



FIS NEWSFLASH

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Paersson (SWE) and Miller (USA) clinch overall FIS Alpine World Cup titles. Only five skiers claimed all the individual gold medals at the 2005 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Bormio/Santa Caterina earlier in the year and the same five starred as the main attraction when the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Finals comprising the last eight events of the season came to an enticing finish on the newly constructed Silvano Beltrametti piste in Lenzerheide (SUI).

While Bode Miller (USA) stole most of the limelight in the final four mens' races of the World Cup season, Sweden's Anja Paerson became the first athlete in ten years since Vreni Schneider (1994-1995) to defend the Ladies' overall World Cup title on Sunday after one of the most dramatic finishes in the history of the FIS Alpine World Cup. Enjoying a slender 35 point gap over Croatian rival Janica Kostelic before the final race of the season, Paersson finished Sunday's season-ending giant slalom down in 17th place having been placed 5th after the first run and as only the top 15 finishers in the finals earn points, the 23-year-old defending champion was forced to rely on the performances of her fellow skiers. With four racers remaining, Kostelic was fourth and needed only a seventh-place finish to snatch the title. But Nicole Hosp, Tanja Poutiainen, Elisabeth Goergl and Maria Jose Rienda Contreras all managed to better Kostelic's time, handing the title back to Paerson by a winning margin of just three points. It was the second smallest margin in World Cup history -- beaten only by Annemarie Moser-Proell's two-point win over Hanni Wenzel in 1979.

Bode Miller finally confirmed his status as the world's best all-round skier on Saturday

12th March, wrapping up the World Cup overall title with one race to spare. The 27-year-old American, who has led the Mens' overall FIS Alpine World Cup standings for the entire season, clinched the biggest win of his career to date after finishing second in the season's penultimate race. With Austrian giants Hermann Maier and Benjamin Raich closing in fast on Miller's lead before the final four World Cup races of the season, the charismatic American seemed short of the form that saw him begin the World Cup season in blistering form and earned him two gold medals at the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships. However, Miller put all negative speculation of his current shape to rest with a series of stunning performances in Lenzerheide and a spot on the podium in three out of four disciplines to become the first American (after Phil Mahre and Tamara McKinney) in 22 years to win the overall World Cup title. "I'm really proud of what I've achieved in the past four days," Miller said after the final race of the season. The overall winners in the individual alpine World Cup disciplines were:

Ladies:

Overall: Anja Paerson (SWE)
Downhill: Renate Goetschl (AUT)
Super G: Michaela Dorfmeister (AUT)
Slalom: Tanja Poutiainen (FIN)
Giant Slalom: Tanja Poutiainen (FIN)
Nations Cup: Austria

Men:

Overall: Bode Miller (USA)
Downhill: Michael Walchhofer (AUT)
Super G: Bode Miller (USA)
Slalom: Benjamin Raich (AUT)
Giant Slalom: Benjamin Raich (AUT)
Nations Cup: Austria

Overall Nations Cup (Men and Ladies combined): Austria

Rovaniemi (FIN) to host FIS Nordic Junior World Ski Championships

A true Nordic venue, Rovaniemi (FIN) will stage for the upcoming FIS Nordic Junior World Ski Championships that will take place in the idyllic Finnish resort from 19th-26th March 2005. No less than 388 athletes from 31 nations have announced their arrival in Rovaniemi for the championships which have been staged every year since 1990 when the event was inaugurated in Les Saisies (FRA). 241 athletes have been entered for participation in the Cross Country events, 75 will compete in the Ski Jumping competitions while 72 young contenders will contest the Nordic Combined events. Athletes are under 20 years of age in the cross country and combined events and under 18 years old in the ski jumping competitions.

This will be the second time Finland pays host to the prestigious championships since Vuokatti hosted the competitions back in 1992. The event in Rovaniemi, which is located at the Arctic Circle about 800 km north of Helsinki, will mark a change to the competition program as 10 km pursuit (for ladies) and 20 km pursuit (for men) will replace the mass start competitions which have been part of the program on previous occasions. Norway's Peter Tande who won gold in the Nordic Combined team competition (Team HS137/4x5 Km) and Slovenia's talented youngster Rok Benkovic who stunned ski jumping experts with his gold medal on the HS100 hill at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Oberstdorf (GER) are expected to steal much of the attention in the Mens' competitions. In the Ladies' events Marion Ruf (GER), Natalja Iliana (RUS) and Norway's Astrid Oevstedahl are believed to be favourites to claim silverware. You may find the complete program for the FIS Nordic Junior World Championships here: http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/604/1228.html?event_id=15406&cal_suchsector=CC

Fabulous Finns!!

What Finnish Ski Jumper Janne Ahonen failed to do during the prestigious Vierschanzentournee (Four Hill Tournament) in Oberstdorf (GER), Garmisch-Partenkirchen (GER), Innsbruck (AUT) and Bischofshofen (AUT) earlier in the year, his countryman Matti Hautamaeki accomplished on Sunday 13th March when he completed a sensational Grand Slam to win the Nordic Tournament. After gaining top spot on the podium in Lahti (FIN), home town Kuopio (FIN) and Lillehammer (NOR), the 23-year-old completed his sensational feat in Holmenkollen (NOR) with an emphatic display of ski jumping in front of an enthusiastic public and the Norwegian royal family. While Hautamaeki secured his fifth successive FIS Ski Jumping World Cup win at Holmenkollen, Ahonen wrapped up the overall World Cup title at the last night Ski Jumping competition of the season in Lillehammer on Friday 11th March when he secured 4th spot in a hugely competitive event. Last season Norway's Roar Ljoekelsoey was beaten to the title by his Finnish nemesis by a mere 10 points, but! this year Ahonen can loft the coveted crystal globe above his serene body calm in the knowledge that he was head-and-shoulders above the rest despite suffering from bouts of flu, a cracked rib and loss of form. The season finale takes place on 19th-20th March with the traditional Ski Flying competitions in Planica (SLO) when Ahonen will collect the prestigious trophy but ski jumping enthusiasts will already now be looking forward to the mouthwatering clash of Finns next season as Ahonen and Hautamaeki continue their fascinating rivalry.

Bloom and Li shine in race for Mens and Ladies overall FIS Freestyle World Cup titles

While the FIS Freestyle World Championships are set to begin on 17th March in Ruka (FIN), the curtain came down on the FIS Freestyle World Cup on Friday 11th March when Madonna di Campiglio (ITA) staged the final event of the season. In the Mens' events, Jeremy Bloom (USA) won six of the last seven moguls competitions to not only capture the crystal

globe for the individual moguls competition but also win the overall Freestyle World Cup title 12 points ahead of countryman Travis Mayer. It was the first time since 1996 when Jonny Moseley won in front of Canada's David Belhumeur that an American captured the Mens' FIS Freestyle World Cup.

With no less than eight aerials World Cup wins and a (how many?) podium spots to show for her efforts throughout the season, China's Nina Li won the Ladies FIS Freestyle World Cup overall title. The title was another example of how far Chinese athletes have come since the Chinese Ski Association assembled its first competitive freestyle team in Harbin, the icy capital of the Heilongjiang province in the early 1990's. Li has leapt into the Freestyle limelight almost as fast as former athlete Guo Dandan who rose to fame in her native country in the middle of the 90's. The winners in the individual Freestyle World Cup disciplines were:

Ladies:

Overall: Nina Li (CHN)
Aerials: Nina Li (CHN)
Moguls: Jennifer Heil (CAN)
Ski Cross: Ophelie David (FRA)

Men:

Overall: Jeremy Bloom (USA)
Aerials: Jeret Peterson (USA)
Moguls: Jeremy Bloom (USA)
Ski Cross: Tomas Kraus (CZE)

Manninen (FIN) back to his best to secure FIS Nordic Combined World Cup overall title

Finland's Hannu Maninen made up for his lacklustre spell at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in Oberstdorf (GER) when he secured his second successive FIS Nordic Combined World Cup overall title. The 26-year-old Finn won the World Cup last year ahead of the 27-year-old Ronny Ackermann (GER), the 2002 and 2003 overall winner, who this season had to suffice with second spot in the overall standings 396 short of Manninen. "I have produced some brilliant performances of

late. I managed to get myself together after the World Championships," Manninen said. "This win certainly makes up for Oberstdorf." The versatile Finn already clinched the title with three events left in the calendar in Lahti (FIN) but crowned another superb World Cup campaign by winning the final race of the season in Oslo in front Norway's Magnus Moan and Ackermann.

Dear Friends of FIS,

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

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