



## San Sicario (ITA) hosts new-look Ladies' Alpine Combined competition

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> February will see the inauguration of the new-look FIS Alpine Combined World Cup competition for Ladies in San Sicario (ITA), the site of the Ladies Alpine downhill and super G events at the 2006 Olympic Winter Games. The new format was already successfully introduced for the men in Wengen (SUI) on 14th January 2005 while this will be the ladies' first taste of the new competition format. Instead of calculating the results of the alpine combined by adding up the times from the classic downhill and slalom races, a separate competition will be staged with a shortened downhill plus one slalom run scheduled on the same day. A combination of both the downhill and slalom Alpine events, the altered format demonstrates the outstanding versatility of the top athletes. The rules may be found on the FIS website at <http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/rulesalpinefisworldcup2004-2005.pdf>.

## FIS discussing launch of new Cross Country Tour.

FIS revealed their plans for a new Cross Country "XC-Tour" at a press conference in Oberstdorf (GER) on 21st February during the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships. The XC-Tour is set to provide Cross Country skiing with a clear profile as it is arranged over a limited period of time and consequently results and competitions should be easy to understand and follow for everybody over the ten-day period which will see eight stages take place in various resorts and cities across central Europe. Athletes taking part in the XC-Tour, which is aiming to create a highlight to the Cross-

Country season in a similar way to the 4 hills tournament for Ski Jumping,, need to participate in all stages of the tour if they are to compete for the overall title.

Similar to the Tour de France of Cross Country skiing, the overall leader would wear a yellow bib, the best sprinter a green bib, and the best climber would wear a polka-dotted bib. According to current plans the Tour would start on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2007 with a 3km prologue at the Olympic Park in Munich (GER) followed by a 2 athletes' team event the next day in Reit im Winkl (AUT) and then a pursuit in Oberstdorf (GER) on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January. The athletes would then visit Zurich or Berne (SUI) with sprints on 8<sup>th</sup> January and Davos (SUI) two days later with a "King of the Mountain" time trial. After sprints in Val di Fiemme (ITA) on 12<sup>th</sup> January and a mass start in the same Italian resort on 13<sup>th</sup> January, the Tour would conclude on 14<sup>th</sup> January with a pivotal long-distance stage between Toblach (ITA) and Cortina (ITA). Through this event structure FIS is hoping not only to create a strong brand identity around the Tour and Cross Country skiing in general but also to optimize TV rights as well as commercial rights to promote the events. The plans for the XC-Tour are subject to approval by the FIS Council following their discussions at the Technical Committee Meetings during the FIS Calendar Conference in Amsterdam between 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> May.

## Unsung Freitas captures hearts at FIS Nordic World Ski Championships

While the likes of Julija Tchepalova (RUS), Marit Björger (NOR), René Sommerfeldt (GER) and Vincent Vittoz (FRA) have grabbed most of the headlines at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Oberstdorf (GER), an unsung Brazilian has

captured the hearts of the of the local spectators even if he hasn't won any medals at the championships. Hellio Freitas took part in the Men's 15km Cross Country Free-Technique race on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February where he skied the 15 km in 57:29.1 minutes - arriving 22 minutes after the winner Pietro Piller Cottler (ITA) in 121<sup>st</sup> place. "It has been a fantastic experience to participate in this competition" said Freitas when he arrived to standing ovations of the 17'000 crowd. "The World Championships is a great event", said Freitas. "I would like to thank all the spectators for their outstanding support. I was rather tired already, but they cheered me to the finishing line." Freitas was originally a marathon-runner but as he failed to qualify for the Summer Olympic Games in Athens 2004, he decided to embark on a quest to qualify for the 2006 Olympic Winter Games in Turin by taking Cross Country Free Technique lessons only five weeks ahead of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships.

**Austrians still in driving seat**  
With 11 medals to show for their efforts on the pistes of Bormio and Santa Caterina (ITA), Austria underlined their current dominance in especially the men's alpine skiing competitions during the recent held FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Italy. USA equaled their own result from the previous championships in 2003 in St. Moritz (SUI) by claiming six medals while Italy with two silver and two bronze medals had something to show for their home advantage. Croatia's one-lady force, Janica Kostelic became the most successful individual athlete during the championships with the three gold medals she captured in the Ladies' Slalom, Downhill and Alpine Combined competitions. For the first time ever the Czech Republic claimed a medal in alpine skiing with Sarka Zahrobska claiming bronze in the Ladies Slalom. In total ten nations managed to get a spot in the podium claiming a share of the 33 medals that were handed out in 11 competitions over the 16 days in which the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships took place.

## Bardonecchia (ITA) sets the scene for FIS Junior Alpine World Ski Championships

The future of world skiing is currently gathering in Bardonecchia (ITA) to challenge for titles at the FIS Junior Alpine World Ski Championships. The Championships were launched already back in 1972, as European Junior Championships when the inaugural competition took place in Madonna di Campiglio (ITA). Since then the prestigious event has been organized every year apart from 1978 when it was cancelled. No less than 280 athletes will be in action during the championships that will last from 20<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> February. 36 nations are taking part in the men's competitions while participants from 34 nations will compete in the ladies' events.

## Bonnet dies at 85

Former Chairman of the FIS Alpine Committee, Honoré Bonnet (FRA), has passed away at the age of 85. The charismatic Bonnet, born in Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, was in charge of the French national alpine ski team from 1959 to 1968 leading his protégés to a series of triumphs. During the Olympic Winter Games in 1960, 1964 and 1968 he led his athletes to eight top spots on the podium and 17 medals in total. Indeed he was the man behind Jean Claude Killy's incredible clean sweep of the Mens' Alpine Skiing events during the 1968 Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble (FRA). He was a member of the FIS Downhill/Slalom Committee from 1965–1973 and then Chairman of the FIS Alpine Committee from 1973–1978. Bonnet along with Serge Lange, Bob Beattie and Sepp Sulzberger fostered the idea of the Alpine Ski World Cup in 1965 and through his work for the FIS Alpine Skiing Committee he was very much responsible for the development of the sport on a global basis.

Dear Friends of FIS,  
Should you have any feedback, comments,  
you are most welcome to send them to me  
at: [frandsen@fisski.ch](mailto:frandsen@fisski.ch). "FIS Newsflash" will  
not only be distributed via e-mail but also be  
published in the News section of the FIS  
Website.

Best regards

Svend Frandsen  
INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION  
Communications Manager