



FIS NEWSFLASH

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Fédération Internationale de Ski
Internationaler Ski Verband

International Ski Federation

FIS Snowboard World Championships at Whistler Mountain (CAN)

All eyes will be on Whistler Mountain, British Columbia when the Canadian ski resort will host the FIS Snowboard World Championships from January 15-23. This is the first time that the championships have been held outside of Europe, and the North Americans are excited to welcome the world to Whistler Resort! No less than around 500 athletes from 37 nations are entered for the different events that include Parallel Slalom, Parallel Giant Slalom, Snowboardcross, Halfpipe and Big Air. Switzerland, Austria, France, Finland and Sweden are expected to dominate the various disciplines during the Championships in both the Mens and Ladies competitions

The planning for an equally world class opening ceremony is underway. Commencing in Whistler Village and culminating on the competition site at Base II on Blackcomb Mountain, the opening ceremony intends to capture the spirit of international excellence in arts, culture and sport at the end of which the championships will be declared officially opened by the FIS President Gian Franco Kasper. 250 journalists have so far been accredited for the event while 150 staff members and 980 volunteers will do their best to maintain the smooth running of the Championships. No less than 20 TV channels will broadcast the Championships in 15 countries. The complete program for Championships may be found on http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/604/1228.html?event_id=15246&cal_suchsector=SB

75th anniversary of "Lauberhornrennen"

One of the most challenging downhill runs in the world, the "Lauberhornrennen" in Wengen (SUI) will celebrate its 75th anniversary on Saturday January 15th when the elite of mens' Alpine Skiing heads for idyllic Swiss village for the 7th FIS World Cup Downhill race of the year. Like the dawn of life in the Tigris and Euphrates valley of Persia, international ski racing has its roots in the valley of Lauterbrunnen and its two famous ski areas, Wengen and Mürren. After the success of the first Kandahar events in St Anton am Arlberg in 1928, a Swiss ski pioneer, Arnold Gertsch launched the first Swiss "Classical" race, the "Lauberhornrennen".

Organized for the first time in 1930 on a superb track - which remains the longest on the FIS Alpine World Cup Ski circuit at a leg-burning 4260 meters - it became an international highlight. The start of the Lauberhorn downhill run is dominated by the mass of the impressive Eiger, one of the most challenging climbs of the Alps which along with the mountain peaks of Mönch and Jungfrau create a breath-taking scenario. Wengen will not only feature the downhill but also present the new format Alpine Combined competition and the traditional Slalom over the weekend. The complete program for the weekend may be found on http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/604/1228.html?event_id=15964&cal_suchsector=AL

China to turn into Cross Country giant?

Could China turn into a virtual powerhouse in Cross-country skiing in time? The talent, the eagerness to learn and the desire to succeed is certainly there according to experiences which FIS Cross Country Race Director Jürg Capol and Aid & Promotion consultant Dr. Josef Zenhäusern brought back from their trip to the Far East between Christmas and New Year 2004. A number of the world's finest Cross Country skiers already visited Beijing in the end of 2003 only to return on 31 December 2004 as the Chinese capital set the stage for its competition in which the participants were able to earn points for the FIS rankings.

Indeed what the Chinese nation might lack in terms of a long-standing tradition within skiing they certainly seem to make up for in terms of governmental support and general enthusiasm for the sport in general as China already has no less than 2,5 million skiers. Changchun – a city with around 8 million inhabitants located 900 km north-east of Beijing – is already provisionally scheduled to host FIS Cross-Country World Cup events in 2006 and 2007 that will serve as appetizers for the 2007 FIS Nordic Ski World Championships in Sapporo – both events are subject to approval by the FIS Council. FIS is currently working on a plan to provide the Chinese Ski Association guidance in how to prepare slopes, time keeping, administrating affairs, etc. as part of the Aid & Promotion program. "Obviously China has a lot to learn when it comes to general rules, piste preparation, ski preparation, time-keeping etc.. But with the co-operation from the authorities and the Chinese Ski Association everything should be possible for us to organize events down there", says Capol and Zenhäusern.

Ahonen dominance fails to affect Four Hills Tournament interest

Who said ski jumping was becoming boring and predictable? Indeed when the skiing world believed Finland's Janne Ahonen was going to routinely net his fourth successive

win and only the second man in history after Sven Hannawald (GER) in 2002 a historic Four Hills grand slam, Austria's Martin Höllwarth denied the Finn the final leg of the prestigious competition in Bischofshofen (AUT) to bring down the curtain on the 53rd edition of the tournament that had everything in terms of suspense, unpredictability, falls, tears, broken records.... This impression was indeed confirmed by the number of people attending the competitions in Oberstdorf, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Innsbruck and Bischofshofen and watching at home in front of the television. No less than 105'000 watched Ahonen's triumph live from the stands in the four host cities while around 23 million viewers tuned in for RTL's and ORF's TV coverage of the tournament.

Milan Jirasek re-elected NOC President

FIS Council Member Milan Jirasek was re-elected as President of the National Olympic Committee of the Czech Republic. He has held this important position since 12 years and the new term of office extends until 2009. Congratulations Milan from the FIS family!

Hans Knauss suspended

Following confirmation of an adverse analytical finding for the prohibited steroid nandrolone in the A and B samples submitted by Hans Knauss after the mens' World Cup in Lake Louise (CAN) on 27 November, 2004, the athlete is forthwith suspended from participation. The athlete has the opportunity to a hearing by the FIS Doping Panel before adjudication of the case.

Dear Readers,

Should you have any feedback, comments, you are most welcome to send them to me at: frandsen@fisski.ch.

Best regards

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