
FIS COMPETITION FACTS – Viessmann FIS World Cup Cross-Country

Viessmann FIS World Cup Cross-Country at Otepää (EST) on December 27th, 2007

First World Cup victory for Kowalczyk

The 24-year-old Justyna Kowalczyk (POL) won the Individual competition over 10 km in classical technique in the Estonian wintersport metropolis Otepää.

Justyna Kowalczyk of Poland produced a powerhouse race to claim her first ever victory in the World Cup series and the first ladies World Cup victory ever for Poland. The winner of the this year's student games won a 10 km classical race in Otepää, Estonia by 7.8 second ahead of World Cup leader Virpi Kuitunen with Ukrainian Valentina Shevchenko third 14.5 seconds behind the winner.

The top three were followed by Marit Bjoergen of Norway, Marianna Longa of Italy and Aino Kaisa Saarinen of Finland.

The World Cup leader and the first Tour de Ski winner Kuitunen was 20.7 seconds behind leader at the 7.5 km mark. Pre-race favorite attacked on the final kilometers but Kowalczyk held her slim lead.

Virpi Kuitunen is in the lead of the World Cup ranking with 997 points, ahead of Marit Bjoergen with 684 points and Katerina Neumannova (CZE, 552 points), who was not competing in the today's race. In the Distance World Cup Kuitunen (445 points) is also leading, on second place follows Katerina Neumannova (325 points) and on third place is the team mate of Kuitunen, Riitta Liisa Roponen (263 points).

Number of participants/ participating nations: 50 ladies, 59 men/ 18 nations

Spectators: 15,000

Number of Media/TV on site and HBC: 135 Media / 8 TV on-site / EETV was the HBC

Weather: snow, -6,6 °C

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Snow Conditions: powder

Special remarks:

Course ladies: Height difference: 44m; Maximum climb: 27m; Total climb: 336m, Length of lap: 3.4km, Numbers of Laps: 3;

Pictures:

Please note that high quality action and podium pictures from today's competitions are available for purchase through the Internet portal offered by Nordic Focus, FIS Partner for photos from the Nordic Disciplines, at www.menzipics.ch/info/indexfisevents.html

Quotes:

Justyna Kowalczyk (POL): The first win is fantastic and I am so happy! I won three gold medals in Torino Universiade lately and that was a perfect basis for Otepää event. I like Otepää because of the demanding course. I have no special training camp for Sapporo World Championships.

Virpi Kuitunen (FIN): Today's race was tough, but I'm satisfied with the second place. I pushed hard and gave all what I have at the end.

Davos is the next step in my preparations for World Championships. Goal for Sapporo? The gold would be nice. I haven't fixed my race schedule for Sapporo yet. I'm interested in all distances, and classic races are my main goal in Japan.

Valentina Shevchenko (UKR): It was the hardest race so far this winter – the weather was tough and good waxing was needful also. I skipped Rybinsk after Tour de Ski, the decision was made already earlier and I was really tired. The decision paid off here in Otepää and the result was as good as I expected. At Sapporo my goal is to reach the podium, but the 10 km distance isn't in classic unfortunately.

For complete results please visit www.fis-ski.com

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