .

He has also volunteered with Special Olympics and taken part in Unified Sports , which brings together athletes with intellectual disabilities and without on the same team . Ohno currently serves as a Special Olympics Global Ambassador ahead of the 2015 World Summer Games taking place in Los Angeles , California .

Ohno dated fellow Olympian speedskater Allison Baver .

= = = Sponsorships = = =

Using his recognition and fame from his sport , he has accumulated a list of sponsors that include McDonald 's , General Electric , The Century Council , Vicks and Coca @-@ Cola . Ohno 's father , Yuki , said about sponsorships : " He 's not like a professional athlete who has a multi @-@ million @-@ dollar contract with a team ... He has to have sponsorships to pay the bills " . Capitalizing on Ohno 's fame , Alaska Airlines were his primary sponsor for the 2010 Winter Games and designed a

Boeing 737 ? 800 jet with his image on the side .

He was critical of the leaders of the U.S. Speedskating Organization when a donation of \$ 250 @, @ 000 was raised by viewers of the Comedy Central show The Colbert Report for the organization after their largest commercial sponsor , the Dutch DSB Bank , declared bankruptcy and was unable to donate its \$ 300 @, @ 000 in November 2009 . In an email to Time , he wrote it was " a bit embarrassing that our leadership couldn 't secure other sponsors three months before the Olympic Games " but credited the show 's host Stephen Colbert for " his willingness to help out our nation 's greatest athletes " . In return for The Colbert Report donation , long track and short track skaters had the " Colbert Nation " logo on their uniforms for World Cup events leading up to the 2010 Winter Games . Ohno did not wear the logo because Alaska Airlines was his primary sponsor for the 2010 Games . He was also part of Oreo 's Team DSRL sketch in 2011 .

= = Dancing with the Stars = =

= = = Season 4 ? with Julianne Hough = = =

Ohno participated on the fourth season of the reality show , Dancing with the Stars . He was paired with dancing partner Julianne Hough , and both appeared on the show for the first time on March 19 , 2007 . Together , they received the competition 's first perfect score of 30 for their samba routine on April 16 , 2007 . The dancing duo became finalists in the competition , and went on to become the champions in May 2007 .

= = = Season 15 ? with Karina Smirnoff = = =

In July 2012 , it was announced Ohno would return for the all @-@ star fifteenth season for a second chance to win the mirrorball trophy ; this time he was paired with Season 13 champion professional Karina Smirnoff . They were voted off during the ninth week of the competition .

\* Note : Paula Abdul was guest @-@ judge during Week 4 , Opponents ' Choice Week .

During the Swing Marathon , the judges eliminated each pair until only one pair remained , earning 10 points . Apolo was the third eliminated and earned 6 points from the judges .

= = Other appearances = =

In 2012 , Ohno appeared as a guest star in the 17th episode of the 2nd season of Hawaii Five @-@ 0 , as a suspect . He also had a guest appearance on The Biggest Loser in Season 12 , Episode 9 and Season 15 , Episode 12 .

In 2013 , Ohno appeared as the character " Stone " in the Syfy Original Movie Tasmanian Devils , as well as the host of GSN 's Minute to Win It .

In 2015 , Ohno appeared as a live guest during the season finale of NBC 's live variety show Best Time Ever with Neil Patrick Harris .

In 2016 , Ohno appeared as a guest star on Hollywood Game Night hosted by Jane Lynch on NBC .

= = Apolo Ohno Invitational = =

In November 2014 Ohno sponsored a speedskating race in Salt Lake City , UT that featured the four top men and women skaters from the US , China , Canada and the Netherlands . It aired on NBCSN on 21 November 2014 at 10 : 00 pm EST .