

A slippery slope

Will Israel's bobsled team make it to the 2006 Olympics?

• By LIONEL GAFFEN and FRANKIE SACHS

On a cool evening in Calgary during November 2002, David Greaves was preparing for his first competitive run down the track. As the newest member of the Israeli bobsled team, Greaves strode towards the starting gate, trying to take it all in.

Decked out in his blue-and-white bobsled suit with a small Israeli flag sewn onto the shoulder, Greaves, together with team member John Frank, proudly climbed onto the track and brought the sled to the starting point.

As the call began to echo throughout the Olympic Park, Greaves noticed the astonished faces of some onlookers.

Next, he heard something he'd never heard before: the PA system boomed out, "The track is clear for Israel 1." His eyes welled up with tears. Frank turned to him, said the *Shema Yisrael* prayer, and they pushed off and raced down the track.

That day didn't have a happy ending — they crashed and flipped over, failed to complete the race, and ruined their rental sled — but for the three members of Israel's national bobsled team, it was another step toward realizing their dream.

The story of the Israeli bobsled team isn't the story of a former jock or ex-fighter pilot looking for long-lost glory, nor is it the tale of how an everyman became an Olympic athlete. Rather, it is the story of three men who set out to bring pride to their country and offer the world a positive story about Israel.

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The teammates and their coach. Offering the world a positive spin on Israel. (Denny Bailly/Visual Media Inc.)