

Cross-Country World Cup returns to Canada

Next weekend, the Cross-Country World Cup returns to Canada for the first time since the 1995 World Championships in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In fact, this is the first time the FIS Cross-Country World Cup circus returns to North America since the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City (USA). The racing schedule features the season's first pursuit competition and a sprint in Vernon, British Columbia, as well as two individual competitions and one team event in Canmore, Alberta. The sprint races in Vernon will debut the new rules that allow the top 30 of the qualification to continue into the final rounds, instead of just the top 16 as it has been until now.

The beautiful Silver Star Provincial Park, located just 20km from the city of Vernon, will be a World Cup host for the second time after the first World Cup races there were held there in 1994. Canmore, the site of the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, was last represented in the World Cup calendar in 1989 when two men's races were staged there. Jochen Behle, the head coach of today's Team Germany, was the winner of the 50 km race in the classic style at that time. The World Cup week in the Town of Canmore also represents the culminating event for an entire year of celebrations in honor of the province of Alberta's 100-year-anniversary in 2005.

Almost the entire Cross-Country elite will start in Canada. To test their altitude tolerance levels, many national teams have chosen to travel early to Silver Star, located at 1664m and cloaked in snow since early November. Pragelato, the site of the Cross-Country events at the Turin Olympic Games, is located at a similar altitude.

Val d'Isere (FRA) celebrates 50-year anniversary

After their stop in Canada and the United States, Val d'Isere (FRA) is ready to welcome the male athletes of the FIS Alpine World Cup back to Europe when the host of the 2009 FIS Alpine World Championships celebrates its 50-year anniversary with the men's downhill, and super combined on 10th and 11th December. The ladies will compete the following week in Val d'Isere from 17th-18th December.

Historically the competitions trace back to when a small article in the local paper, *The Dauphiné Libéré* launched the idea of the event. The brains behind the event were Charled Diebold and Louis Erny who had moved to the Savoie region. Indeed Debold later became a force behind the development of winter sports in France.



The idea was originally to kick-off the winter sports season with two weeks of training followed by a competition and on 17th December 1955, fifty-five competitors raced down the Solaise mountain to give birth to a historic event which today remains a true classic on the FIS Alpine World Cup schedule. The World Cup races are held on

the Belvedere/La Daille part of the impressive "Espace Killy" area which connects Val d'Isère to Tignes and was named after French alpine skiing star, Jean-Claude Killy, who grew up in the area and later reached legendary status when he dazzled the world with his confident style at the 1968 Olympic Winter Games at Grenoble (FRA) by winning three gold medals in all of the Alpine events.

Training runs are scheduled to begin on Thursday 8th December and organizers are cautiously optimistic. New snowmaking equipment installed since last season has added capacity to the existing facilities, and over the past ten days some 230,000 m³ of snow have been produced. In addition snow has been falling steadily in recent days. You may find the complete program for Saturday's and Sunday's events here: http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/604/1228.html?event_id=18032

Tour de Ski hits the ground running

The headquarters of the German Ski Association (DSV) in Planegg bei München hosted the FIS Tour de Ski Kick-off meeting on Friday, 2nd December, 2005. Representatives from the Tour's three hosting National Ski Associations (DSV, ÖSV and FIS, or Germany, Austria and Italy, respectively), local organizing committees from Ramsau (AUT), Oberstdorf (GER) and Val di Fiemme (ITA), and FIS met to discuss the Tour's marketing, logistical, TV and event production details as well as the next steps. Scheduled to launch on 29th December, 2006, the FIS Tour de Ski will be the first FIS Cross-Country event to take place in three different countries, encompassing eight individual races, and award 400 World Cup points to the overall Tour winners.

"We think this initiative is the right way to improve the value of cross country skiing for athletes, media and sponsors, and the German Ski Association would be proud to host the FIS Tour de Ski next season," commented Thomas Mayr, DSV Marketing Director. He added: "After today's lively meeting, we have to clarify some important

questions, and then we should be ready to pull up our sleeves and begin the preparations for this exciting new event" Angelo Corradini, General Secretary of the Val di Fiemme organizing committee, noted: "We very much look forward to staging the final weekend of the Tour, including the Final Climb up the Alpe Cermis—until now that mountain has never been raced up, only downwards!"

Whistler (CAN) gets ready to host FIS Snowboard World Cup

After Saas-Fee (SUI) on 21st and 22nd November, British Columbia (CAN) provides the next backdrop for the action when Whistler Mountain stages the 6th FIS Snowboard World Cup event of the season from 8th – 11th December.

Despite some unseasonably mild conditions during the previous weeks, Whistler should be all ready for the Snowboard Cross and Halfpipe competitions with forecasts guaranteeing plenty of snow in the days leading up to the events. "This is an exciting time for the sport with the Winter Olympics just around the corner," said Tom McIlffaterick, Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Snowboard Federation. "The early snows this season gave us a great start to preparing courses for the event and after a few days of mild and sunny weather, the snow and cold weather is returning to Whistler to allow us to make the final snowmaking preparations and some great riding for the competitors". Around 250 athletes from 50 nations are expected in the Canadian ski resort for a fascinating weekend of snowboard action. You may find the program for all the competitions here: http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/604/1228.html?event_id=19396

IOC issues anti-doping rules for Turin Games

On 23rd November the IOC issued the IOC Anti-Doping Rules which will be applicable in relation to the Olympic Winter Games in Turin. This important document has been sent to the National Olympic Committees,

the International Wintersport Federations and the National Anti-Doping Agencies. During the Period of the Olympic Games, all doping controls initiated by the IOC shall include testing for all substances present on the 2006 List of Prohibited Substances issued by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and will be conducted at any time or place with no advance warning required to be given to the Athletes. The Period of the Olympic Games is defined as "the period commencing on the date of the opening of the Olympic village for the Olympic Winter Games", at the end of January, up until and including the day of the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, namely, 26 February 2006. As part of the IOC's zero tolerance approach to doping, the number of tests will increase by 45% in Turin, compared to Salt Lake City. You may find the complete results from the Nordic Opening on the FIS Website.

Freestyle Pioneer Irv Kagan dies at 76

Irv Kagan, considered by many to be "the father of Freestyle World Cup skiing" in the United States Thursday December 1st. He was 76.

Born in Lynn, Mass., Kagan graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He retired as president and CEO of Penobscot Shoe Co. in 1993. Kagan was a longtime trustee of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Foundation and a former vice president and board member of the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association. He also was a USSA representative to the International Ski Federation and was instrumental in establishing the Freestyle World Cup in the Eighties. "Irv was 'The Man' in Freestyle, not just in the United States but a major figure internationally. He had a great international impact," said Polly-Jo Clark, USSA freestyle program director.

Dear Friends of FIS,

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

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