

Snowboarder Smiling After Crash

By Amy and Serena

Austrian snowboarder Markus Schairer experienced '*one of the worst crashes in my entire life*' on Thursday 15th February 2018 in the snowboarding cross quarterfinals of the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

During the last jump of the course, Schairer lost control and landed flat on his back, breaking the fifth cervical vertebra of his spine. The three-time Olympian was immobilised for minutes after the fall but then rose to his feet, strapped himself back onto his board and finished the course.

After he finished the race, the Austrian Olympic Committee later said that there were no early signs of neurological impairment. At the moment it is unclear to see where he is receiving treatment.

Schairer, 30, posted '*My dream did not come true. I did not bring home gold, silver or bronze. Instead, I'm wearing my own personal medal now. Honestly, I had more than one guardian-angle. I broke my neck at one of the worst crashes in my entire life. Luckily, there are no neurological deficits, so I will be able to walk soon. When such things happen, you really start knowing what's important! Thanks for the massive support from my family, friends, the @olympic_team_austria and all the wishes from all around the world!! Big applause for my opponents but friends on the podium @pierrevaultier @jarrydhughes @reginoherma3 #badass #olympics #pyongchang2018 #crash #pain #comminghome #snowboardcross #sbx*' on Instagram with a selfie of him in his neck brace.



This quote reveals his disappointment of not bringing home an Olympic medal, but also his acknowledgement of the support and love from his friends, coaches and opponents.

At the moment, he has had his long-lasting surgery and posted two new photos on Instagram: 1 of the x-rays of his neck; and one of him in his neck brace with '*the good thing having your neck wrapped in a ruff is that you have to keep your head held high*' as a caption. He has had 15 staples in his back as well as 4 nails into his neck to help support and heal the bone structure.

Snowboarding cross (according to The Guardian) is the second most dangerous Winter Olympic sport so accidents like Schairer's - but perhaps a little less horrific - are common. Here are some previous incidents that also occurred during the Winter Olympics (or training): Elise Christie, a British speed skater, experienced a horrific crash in the 1500m; and Katie Ormerod broke her heel into 2 pieces during training (to find further detail on this, visit this link: www.bbc.co.uk/sport/winter-olympics/42993893).

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

<http://people.com/sports/winter-olympics-2018-snowboarder-markus-schairer-breaks-neck/>

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