

# Pass It On®...

## From Great to Even Greater.

*Lindsey Vonn comes out of a 5-year retirement to become the oldest athlete in the field of downhill racing – with a titanium knee.*

The sport of downhill racing is about speed. The fastest time wins. But to get across the finish line, skiers have to hold form in turns that almost defy physics and stretch the boundaries of human strength and balance. Racing requires incredible leg muscle to absorb the centrifugal force on tight corners when travelling at 80 MPH. For nearly two decades, one of the very best has been Lindsey Vonn.

Lindsey Vonn is one of the most accomplished alpine ski racers in history. After winning four World Cup overall championships in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012, she is among the all-time leaders in World Cup race victories. Vonn made history as the first American woman to win a gold medal in downhill at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Vonn won her first race at age 7 and international competitions by 9. She showed incredible talent as soon as she stepped onto the slopes at 2 years old. Her father was a former junior ski champion. The whole family was athletic, and they all supported her. But Vonn's drive was unique. She didn't just love to compete; she loved to go fast. The focus it takes to carve at high speed and the adrenaline of literally being on edge is what drew Vonn to the sport of downhill racing.

Recognizing her potential, the family moved to Colorado to pursue Lindsey's dream of reaching the Olympics. There was world-class training, a legendary coach and new opportunities.

Yet Lindsey Vonn's storied career has been anything but easy. Imagine crashing on the ice at high speed without the protection of a steel cage or an air bag. Vonn crashed so hard that it nearly tore her leg in half. She injured her knee so badly that it needed repair with titanium replacement parts.

After multiple injuries, doctors advised Vonn to leave competitive racing and enjoy life. She took that advice, and before retiring, she said in an interview, "Never give up, just start a new chapter." She had earned it. She was in the record books.

But Vonn wasn't finished. After five years in retirement, she decided to come back.

"I still love skiing, and that's the only reason I came back," she said as she began preparing for the 2026 Olympics. "I'm not chasing anything, I'm not trying to prove anything to anyone. ... It's just me and the mountain, like it was in the beginning."

Looking back at her career, Vonn is very aware of the sacrifices her family made for her – especially her mother, who battled ALS and passed away in 2022. That legacy is still with Vonn as she prepares for another run, titanium parts and all.

"One thing my mom has given me is the ability to pick myself back up .... That's what she did her whole life, and I'll never stop doing that."

**Go For It...**[PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

*The Foundation for a Better Life® promotes positive values to live by and pass along to others.*

Copyright © 2026 | The Foundation for a Better Life®  
All rights reserved. | [www.passiton.com](https://www.passiton.com)

Available under a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 License (international):  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>