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## **FIS COMPETITION FACTS – Viessmann FIS World Cup Cross-Country**

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Viessmann FIS Tour de Ski performance by Craft Sportswear in Val di Fiemme (ITA)  
on January 6th, 2007

### **Another victory for Kuitunen**

**Virpi Kuitunen from Finland, the winner of the Sprint Stage in Asiago yesterday, took another victory in today's 15 km mass start competition in the classical technique in Val di Fiemme, the fifth Stage in the Viessmann FIS Tour de Ski.**

Virpi Kuitunen finished in the today's race clearly - 37.1 seconds - ahead of her team mate Aino Kaisa Saarinen. Marit Bjoergen from Norway took the third place, reaching the finish 1.06.5 minutes behind today's Stage winner.

Kuitunen now leads the overall Tour de Ski ranking 1.39.5 minutes ahead of Saarinen and 2.09.08 minutes ahead of Bjoergen. In tomorrow's race, the racers will start according to their time differences in the overall Tour standings after today's race, with Kuitunen starting first.

In the Tour de Ski Sprint Ranking standings (Silver Bib) Kuitunen took the lead with 130 points followed by Marit Bjoergen with 105 points. Aino Kaisa Saarinen is third place with 77 points. Today's race also determined the final standing in the Tour Sprint Ranking provided that all these athletes finish the Final Climb, the last Stage, tomorrow.

The last competition of the Viessmann FIS Tour de Ski will be the Final Climb tomorrow, 10 km for ladies and 15 km for men in the free technique. The finish will be at the middle station of Alpe Cermis cable carway.

Number of participants/ participating nations: 50 ladies/ 14 nations

Spectators: 3,000

Number of Media/TV on site and HBC: 130 Media / 14 TV on-site / RAI was the HBC

Weather: sunny, -1°C; snow -4°C

Snow Conditions: hard packed



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Special remarks:

Course: Height difference: 61m; Maximum climb: 49m; Total climb: 560m, Length of lap: 3,75 km;

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](http://www.menzipics.ch/info/indexfisevents.html)

**Quotes:**

**Virpi Kuitunen (FIN), Today's Winner, Tour Golden Bib, Winner of Tour Sprint Ranking**

**(Silver Bib):** "I had some problems in the early races so that is probably why I still have so much energy now and can get it all out of myself. Yesterday's Sprint in Asiago seems to have been a sort of turning point. My plan for today was to ski relaxed and to ski as fast as my body allowed. I was very surprised to have reached this goal so early in the race but there was no reason to slow down. It also helped that Aino-Kaisa and myself could ski together the two first laps. Actually my plan was to help Aino-Kaisa (Saarinen) but for some reason she was not able to follow but I think she is very happy about her second place today. Skiing alone is more difficult than skiing with someone so the last laps were more difficult. Also I started to think about tomorrow's race on the last lap. I do have a large lead now but tomorrow's race will show if that is enough. I am pretty satisfied with my shape but I also have respect for the Final Climb. We will have to wait to see whether the winner will be myself or the mountain. I am afraid that at some points the climb is so steep that it will be difficult to ski properly. It will for sure be a new experience for us all.

I think one reason for my good results this year has been the fact that my training all year has gone really well; it is like I have fallen in love with skiing again. Our team has also been especially supportive this year – a smiling team I would call it. My training has been well-balanced. The only problem is my back, and as you have seen, it is usually ok in classical races and in sprints, but in long distance races in the free technique the pain can be just too much."

**Aino-Kaisa Saarinen (FIN), Today's Second Place Ranked, Current Second Place**

**Ranked in Tour Overall Standings:** "My tactic for today was to try to be in the leading



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group and ski as fast as I could. I was a bit surprised that no other athletes could follow me and Virpi. I had thought that there would have been more athletes trying to win some sprint bonus seconds today. I am a bit concerned about tomorrow's race as we do not really know what to expect. I will just have to try my best. Today, we were able to work as a team and support each other; we also had great skis. The uphill tomorrow will be the hardest part. Anyone who can ski it up well, will win. Tomorrow, you really have to know your limits and be able to pace yourself exactly right; you have to be careful not to overdo it as that would really end up in a catastrophe.

### **Marit Bjoergen (NOR), Today's Third Place Ranked, Third in Tour Overall Rankings:**

"Today I did not have as good skis as the Finns. I tried to keep up with them but could not. I did not want to make the same mistake as I did in Oberstdorf trying to collect the sprint seconds. I am however quite happy with my third place today. I will give it my best tomorrow and we will see how far that will take me."

For complete results please visit [www.tour-de-ski.com](http://www.tour-de-ski.com) or [www.fis-ski.com](http://www.fis-ski.com)

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