



Action-packed FIS World Cup weekend

An action-packed weekend and Monday night offered a superb programme with a series of spectacular competitions between 10th-12th December.

5 different countries, France, USA, Canada and the Czech Republic hosted 20 competitions in 7 events of 4 of the FIS disciplines, Cross-Country Skiing, Alpine Skiing, Ski Jumping and Snowboarding.

12 nations managed to claim a spot on the podium while 7 different nations produced a winner in the various competitions. Amongst a number of interesting results it was only the second time that Andorra managed to collect points in the FIS Alpine World Cup through Alex Antor's 23rd spot in the Alpine Super Combined in Val d'Isere), while Greece could celebrate their first points in the FIS Cross-Country World Cup competitions in Vernon (CAN) with Lefteris Fafalis placing 30th in the men's Sprint race. Germany were the dominant force in the Men's 15km Cross-Country pursuit competition where they claimed the top five positions. Switzerland's Andreas Kuettel confirmed his strong start to the season with a 1st and 3rd at the Ski Jumping events in Harrachov with further joy in the Swiss camp following Nadja Styger's victory in the Ladies Super G in Aspen, in contrast to the disappointment for the Men's Alpine Team after the disqualification of Didier Defago for infringement of equipment regulations after posting the best times in the Super Combined in Val d'Isère.

Previous winners' celebration sets atmosphere for thrilling alpine weekend at Val d'Isere (FRA)

Olympic skiing legend, Jean-Claude-Killy along with Luc Alphand, Carole Montillet and Australia's Malcolm Milne were among the distinguished guests when Val d'Isere (FRA) celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Criterium de la Première Neige by inviting all former winners for a glorious celebration in the idyllic French ski resort. Impressively around 50 former winners turned up for the occasion.

Jean-Claude Fritsch, head of the Val d'Isere local organizing committee was the architect behind the idea of bringing the legendary athletes together on Friday 9th December – the day before the Men's Downhill competition – to rekindle the nostalgia of past performances and set the atmosphere for the "Criterium de la Première Neige" which over the years has turned into a true classic since it became part of the FIS Alpine World Cup tour in 1968/1969.

FIS Freestyle Skiing World Cup resumes in Tignes (FRA)

Three months after the FIS Freestyle World Aerials events in Mt. Buller (AUS), Tignes (FRA), Changchun (CHI) and Oberstdorf (GER) will set the scene for eight competitions within five days between 14th and 18th December as athletes prepare for the next chapter in this season's FIS Freestyle World Cup. Tignes and Oberstdorf will host the first Moguls competitions of the year while Changchun will signal the second stop in the FIS Freestyle Aerials World Cup. Athletes from 23 nations have announced their participation in Tignes and Oberstdorf (with Greece taking part for the first time in

the history of the FIS Freestyle World Cup) while Changchun may present performers from 11 different nations. All sites look set to stage the competitions in very good conditions as snow has been falling steadily at all locations and temperatures have remained wintry allowing organizers to stay within the time schedule with the final preparations.

This will be the 25th year that Tignes hosts a Freestyle FIS World Cup event. The resort is particularly significant for Freestyle skiing as hosts of the 1st Freestyle FIS World Championships in 1986 as well as the first ever Olympic Freestyle competition in ladies and men's moguls in 1992.

IOC TV and Radio Commission conducts a final review of Torino TV preparations

FIS President Gian-Franco Kasper attended the IOC TV and Radio Commission's final meeting before the Olympic Winter Games in Torino, held in Lausanne on 12-13th December, 2005. One of the 24 IOC Commissions, the TV and Radio Commission advises the Organizing Committees of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Broadcasting Organizations on how to provide the best possible conditions for the broadcast media during the Games. The meeting agenda included a status review of the Games' TV preparations as well as details concerning operating conditions during both the pre-Games and Games-time periods.

Torino 2006 is bound to set new broadcasting records for the Olympic Winter Games: There will be 80 broadcasters on site, producing more than 900 hours of coverage to be sent live to 160 countries. For the first time in Olympic history, the competition coverage will be totally digital and shot in high definition.

The production and distribution of Torino radio and television programming is managed by the Torino Olympic Broadcasting Organization (TOBO), an internal division of the Torino organizing

committee (TOROC). More than 1,500 TOBO technicians, cameramen, directors, producers, and sound and video specialists will be working to ensure that Torino 2006 delivers an unforgettable television sports experience.

FIS President announces FIS Academy executive programmes

The President of FIS, Gian-Franco Kasper, travelled to Manchester (GBR) to announce the details of the FIS Academy executive programmes. The FIS Academy provides intensive, tailored, world-leading education to executives working within the FIS Family.



(Gian-Franco Kasper, Professor Alan Gilbert – President of The University of Manchester, Vicky Rosin – Assistant Chief Executive of Manchester City Council, and Chris Solly – Director of the FIS Academy launch the World Academy of Sport Executive Centre and the FIS Academy executive programmes.)

Following a successful launch last Thursday, co-hosted by the President of The University of Manchester, Professor Alan Gilbert, Gian-Franco Kasper acknowledged "We at FIS are delighted that such a reputable institution will be delivering FIS Academy executive programmes."

"The strategic direction of the FIS over the next few years will need to develop and invest in industry services as people become increasingly multi-skilled and as the world becomes progressively smaller. With the support of The University of Manchester I believe we will provide such tools. This centre of educational excellence will be highly specific and sensitive to the needs of the ski industry and represents a further re-investment in the future of winter sports

around the world, giving a clear message to the sporting community that the FIS is at the fore-front of modern international sporting organisations.”

The FIS Academy Management Education Programme, a series of three tailored, 2-hour intensive modules being delivered at the FIS 2006 Congress in Portugal in May 2006, is the first in a number of executive education courses to be provided by the Academy. It will be followed by the FIS Academy Intensive Executive Administration 6-day Programme which will be held at The University of Manchester. You may find out more about the FIS Academy here: <http://www.fis-academy.org/>

Ertl (GER) sets standard

Germany's Martina Ertl-Renz made her 403rd FIS World Cup start in Sunday's slalom in Aspen (USA), breaking the ladies' record formerly held by Austria's Anita Wachter. Ertl-Renz, 32, made her World Cup debut 14 years ago in a giant slalom competition at Santa Caterina (ITA), finishing 10th. She won two medals at the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics, silver in giant slalom and bronze in slalom.

The German all-rounder's durability and ability to adapt to change have brought her 14 World Cup wins, the first coming in a giant slalom in Vail (USA) in 1994 and the most recent in Sölden (AUT), in 2003. "I still have fun and I am still not the oldest in the circuit!" Ertl-Renz says.

Torino 2006 Olympic Torch Relay sets off

The Torino 2006 Olympic Torch Relay began on 8th December in Rome and will tour the length and breadth of Italy for 64 days. It will cover a total distance of 11,300 km, visiting 140 cities, 107 provinces and all of Italy's regions, as well as the neighbouring countries of San Marino, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland and France. There will be 10,001 torchbearers, who will carry the flame to Turin, where it will arrive on 10 February 2006.

The Olympic flame was sent off by President Jacques Rogge and Italy's President Carlo

Azeglio Ciampi, at a ceremony held at the Palazzo Del Quirinale (the residence of Italy's Head of State). After some speeches, President Ciampi lit the flame for the first torchbearer, the Italian marathon gold medallist at the Athens Games, Stefano Baldini, thereby starting the Olympic flame on its journey around Italy to Turin. Austrian skiing legend Franz Klammer was also among a fine selection of former Olympic greats to carry the Olympic flame on its first steps towards Turin.

Nordic Combined Executive Board issues written reprimand for Ackermann

The FIS Nordic Combined Executive Committee has issued a written reprimand to German skier Ronny Ackermann on the basis of "unsportsmanlike behaviour" in relation to the incidents that took place in connection with the Cross-Country sprint competition in Lillehammer on 4th December 2005 when he clashed with race winner Hannu Manninen (FIN).

Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) issues award in case of Cross-Country skier Justyna Kowalczyk (POL)

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has decided that the decision rendered by the FIS Doping Panel in relation to the case against Justyna Kowalczyk (POL) will be replaced by a *de novo* decision on the merits of the case. Kowalczyk has served her period of suspension as the period of ineligibility imposed upon Kowalczyk began on 23rd January 2005 and ended on 8th December 2005. Additionally Kowalczyk (POL) was disqualified from all individual results obtained in the U23 OPA Intercontinental Cup Competition held on 23 January 2005.

Rall and Beltrametti team up to launch new skiing website Mario Rall, former ski sports editor of Switzerland's most popular newspaper Blick for 23 years, has launched a new website dedicated to ski racing in Switzerland and

internationally www.skionline.ch which will present news stories, interviews, athlete profiles, a photo section, calendars, results, statistics and a large number of interesting features. The Managing Director of the new website is former Swiss Alpine skier Silvano Beltrametti whose career was tragically ended after a crash in Val d'Isere in 2001 left him paralyzed. www.skionline.ch was launched on 22nd October – the same day the new season for the FIS Alpine World Cup began in Sölden (AUT).