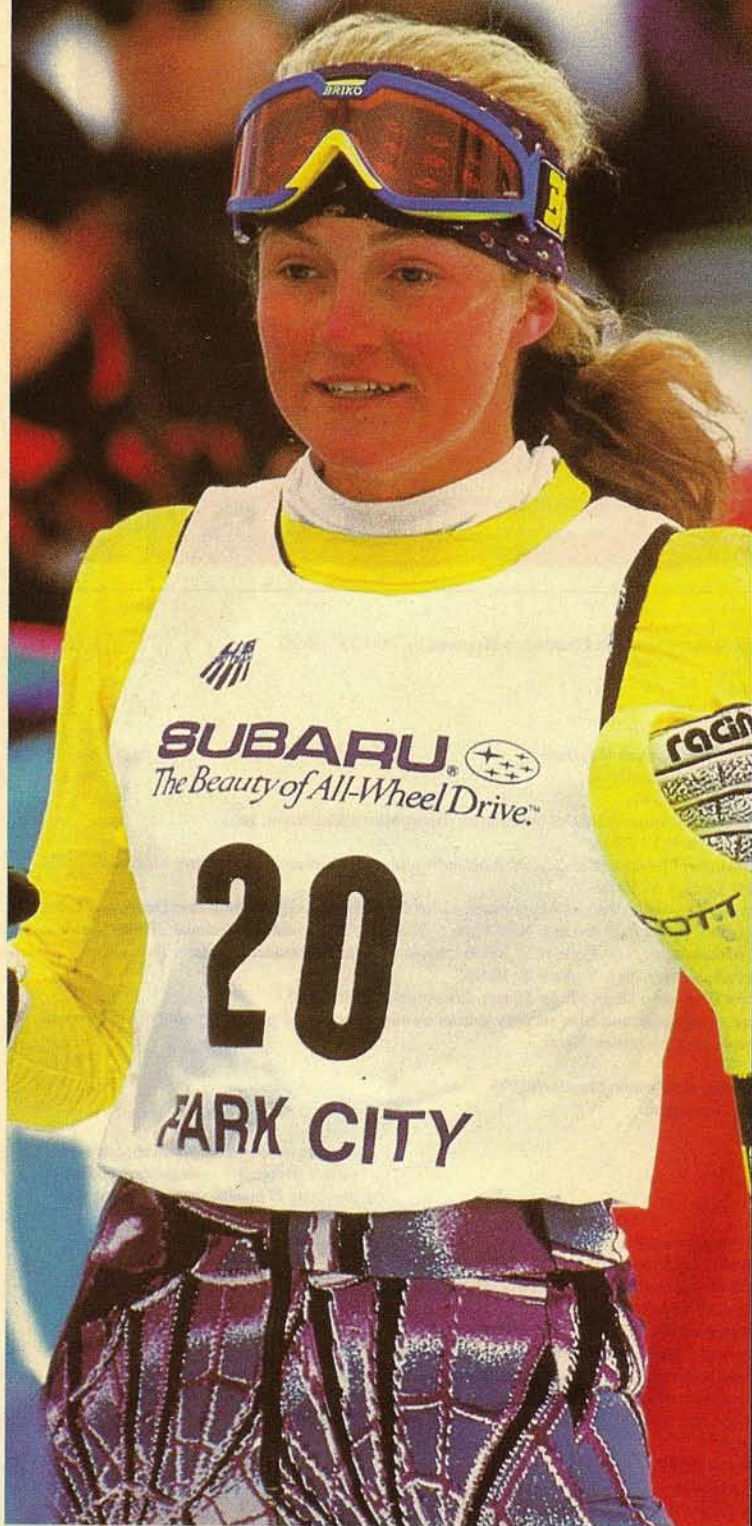


Last run

Sarah Schleper



Born to race Feb. 19, 1979

Raised in & Lives In Vail, Colo.

Sweet success at sweet 16 By the end of last season, among 16-year-olds, she ranked second in the world in slalom, third in giant slalom and fourth in super-G. Last spring, in a field that included U.S. Ski Team skiers, she finished 11th in the U.S. National Championships slalom (fourth in the second run) despite a poor start position.

Chip on Sarah "I've been coaching for 27 years, and Sarah is something special," says Ski Club Vail coach Chip Woods. "Sarah shows the same promise at this age that Tommy Moe and Tamara McKinney did when they were 16 and I was coaching them. There's no doubt in my mind that someday this kid will win World Cup races."

Sarah on Sarah "I'm pretty competitive in all the sports I do—I run track and I play on the boys soccer team at Battle Mountain High School."

Chip on Sarah, part II "She knows one speed—and that's the one it takes to win. She's a fierce, intense competitor on race day. Sarah will fight and fight and twist in the air to get back on course and finish. Her slalom completion rate is around 95 percent, which is incredible—higher than any other skier I've ever worked with."

Seed of her speed "My dad, Buzz, started me skiing in our backyard when I was about 2 years old. Then I grew up skiing on Vail Mountain with my dad and my brother, Johnny. It's been an advantage to be on a big mountain and to always be trying to keep up with my dad. He's a great skier and he likes to have fun."

Ski to live, live to ski "Skiing is the greatest thing in life. It's always such a rush. I love going fast and arcing turns."

Name that tune "I like for my dad to be at races. He pumps me up and he gives my skis an awesome tune—he owns Buzz's Boots & Boards ski shop in Vail."

Endless winter "Last year I skied six days a week from mid-October through the end of April. We took Mondays off. Then, during the summer, I skied about four weeks at Mammoth, Calif., Mt. Hood, Ore., and in New Zealand."

The goals, short term "I want to do well in the World Junior Championships this March in Switzerland."

The goals, long term "Everyone's goal as a ski racer is to win World Cups and Olympic gold medals."

—Reade Bailey