

Intro: **Hello and what's up**, and welcome to Ski Stuff the all encompassing ski podcast...
(music)

(Music) Hey I'm your host Thomas and welcome to the year long endeavour that is Ski Stuff... on the very first episode of Ski Stuff we will be discussing my pick for the greatest Canadian skier. This could factor in many things such as most medals, most awards or just overall the best. With the help of special interview guest Mikko Jaakkola we will discuss, dissect and examine the life impact and career of (drum roll) ... ALEXANDRE BILODEAU. (end music) (start backing track)

Alexandre Bilodeau was a Canadian freestyle skier who competed in the Olympics and the world freestyle circuit. He is an extremely talented athlete who had a huge impact on both the sport he competed in and Canada as a nation.

If you don't know much about Alexandre, let me give you the nice short sweet rundown on his life the events he competed in and his awards and successes... (short music)

Alexandre Bilodeau was born September 8th 1987 in the quaint town of Rosemère Quebec. He has two siblings, one brother and one sister. His brother tragically contracted cerebral palsy and was said he would not be able to walk... now his brother is 32 and is alive well and walking. Alexandre's brother's condition played a big part in Alexandre's future charity work.

Alexandre's first love was not skiing but hockey. He loved it so much and He wanted to play everyday but his mom grew tired of driving Alexandre to the rink and tried to get him to join skiing. Alexandre thought about it and when he saw Jean-Luc Brassard win Olympic Gold he made up his mind and joined ski team

This was a pivotal moment in his ski career. He kept in skiing, stayed in school and went to graduate from Collège Jean-Eudes. After school he started his ski career in the World freestyle circuit. In the very year started World Cup he placed 12th in the 2006 Torino Olympics. Biding his time to come back to the Olympics he continued in the World Cup series becoming extremely successful in almost all events he competed in. (Music fades out).

2010 was where Alexandre had his big break. He was invited to compete for team Canada for the 2010 Winter Olympics. He joined the team gladly and started to train. His main competition was Dale Begg-Smith, an Australian born in Vancouver.. Alexandre threw down an amazing training run coming second if this were to be the main competition. He knew he had to better to beat Dale Begg-Smith. On the night of the competition in slushy Rainy conditions he threw down an amazing run edging out Dale Begg-Smith by just 0.67 of a point. He won the gold medal and extremely important for Canadian morale.

"The board reads #1, he is on top with one more to go!"

He was awarded the diamond jubilee medal from Queen Elizabeth the second. He got on live tv and announced his retirement after the 2013/14 World Cup season and the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Alexandre Bilodeau was gladly accepted onto the Canadian freestyle ski team for Sochi 2014. He knew his main rival in this Olympics would be fellow Canadian Mikael Kingsbury as the previous two World Cup seasons had just been a seesaw between the two of them. With Mikael usually coming out on top as he was the younger skier. Alex had another good training run as he did in 2010 and he was looking good. For his final run again threw down an amazing run and won gold beating out Mikael. This was the first male Canadian freestyle skier to defend his gold medal two years in a row. And it was a first for Canada. He continued in the World Cup season and retired a couple months after the Olympics. He became the most successful Canadian men's freestyle skier

Since his amazing and inspiring ski career he has gone to study accounting at the John Molson school of business situated at Concordia university in Montreal. He has also started charity work for many different organizations and has been selected to coach Canadian ski teams in Quebec. He think that his heroes are his Brother Frédéric and great Canadian skier Jean-Luc Brassard. He lives in Montreal. He has been awarded the medal of honour from the National Assembly of Quebec and air Canada athlete of the Year. He is now recognized as the most awarded men's freestyle skier from Canada. (Music fades away)

Now that you know his story the facts it's time to ask yourself the question, is he the greatest Canadian skier since 1982? I personally believe he is and I am going to give you my reasons why. Reason #1 is he is a record breaker and the most successful Canadian freestyle skier in Canadian history. Reason number two is because he has done so much for the sport. He has donated to different ski charities and medical charities such as cerebral palsy and other afflictions. My third reason why he is the greatest Canadian skier since 1982 is because he has done so much for Canadian identity and Canadian victories in the sport.

So now you know my reasons why he is the greatest Canadian. You can ask yourself the same questions. What are your reasons for why or why not he is the greatest Canadian. It is now time to have a special interview guest Mikko jaakkola. We will ask a couple questions about Alex and a couple questions about himself and why or why not he is the greatest Canadian.

(Bed cuts) just a warning the audio will be a little patchy throughout the interview. Hello and how are you doing today?

I am doing splendid, how are you?

Pretty good, pretty good

So can I get your full name and what you do?

My full name is Mikko Jaakkola and I am an electrician.

How long have you been skiing.?

How long have I been skiing, well I have been skiing of and on for about 30 years. First time I skied I broke my leg so I didn't ski for a while after that

That's to bad

Where do you like to ski?

Wherever your skiing dude. Location wise I would have to say Revelstoke is my favourite hills ever

Nice, same here

How much do you know about Alexandre Bilodeau and what he does and what he's won.

Y'a you should know that he's won the first gold medal on home soil.

Ya

In 2010. That was pretty cool. I couldn't tell you his exact standing in the World Cup bit I know he is a repeat Olympic gold medalist which is pretty cool.

Ya it is (for context I pretty much just asked this question just to get a general background check on what he knows about Alex.)

Before we go any deeper into Alexandre's career, do you think there has been a overall better Canadian skier since 1982?

It's a tough one you know. It all kinda comes back to the timeline. The back to back gold medal kinda proved himself. Not to say that there hasn't been a lot of amazing skiers that we have produced. Alex is my pick.

After this question I kinda found out that Alex was his pick for the greatest Canadian skier. For context I just wanted to know his personal pick.

Do you know about his contributions to charities and did you know know that his brother had cerebral palsy.

Again I discovered in 2010 that his brother had cerebral palsy he umm contributed to several charities. One of course being the cerebral palsy thing of Canada.

What do you think of his rivalry with Mikael Kingsbury?

Yea, it's a doozie. It's one of the healthy rivalries.

I can agree with that. You can cheer for one or the other but one still comes out on top.

They have been doing really good performances for Canada. Ya know they still want to win.

That about concludes the interview. Any final thoughts?

Do you know that Alex gave out the Juno award to Michael Bublé. At the 2010 Juno awards

Yea I did I found that out in my research about Alex. It's pretty cool, he won the first gold medal on Canadian soil and so they got him TV famous.

It's cool. Final thoughts just go skiing.

Well thank you very much for coming on the show. Yea thank you.

Hey you welcome any time buddy.

Another massive thank you to Mikko Jaakkola for coming on the show. It was a huge help to get the average Canadian skiers view on Alexandre Bilodeau. Now that you the listener know the facts it's time to ask yourself as a skier or maybe not, is Alexandre Bilodeau the greatest Canadian skier since 1982? Who could be better? who has done more? Which Canadian has impacted the sport more? Why or why not? You can tell me in the comment below. Thank you so much for listening to the very first episode of Ski Stuff. Come back for the next episode, WW2 and where does skiing have a place in the great conflict. If you could please subscribe that would be a huge help and it is free. Just on click tap or drag makes a difference. Another big thank you for Mikko for coming on the show. And again thank you for listening. See you next time and keep dreaming about skiing.