



THE WORLD OF BIATHLON | PERSONALITIES | EVENTS | RESULTS

# BIATHLON WORLD



## MICHAEL RÖSCH

THE RETURN OF THE WARRIOR

HOCHFILZEN 2017

**WHO WILL WIN  
THE MEDALS?**

ANAI'S CHEVALIER

**HARD WORK  
AND SACRIFICE**

THEIR PRIDE AND JOY

**CREATIVE RIFLE  
DESIGNS**



## THRILLING SEASON

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CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

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## Dear Biathlonworld reader,

You are holding the pre-World Championship edition of Biathlonworld magazine in your hands. With the highlight of the season, the World Championships in Hochfilzen, Austria, just around the corner, you can check out our World Championship preview on page 9 to find out which athletes to watch out for and who the hot favorites for the medals are.

The cover of this edition might surprise you, it features Belgium's Michael Rösch and his inspiring story. It is a story that goes deep into the biathlete's psyche, revealing that biathlon is about more than podium glory: it is about the struggle – with yourself, the weather and circumstances.

Another philosophical insight comes from Dominik Windisch, who invited the Biathlonworld team to his home in Antholz, Italy, where he shared his memories of Sochi and his plans for the World Championships in Hochfilzen. You can read the interview on page 98.

On page 100, we present you some of the interesting rifle designs on the tour: Shipulin's dragon, Boe's trendy pink, Joanne Reid's Lady Fortune and the Gasparin sisters' leopard, flames and mountains.

The life of a biathlete is very tough – always on the go, always traveling. We tell you the story of how the Canadian team

discovered Ruhpolding's local cuisine on page 104.

You may also have noticed a recent increase in activity on the IBU's social media channels: we have made them more dynamic to also target a younger audience. You can read more about the content on the IBU's different social media accounts in the article titled "Social Revolution" on page 106

***Wishing you a fun read,  
Your Biathlonworld team***



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**IBU JUNIOR OPEN EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS BIATHLON 2017**  
**NOVÉ MĚSTO NA MORAVĚ CZE** 01.02. - 05.02.2017

THURSDAY	<b>02.02.2017</b>	10:00 13:30	<b>INDIVIDUAL WOMEN</b> <b>INDIVIDUAL MEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>04.02.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b> <b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>05.02.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT MEN</b>

**IBU CUP 6 BIATHLON**  
**BREZNO-OSRBLIE SVK** 01.02. - 04.02.2017

FRIDAY	<b>03.02.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b> <b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>04.02.2017</b>	10:00 12:30	<b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT MEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Knut AAS

**IBU Referees**  
Lachezar ILIEV, Ioan LUNGOCIU

**IBU WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BIATHLON 2017**  
**HOCHFILZEN AUT** 06.02. - 19.02.2017

THURSDAY	<b>09.02.2017</b>	14:45	<b>MIXED RELAY</b>
FRIDAY	<b>10.02.2017</b>	14:45	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>11.02.2017</b>	14:45	<b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>12.02.2017</b>	10:30 14:45	<b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT MEN</b>
WEDNESDAY	<b>15.02.2017</b>	14:30	<b>INDIVIDUAL WOMEN</b>
THURSDAY	<b>16.02.2017</b>	14:30	<b>INDIVIDUAL MEN</b>
FRIDAY	<b>17.02.2017</b>	14:45	<b>RELAY WOMEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>18.02.2017</b>	14:45	<b>RELAY MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>19.02.2017</b>	11:30 14:45	<b>MASS START WOMEN</b> <b>MASS START MEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Christophe VASSALLO

**IBU Referees**  
Robert ZWAHLEN, Erik ALBINDER,  
Michal ZICHACEK, Max SAENGER

**IBU YOUTH/JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BIATHLON 2017**  
**BREZNO-OSRBLIE RUS** 21.02. - 28.02.2017

WEDNESDAY	<b>22.02.2017</b>	11:00 14:00	<b>INDIVIDUAL YOUTH MEN</b> <b>INDIVIDUAL YOUTH WOMEN</b>
THURSDAY	<b>23.02.2017</b>	11:00 14:00	<b>INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR MEN</b> <b>INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR WOMEN</b>
FRIDAY	<b>24.02.2017</b>	11:00 14:00	<b>SPRINT YOUTH MEN</b> <b>SPRINT YOUTH WOMEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>25.02.2017</b>	11:00 14:00	<b>SPRINT JUNIOR MEN</b> <b>SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>26.02.2017</b>	11:00 12:00 14:15 15:20	<b>PURSUIT YOUTH MEN</b> <b>PURSUIT JUNIOR MEN</b> <b>PURSUIT JUNIOR WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT YOUTH WOMEN</b>
MONDAY	<b>27.02.2017</b>	11:00 13:45	<b>RELAY YOUTH MEN</b> <b>RELAY YOUTH WOMEN</b>
TUESDAY	<b>28.02.2017</b>	11:00 14:00	<b>RELAY JUNIOR MEN</b> <b>RELAY JUNIOR WOMEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Kristian OJA

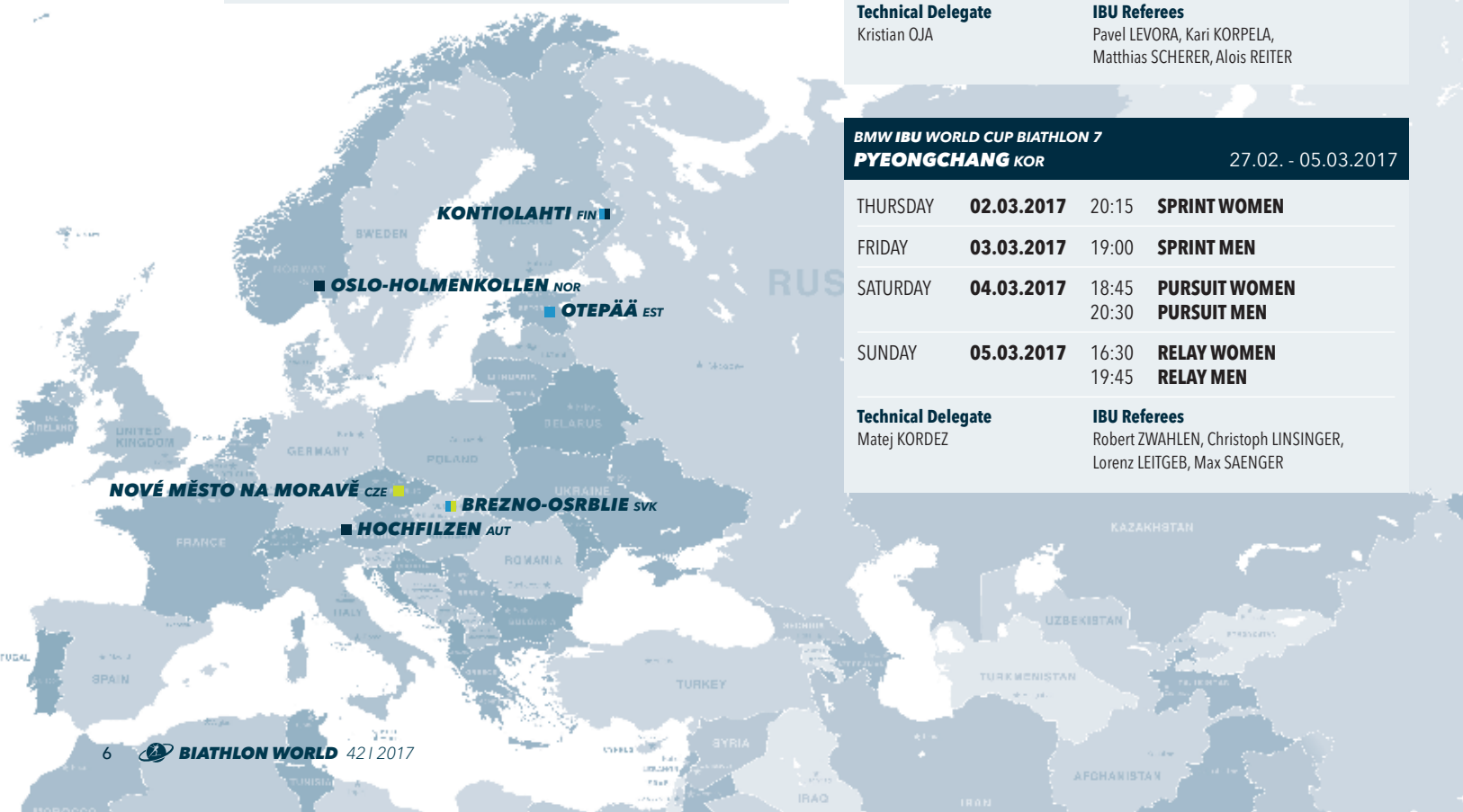
**IBU Referees**  
Pavel LEVORA, Kari KORPELA,  
Matthias SCHERER, Alois REITER

**BMW IBU WORLD CUP BIATHLON 7**  
**PYEONGCHANG KOR** 27.02. - 05.03.2017

THURSDAY	<b>02.03.2017</b>	20:15	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b>
FRIDAY	<b>03.03.2017</b>	19:00	<b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>04.03.2017</b>	18:45 20:30	<b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>05.03.2017</b>	16:30 19:45	<b>RELAY WOMEN</b> <b>RELAY MEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Matej KORDEZ

**IBU Referees**  
Robert ZWAHLEN, Christoph LINSINGER,  
Lorenz LEITGEB, Max SAENGER



**IBU CUP 7 BIATHLON**  
**KONTIOLAHTI FIN**

28.02. - 05.03.2017

THURSDAY	<b>02.03.2017</b>	10:00 13:30	<b>INDIVIDUAL MEN</b> <b>INDIVIDUAL WOMEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>04.03.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>SPRINT MEN</b> <b>SPRINT WOMEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>05.03.2017</b>	10:00 12:30	<b>PURSUIT MEN</b> <b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Tore BOYGARD

**IBU Referees**  
Lachezar ILIEV, Tomas FUSKO

**BMW IBU WORLD CUP BIATHLON 8**  
**KONTIOLAHTI FIN**

06.03. - 12.03.2017

FRIDAY	<b>10.03.2017</b>	15:30 18:45	<b>SPRINT MEN</b> <b>SPRINT WOMEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>11.03.2017</b>	13:00 16:15	<b>PURSUIT MEN</b> <b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>12.03.2017</b>	14:30 17:15	<b>SINGLE MIXED RELAY</b> <b>MIXED RELAY</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Johnny ROGNSTAD

**IBU Referees**  
Robert ZWAHLEN, Matt SABASTEANSKI,  
Ioan LUNGOCIU, Max SAENGER

**IBU CUP 8 BIATHLON**  
**OTEPÄÄ EST**

07.03. - 12.03.2017

THURSDAY	<b>09.03.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b> <b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>11.03.2017</b>	10:00 13:00	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b> <b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>12.03.2017</b>	10:00 12:30	<b>SINGLE MIXED RELAY</b> <b>MIXED RELAY</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
Christophe VASSALLO

**IBU Referees**  
Lachezar ILIEV, Tomas FUSKO

**BMW IBU WORLD CUP BIATHLON 9**  
**OSLO-HOLMENKOLLEN NOR**

13.03. - 19.03.2017

FRIDAY	<b>17.03.2017</b>	14:00 16:30	<b>SPRINT WOMEN</b> <b>SPRINT MEN</b>
SATURDAY	<b>18.03.2017</b>	12:45 15:00	<b>PURSUIT WOMEN</b> <b>PURSUIT MEN</b>
SUNDAY	<b>19.03.2017</b>	11:15 13:30	<b>MASS START WOMEN</b> <b>MASS START MEN</b>

**Technical Delegate**  
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**IBU Referees**  
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HOCHFILZEN 2017

# WHO WILL WIN THE MEDALS?

The IBU World Championships are the highlight of every non-Olympic year; the one set of competitions that most biathletes make their number one goal. Winning an IBU World Championships medal can be a career-fulfilling achievement for many athletes. For some very special athletes like Ole Einar Björndalen or Martin Fourcade, WCH medals add ever-more

substance to their legendary careers.

Last year, Fourcade, Björndalen, Laura Dahlmeier, and Marie Dorin Habert scooped up the most medals last year in Oslo. Dorin Habert won six, Fourcade five with Björndalen and Dahlmeier each claiming four. Now, everyone is at zero for 2017; the new count begins with the February 9 mixed relay.





## SPRINT MEN 2016 RECAP

- **Martin Fourcade - FRA**
- **Ole Einar Björndalen - NOR**
- **Sergey Semenov - UKR**

The sprints are the opening round of "real" competitions after the mixed relay appetizer. They go off on the first Friday and Saturday, followed by pursuits on Sunday. All of the big names consider the sprint the "Champagne" of victories. Be-

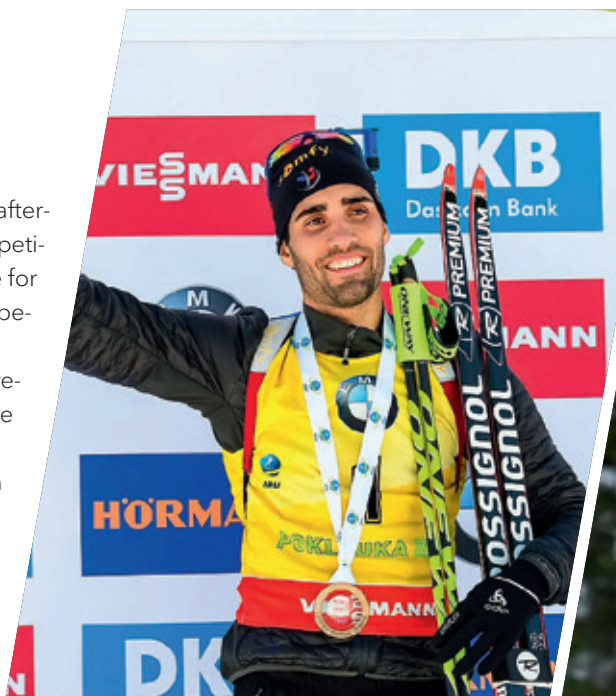
## MIXED RELAY 2016 RECAP

- **France**
- **Germany**
- **Norway**

The mixed relay has gone from afterthought to one of the darling competitions; a great warm-up and a chance for all of the big names to make a point before the sprint/pursuit.

Everyone wants to win a mixed relay medal. Unfortunately, only three teams will do so.

France remains the favorite with Fourcade, Dorin Habert, possibly Anais Chevalier and Quentin Fillon Maillet. This is a case of: tag Fourcade close to the lead and it is all over. Germany needs Dahl-



meier and Schempp on their team, plus any of several men or women. They can scare France, but will be hard-pressed to top them. Norway may be struggle unless Tiril Eckhoff and Marte Olsbu round into form; Johannes Thingnes Boe and Emil Hegle Svendsen would give them a chance. Podium chasers could easily be Czech Republic if they can recapture their magic form a couple of years ago and never count out Ukraine; always good on the shooting range and relays.

for the 2014 OWG, Björndalen admitted if he could only win one medal, his goal would be the sprint, which he won! Last season, he picked up Silver in Oslo. This year, the favorite is obvious as it will be in many of the men's competitions, Fourcade. He has won four of the five contested so far, shooting clean in three with a single penalty in the other. Eighth with three penalties in Oberhof was a hiccup. He is the fastest of the men and shoots well under pressure. Behind him, Julian Eberhard, although inconsistent on the range, especially in standing won in Oberhof and was second in Ruh-

polding. He has the wheels to scare even Fourcade and win his first WCH medal. Beyond these two,

it to Mäkäräinen; on shooting, either Dahlmeier or Koukalová. On pure doing something no-one expected, it goes to Dorin Habert. Then there is Akimova who

range. This might be the year for the Yellow Bib; nod to the low-key personality who spent part of the time between Antholz hanging out high in the Alps. Koukalová is on the upswing, so watch her go after the lady in Yellow.

## PURSUIT MEN

### 2016 RECAP

- **Martin Fourcade - FRA**
- **Ole Einar Björndalen - NOR**
- **Emil Hegle Svendsen - NOR**

The pursuit is one of those competitions where the "it's biathlon so anything can happen" applies. Shoot poorly in prone, meaning two penalties and usually the podium is gone. Then there are the two standing stages, a penalty in the first is an issue but no big deal. The medals usually are determined in the final standing stage; think Fourcade/Shipulin in Pokljuka: Fourcade cleaned and Shipulin went to the loop, story over! Beyond Fourcade, the number two pursuer is Svendsen. He has been on the podium, has a big heart full of fight. This is a competition made for him. Shipulin is a fan of these fast-shooting, fast-skiing, give every ounce of energy exercises. It would be perfectly fitting to see him on the podium. Never a sure bet, but these three are as good as it gets.

there are Fourcade's main rivals, Emil Hegle Svendsen, Simon Schempp and Anton Shipulin. Svendsen seemed to be getting back to his old self recently as has Shipulin. Schempp has been flirting with the sprint podium all season. If these three and Eberhard all shoot clean, it will be a battle...for second place! Wild card is the comebacking Johannes Thingnes Boe.

## SPRINT WOMEN 2016 RECAP

- **Tiril Eckhoff - NOR**
- **Marie Dorin Habert - FRA**
- **Laura Dahlmeier - GER**

Eckhoff has struggled all season, so it is most likely that she will not repeat as sprint World Champion. The five sprint winners this season all could make a case for WCH Gold: Dahlmeier, Dorin Habert, Gabriela Koukalová, Tatiana Akimova, and Kaisa Mäkäräinen. A case could be made for any of them to win Gold. Based on pure sprint speed, give

has the nice blend, but not much experience in the high-pressure WCH. Koukalová is generally the steadiest of shots and her ski speed has been good all season, while Mäkäräinen can be hot/cold on the





## PURSUIT WOMEN

### 2016 RECAP

- **Laura Dahlmeier - GER**
- **Dorothea Wierer - ITA**
- **Marie Dorin Habert - FRA**

Mäkäräinen leads the Pursuit Cup Total Score and was the 2017 IBU Summer Biathlon World Champion, so just mail her the medal and get it over with! Actually, this is probably her best competition. Her ski speed, actually her ability to change gears even at the "advanced" of 34 is very special. That ability to blow away or come from behind in the last loop gives her the Gold medal nod. Dorin Habert will miss some shots, but can also fly; two penal-

ties in Oberhof and she still won. Koukalová has a win and two second places

plus a 26th place disaster in Pokljuka. Her cautious shooting, especially in prone is made for the pursuit. She will be the woman to take advantage when someone else has one penalty too many. Wierer is on the outside looking in this season, but has two podiums; she may rise to the occasion in Hochfilzen and chase down the second individual WCH medal of her career.

## INDIVIDUAL MEN

### 2016 RECAP

- **Martin Fourcade - FRA**
- **Dominik Landertinger - AUT**
- **Simon Eder - AUT**

Only two 20K individuals so far this season; Fourcade won in Östersund and Shipulin in Antholz with Fourcade second. Broken record; but the almost-unstoppable resident of Villard de Lans is the man to beat. He knows how to pace, and conserve energy when necessary, like last year in Oslo. The 20K fits his shooting style: calm, cautious and mostly accurate; not much flusters Martin. With one win under his belt, Shipulin could be gathering a medal here. With the moderately high tracks in Hochfilzen, it might feel a bit like Antholz...and Shipulin is the "King of Antholz," with those five wins.

After these two, the next person with a good chance for the podium is Björndalen. He was fifth in Sweden and fourth in Antholz. He still can shoot the lights out and his ski speed may not be what it was ten years ago, but 95% of the World Cup field would be thrilled to be as fast as him. He and his wife Darya Domracheva have been preparing in the thin air of Antholz, so Hochfilzen will feel like sea level. A medal for Ole might be in the classic biathlon competition. Wild card may be the 2010 Olympic Champion Svendsen, if he chooses to compete.

## INDIVIDUAL WOMEN

### 2016 RECAP

- **Marie Dorin Habert - FRA**
- **Anais Bescond - FRA**
- **Laura Dahlmeier - GER**

Dahlmeier has won both 15K individuals this season, with two penalties each time. The Yellow Bib had her best summer of training in several years, with no interruptions. That deep fitness plus her innate strength (not many of her rivals climbed two 6,000 meter peaks this past summer) are part of the perfect



recipe for the sometimes grueling 15K.

The Hochfilzen tracks are far from easy, but should be no big deal for Dahlmeier. Her skiing is good enough to give away a penalty or two. Dorin Habert's teammate Anaïs Chevalier is a rock-solid shot; not the fastest on

have been consistent, won in Antholz and could benefit from a very pro-German crowd in Hochfilzen. France depends on Fourcade, but loves the relays, so look for them to be at their best. The perfect scenario would see Fourcade, Svendsen, Shipulin and Schempp side-by-side in the final standing stage. Try predicting that

finish! Those look like the best teams if they show up with their best four! Final note: the men's relay could be a good medal shot for the home team, Austria. They are good in the relay and want to do well in their home stadium; a long shot but not an impossibility.

## RELAY WOMEN

### 2016 RECAP

- Norway
- France
- Germany

This one is easy: give the Gold medals to Germany. They have been unstoppable and pretty much unchallenged. Even if one of the middle legs is shuffled (but doubtful), they will give Laura a lead and she will respond with a victory. France has been second three times, so send the Silver medals over to their hotel; solid team, good shots and Marie on the anchor leg is all it will take. Ukraine is also a great relay nation, in Sochi Gold. They now have the little dynamo, Anastasiya Merkushyna on their squad plus Valja Semerenko again; this



the tracks but that is okay. This may be her best shot for a medal. Several others might contend, but something inside sees another German like Maren Hammer Schmidt or Franziska Hildebrand coming through with a medal. Then there always is Wierer, who won the small globe last season...this one is wide open after the top of the podium.

## RELAY MEN 2016 RECAP

- Norway
- Germany
- Canada

Germany, Russia and France each have a win this season. Norway has never put their "A" team on the starting line but have two podiums. The Russians have not won but have been on the podium in all three relays. The Germans





team of fighters will get a medal, but it will be a tussle. Norway may not win Gold, but they will battle for the podium; lots of pride in their team and maybe the women's only chance for a medal. The wild card is Italy with Doro on the anchor.

## MASS START MEN

### 2016 RECAP

- **Johannes Thingnes Boe - NOR**
- **Martin Fourcade - FRA**
- **Ole Einar Björndalen - NOR**

After his heroics in the Antholz mass start, the younger Boe brother has the up-

per hand in the Stop Martin campaign. If he shoots as fast and as accurately as everyone has seen him do before, Boe will repeat as the mass Start World Champion. In this case, Fourcade is the underdog; he is human and knows his way around the penalty loop. He would surely like to



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TIME TO PLAY

avenge last year's loss to the Norwegian. Clean shooting will mean a track battle, foot race; Fourcade might find himself looking at the red-haired Norwegian's back again. Schempp leads the mass start cup going into this IBU WCH, with a win, a second and seventh. The 2017 Schempp just does not look like the 2016 model, a medal is a possibility, but he will have to battle Svendsen, Shipulin and maybe the outside shot, Dominik Windisch. As in the pursuit, it will all come down to that last standing stage...it always does!

## MASS START WOMEN

### 2016 RECAP

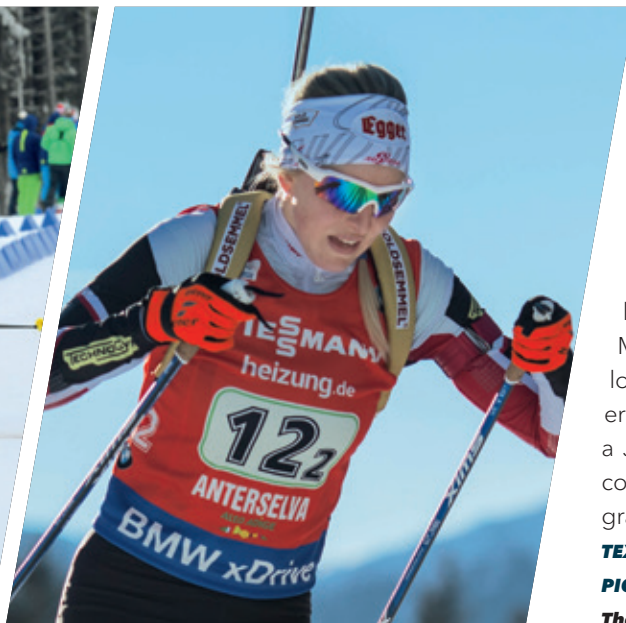
- **Marie Dorin Habert - FRA**
- **Laura Dahlmeier - GER**
- **Kaisa Mäkäräinen - FIN**

Two victories and a second place this season means there could be two red-haired mass start World Champions. The flaming-haired Czech star Koukalová is in the driver's seat. Koukalová hit 57-of-60

## IBU WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BIATHLON 2017 HOCHFILZEN AUT

06.02. - 19.02.2017

MONDAY	06.02.2017		ARRIVAL
TUESDAY	07.02.2017		TRAINING
WEDNESDAY	08.02.2017		TRAINING
THURSDAY	09.02.2017	14:45	MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km + 2 x 7.5 km
FRIDAY	10.02.2017	14:45	SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km
SATURDAY	11.02.2017	14:45	SPRINT MEN 10 km
SUNDAY	12.02.2017	10:30 14:45	PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km
MONDAY	13.02.2017		TRAINING
TUESDAY	14.02.2017		TRAINING
WEDNESDAY	15.02.2017	14:30	INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km
THURSDAY	16.02.2017	14:30	INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km
FRIDAY	17.02.2017	14:45	RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 km
SATURDAY	18.02.2017	14:45	RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 km
SUNDAY	19.02.2017	11:30 14:45	MASS START WOMEN 12.5 km MASS START MEN 15 km



shots in those three competitions. A clean shooting day and inspiration/taking advantage like in Nove Mesto gives her the Gold. Dahlmeier is hot on her heels in the mass start cup; they have battled before. If this turns into a sprint, then it is Dahlmeier. However, if a certain native of Finland is close, then both are in trouble, Mäkäräinen's flying skis will make them look like they are walking! Nothing is ever assured and the mass start is that way; a Justine Braisaz or Lisa Theresa Hauser could come out with their special skills to grab a medal. **I**

**TEXT** Jerry Kokesh

**PICTURES** Christian Manzoni, Eberhard Thonfeld, Ernst Wukits, Rene Miko

**Despite all of these medal candidates, nothing is assured. Some of these favorites will flame out; some will medal but will miss Gold... and as always, there will be one or two huge surprises! Get ready for a wild ride!**

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# FIRST SHOWDOWN IN THE **WINTER WOODS**



The winter in Jämtland, geographically located almost exactly in the middle of Sweden, is enchanting. You only have to look to the skies and contemplate, be prepared to witness natural wonders that simply do not exist in Central Europe.



When the sun rises in the morning, the horizon is a blaze of red, as if the forests were on fire. This is the perfect time to drive a few kilometres out of Östersund into the depths of the woods and take a few moments to unwind. The spectacle of nature repeats itself in the late afternoon, during the training sessions at the biathlon venue. The heavens are framed crimson, and even a few biathletes take couple minutes from their busy schedules to enjoy the sight before returning to the course and turning up the concentration to fine-tune their shooting at the range. After all, the season opener is always an extreme situation, always pervaded by the same, understandable feeling of uncertainty, accompanied by the insatiable longing for answers to the crucial question: "Have we been doing the right training?" The only way of answering the question is to compete, so perhaps that was one reason why there were 24 teams mixed relay at the start this season opener, some with an illustrious line-up. Gone are the days when the competition, with two female athletes starting followed by

two male athletes, only met with a halfhearted reception. The competition has received the blessing of the IOC and also counts towards the Nations Cup points score, with half the points going to the women and half to the men. Thus the athletes', coaches' and officials' high hopes were paired with a clear note of nervousness. The fans, of course, were cheering as if there was no tomorrow: the biathlon season had finally returned.

### A COLORFUL BLEND

American athlete Susan Dunklee, who got off to a whirlwind start, was possibly thinking the same thing. Thanks to Dunklee, it was not the usual suspect Europeans, but the US team - free of all constraints and unfortunately without a

#### MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 x 7.5 km

1. <b>NORWAY</b>	NOR	0+6	1:10:57.1	0.0
OLSBU Marte, BIRKELAND Fanny Horn, BJOERNDALLEN Ole Einar, BOE Johannes Thingnes				
2. <b>GERMANY</b>	GER	0+6	1:11:30.8	+33.7
HILDEBRAND Franziska, DAHLMEIER Laura, DOLL Benedikt, PEIFFER Arnd				
3. <b>ITALY</b>	ITA	1+12	1:11:41.3	+44.2
VITTOZZI Lisa, WIERER Dorothea, HOFER Lukas, WINDISCH Dominik				
4. <b>RUSSIA</b>	RUS	0+5	1:11:41.6	+44.5
PODCHUFAROVA Olga, AKIMOVA Tatiana, TSVETKOV Maxim, SHIPULIN Anton				
5. <b>FRANCE</b>	FRA	1+10	1:12:10.4	+1:13.3
BRAISAZ Justine, BESCOND Anaïs, CLAUDE Fabien, FILLON MAILLET Quentin				

#### SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km

1. <b>FRANCE</b>	FRA	0+4	35:43.5	0.0
DORIN HABERT Marie, FOURCADE Martin				
2. <b>AUSTRIA</b>	AUT	0+6	35:59.5	+16.0
HAUSER Lisa Theresa, EDER Simon				
3. <b>GERMANY</b>	GER	0+5	36:08.7	+25.2
PREUSS Franziska, LESSER Erik				
4. <b>SWEDEN</b>	SWE	0+8	37:04.3	+1:20.8
PERSSON Linn, STENERSEN Torstein				
5. <b>KAZAKHSTAN</b>	KAZ	0+8	37:12.3	+1:28.8
VISHNEVSKAYA Galina, SAVITSKIY Yan				

headgear sponsor - initially in the lead, but then her teammate Clare Egan had to ski two penalty loops, quashing the Americans' hopes in Östersund. The established teams with more balanced line-ups then took over, with the Norwegian quartet of Marte Olsbu, Fanny Horn Bir-



Laura Dahlmeier and Franziska Hildebrand - GER



Italian Mixed Relay Team



**Laura Dahlmeier - GER**

celand, Ole Einar Bjoerndalen and John Tignes Boe improving lap after lap to come in first, ahead of Germany (Franziska Hildenbrand, Benedikt Doll and Arnd Peiffer). The competition, which occasionally also saw Italy's Dorothea Wierer in the lead, was thrilling and unpredictable - the perfect advertising for the mixed relay discipline. And although Lukas Hofer had to enter the penalty loop, Italy was strong enough to land a highly acclaimed third place, with Dominik Windisch managing to fend off Russia's famed Anton Shipulin in a dramatic sprint for the finish line. Yet it was not just the teams vying for gold

that kept spirits high in the somewhat empty grandstands. The host country's entry - a young team which looks set to

Sweden's head coach, Wolfgang Pichler, continued surfing on the wave of good feelings - even after the second competition of the day, the single mixed relay. His team - made up of Linn Persson and Torstein Steinersen - took the stadium by surprise, coming in fourth place. The SMR continues to be the discipline that dishes up the most surprises, presumably due to the switch between male and female biathletes - although there was one team in Östersund that already stood out on account of its line-up: France's, made up of Marie Dorin Habert and Martin Fourcade. Head coach Stephane



**Martin Fourcade and Team France Staff**

#### INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km

1. DAHLMIEIER Laura	GER	0+0+1+1	2	46:14.0	0.0
2. BESCOND Anaïs	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	46:29.8	+15.8
3. YURKEVICH Darya	BLR	0+0+0+0	0	47:31.3	+1:17.3
4. PREUSS Franziska	GER	0+2+0+1	3	47:51.9	+1:37.9
5. BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	2+0+0+2	4	48:06.4	+1:52.4
6. GLAZYRINA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0+2+0	2	48:56.3	+2:42.3
7. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	1+2+0+0	3	49:18.9	+3:04.9
8. OEBERG Hanna	SWE	0+1+2+1	4	49:28.6	+3:14.6
9. VITKOVA Veronika	CZE	3+1+0+1	5	49:37.3	+3:23.3
10. HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+0+0+3	3	49:46.0	+3:32.0

#### INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+2+0+0	2	51:33.8	0.0
2. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0+0+2	2	52:03.3	+29.5
3. CHEPELIN Vladimir	BLR	1+0+0+0	1	52:58.1	+1:24.3
4. BIRKELAND Lars Helge	NOR	1+1+1+0	3	53:44.3	+2:10.5
5. BJOERNDALLEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+2+0+1	3	53:50.5	+2:16.7
6. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	1+0+0+2	3	54:02.1	+2:28.3
7. ANEV Krasimir	BUL	1+1+0+0	2	54:03.1	+2:29.3
8. GRAF Florian	GER	0+0+0+1	1	54:07.4	+2:33.6
9. LINDSTROEM Fredrik	SWE	1+0+1+1	3	54:17.6	+2:43.8
10. WEGER Benjamin	SUI	0+1+0+1	2	54:32.8	+2:59.0

score a medal by the 2019 Östersund World Championships at the very latest - put on an inspirational show: their own special kind of Swedish magic at the season opener, coming in sixth.

Bouthiaux bet on his best athletes and was rewarded with a win. His fellow coach from Austria, Reinhard Gössweiner, had success with the same tactic: Lisa-Theresa Hauser and Simon Eder crossed the finish line only 16 seconds behind France, followed by Franziska Preuss and Lesser Erik (Germany) in third place, grabbing a decent fist-full of points for the Nations



Gabriela Koukalova - CZE

Cup score. Kazakhstan in fifth, Switzerland in sixth and Canada in seventh place proved that the single mixed relay gives teams, that are not so often to be found in the top spots otherwise, a chance to really present themselves at their best.

## YELLOW FEVER FOR DAHLMEIER

The event had got off to a great start, and the wintry atmosphere in central Sweden was an added bonus – but everyone knew that the hard battles were still to come. The women then had two days to rest before the true test of endurance, the 15-kilometer, which in Östersund features a massive long climb that needs to be skied five times. For Laura Dahlmeier, this was new territory. She had missed the season opener a few times before. To her own surprise, this time she was in top form. "On the course I actually didn't feel good at all, and kept saying to myself: ski faster, Laura, ski faster," she said. But Dahlmeier's good fortune did not end with her first place: she also scored herself the 'yellow bib'. "I've been dreaming of that since childhood," confided Dahlmeier. Yet again we witnessed a string of obvious

comparisons with Magdalena Neuner, the last German biathlete allowed to slip into this coveted bib (on 18 March 2012). Yet even though Dahlmeier and Neuner come from the same area at the foot of Germany's highest peak, the Zugspitze, there is already a clear difference between the two. Throughout her career, Neuner had problems at the shooting range, whereas Dahlmeier handled the capricious Östersund winds with aplomb.

"This is insane – I never expected anything like it," she said, excited after her eighth World Cup victory. To top it off, Neuner's gold ended another a long dry spell for the German team: it was the first victory in a season opener competition since Martina Glagow's win in November 2007. Placing second was France's Anaïs Bescond. Third-placed Darya Yurkevich from Belarus even managed the unusual feat of defying the gusty winds in Sweden's na-

tional biathlon stadium with four flawless bouts of shooting.

## FOURCADE IN HOT PURSUIT OF BJÖRNDALEN'S RECORD

Not a single one of the 103 men starting the next day managed to shoot flawlessly.



### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+0	0	20:09.7	0.0
2.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+1	1	20:21.1	+11.4
3.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0	0	20:29.6	+19.9
4.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+1	1	20:35.4	+25.7
5.	HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0	0	20:50.6	+40.9
6.	HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+0	0	20:52.9	+43.2
7.	ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	0+1	1	20:53.5	+43.8
8.	SKARDINO Nadezhda	BLR	0+0	0	20:53.9	+44.2
9.	VISHNEVSKAYA Galina	KAZ	0+0	0	20:59.1	+49.4
10.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	0+1	1	21:01.4	+51.7

### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0	0	23:31.9	0.0
2.	LINDSTROEM Fredrik	SWE	0+0	0	24:13.4	+41.5
3.	PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0	0	24:15.5	+43.6
4.	DOLL Benedikt	GER	0+1	1	24:16.0	+44.1
5.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1+1	2	24:17.9	+46.0
6.	WINDISCH Dominik	ITA	0+0	0	24:22.5	+50.6
7.	BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+0	0	24:27.5	+55.6
8.	DESTHIEUX Simon	FRA	0+0	0	24:27.9	+56.0
9.	PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro	UKR	0+0	0	24:28.4	+56.5
10.	FOURCADE Simon	FRA	1+0	1	24:29.2	+57.3

Even the winner of the season opener, the 20 km – Martin Fourcade – had to give in to the difficult wind conditions twice. He was still immensely pleased: “I was really wondering what shape I was in, and now have a good answer to that,” said the five-time World Cup total winner. “Whether



**Podium Sprint Women**

you are capable of winning, or actually win: it does make a difference.” One of his main competitors allegedly Johannes Thingnes Boe, whose skiing appeared effortless, shot flawlessly in front of Fourcade until the last shooting bout before having to concede two penalty minutes. His second place ahead of the surprisingly strong Belarusian Vladimir Chepelin hinted, however, that the younger of the two Boe brothers might be set to have a good season. Meanwhile, another athlete also often cited as a match for Fourcade, Simon Schempp, appeared disappointed after seven missed targets, but showed real fighting spirit. “There is plenty of the season left to come, so all is not yet lost,” he said, appearing hopeful following his

good performance on the course. My skiing was quite OK – it’s a good start.”

### **REFUELING AT THE CHRISTMAS MARKET**

The courses in Östersund are difficult, but fortunately the competition program takes that into consideration, so a day of rest was scheduled for the following day. And fortunately, the Östersund christmas market was already open as well. If you have never been there before, make sure you rectify that soon! The market offers everything reminiscent of Christmas, including hot drinks of course – but consistently alcohol-free only. Of course, the selection of products on offer is temptingly large, but you will hardly find a single mass-produced item. The market mainly features products from the local area, from woollen socks and rabbit fur gloves to cheese and reindeer hearts. The culinary delights include grilled wild salmon, which is so delicious that it in itself is reason enough to travel to central Sweden. The athletes also like to use the Christmas market as an excuse to take a break from their usual program and refuel, since there is little other opportunity to do so during a biathlon World Cup week.

### **THE ROUSING FINALE**

The next competitions followed at the weekend, starting with the Women’s sprint, the results of which gave the first indication of the ‘usual suspects’ for the top ten this season. In Östersund they were, in order: Marie Dorin Habert (France) who shot flawlessly ahead of Finland’s Kaisa Mäkäräinen and an equally confident shooter, Gabriela Koukalova from the Czech Republic. These three were followed by this sea-

son’s first gold winner, Laura Dahlmeier, who was defending her yellow bib for the first time. Placing fifth was Lisa Theresa Hauser from Austria. Even in slalom-mad Austria, where the biggest winter sports are downhill skiing, followed by more downhill skiing, then ski jumping, this recent world-class placing is now seen as normal. A few years ago, the Austrians would have been bowled over by such a performance. Of course, it’s nice for Austria to have Hauser as their first woman biathlete to make it to the front of the pack. Her placings after two competitions even put her in third in the overall World Cup standings, which was a first for the Austrian team. The Swiss also have reinforcements waiting in the wings for Selina Gasparin: Lena Häcki from Engelberg placed 12th. The next day would be even better, with the pursuit.

The ‘elite’ were, again, in a world of their own. The most successful Italian biathlete in history, Dorothea Wierer – who up until that point had been missing from the illustrious circle – finally joined their

**Fredrik Lindstroem - SWE**



**PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km**

1. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+1+0	1	31:43.3
2. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+1+1+0	2	+8.4
3. WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+0+0+0	0	+21.4
4. HAECKI Lena	SUI	0+0+0+0	0	+36.3
5. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	1+1+0+2	4	+52.7
6. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+1+0	1	+1:01.0
7. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	2+1+2+1	6	+1:15.5
8. PUSKARCIKOVA Eva	CZE	0+1+0+1	2	+1:17.4
9. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+2+0+0	2	+1:21.7
10. SKARDINO Nadezhda	BLR	0+0+0+1	1	+1:29.4

**PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km**

1. BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	31:22.3
2. TSVETKOV Maxim	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+10.5
3. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	2+0+0+2	4	+15.2
4. PEIFFER Arnd	GER	2+0+1+0	3	+52.7
5. LESSER Erik	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+55.1
6. FOURCADE Simon	FRA	0+0+2+0	2	+56.1
7. KRČMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	+1:01.1
8. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+3+0	3	+1:02.1
9. SCHEMP Simon	GER	1+1+0+1	3	+1:07.5
10. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+1+2+1	4	+1:07.6

ranks with a third place, thanks to faultless shooting. Up front, Gabriela Koukalova and Laura Dahlmeier were fighting for the top spot. At the end, the Czech woman finished 6.4 seconds ahead of the German, who had to ski one more penalty loop (2 in total). Laura Dahlmeier was satisfied nonetheless: "I'm glad to be join-

ing the front group," she said. The award ceremony always honors the top six women. For Switzerland's Laura Häcki, it was the first time that she had walked up onto the podium with the world's top biathletes. She was very close, having placed fourth. Standing beside her were Kaisa Mäkäräinen, and of course Austria's Lisa Theresa Hauser was up there too.

On the two final days of competition, it seemed almost a bit unfair that the Östersund

wind in the early afternoon was consistently milder than on the days before. The five-gram red flags hang rather limply from their holders, as if the wind had fled in fear of the men's competition. Obviously the top men biathletes exploited this for all it was worth – especially Martin Fourcade, who dominated the competi-

**Podium Pursuit Men**

tion. After ten kilometers and consistently flawless performances at the shooting range, Fourcade arrived 41.5 seconds ahead of Sweden's Frederik Lindström and Arnd Peiffer of Germany. The Swedish fans were especially happy, since there are few who would expect one of their countrymen on the podium at the awards ceremony. For Lindström it was his first podium placing after a two-year hiatus. The amazing thing was that his previous podium placing was also in the sprint at the season opener in Östersund, and also in second. The German team also seemed relieved following Arnd Peiffer's third placing and the fourth place for Benedikt Doll. Upon further analysis of the competition, it was clear that although Fourcade was good on the trail, he was not the quickest. That honor was reserved for Austria's Julian Eberhard, who came in fifth with two missed seconds 46 seconds behind Fourcade, immediately behind the other top competitors: one small victory that proved that Eberhard also has what it takes to mingle with the top crowd, something he has also managed once in the past.

Now, let's take a look at the statistics before we look at the pursuit. Ole Einar Bjoerndalen was the only one to have succeeded, in 2007, to win all three competitions at the Central Swedish venue. So Martin Fourcade was chasing yet another

**Lena Häcki - SUI and Kaisa Mäkäräinen - FIN**



record set by his Norwegian colleague, but this time the Frenchman allowed himself a few weaknesses: even in the prone he had to ski two penalty loops. Although he was able to make his way back to the front, his additional misses in the final bout made him slip back into third. No problem? It was actually – because the Russians put on a very strong showing this time, especially Anton Babikov, who pre-

viously in the Östersund sprint had topped his best last season's World Cup result, with a seventh placing in Antholz. The 25-year old from Ufa defended his lead in the final lap and secured his first World Cup win. Another member of the Russian team, Maxim Tsvetkov – a protégé of Ricco Gross – added the icing to the cake and, in a thrilling finale, managed to hold Martin Fourcade at bay. So Björndalen's triple win in Östersund is still safe. This time in Sweden, the record-holding World Cup winner placed 5th-12th-12th. Martin Fourcade will have to wait another year to challenge his historic results. **I**

**TEXT** Siegi Heinrich

**PICTURES** Evgeny Tumashov



**Start Pursuit Men**



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**BIATHLON WORLD** 42/2017 23





# **SUNNY POKLJUKA HAT TRICKS**

## **DAHLMEIER AND FOURCADE DOMINATE**

After wintry, dark and windy Östersund, the biathlon circus packed the tent and pitched on the Pokljuka plateau for BMW IBU World Cup 2. The contrast between Northern Europe and the Julian Alps was dramatic: longer days, sunshine in the stadium and the wind flags virtually motionless.



#### Martin Fourcade - FRA

Over a long weekend, Lake Bled turned was a promenade for biathlon stars: Anton Shipulin cooling down after intensive training, Emil Hegle Svendsen jogging with his headphones and Rosanna Crawford taking a selfie with her teammates. The hotel parking was packed with team trucks, painted in national colors.

Laura Dahlmeier and Martin Fourcade travelled to Pokljuka with Yellow Bibs in their luggage. The three-day competition program was intense: Sprint, Pursuit and Relays.

### FOURCADE BREAKS THE SPELL: FIRST WIN AT POKLJUKA

Martin Fourcade and Pokljuka had a complicated relationship. Before the 2016-17 season, the French star has never topped a podium in Slovenia. On a sunny and windless morning, he broke the streak, shooting clean and flew around the last loop to take the victory. Perfect shooting conditions meant the only route to the podium involved closing all ten targets. Johannes Thingnes Boe did it, but

was a bit slower than Fourcade in the final loop and finished second.

Taking the middle winner's seat in the middle at the press conference, Fourcade smiled and said, "First time I ever took this chair in Pokljuka." He talked about his victory, "It was amazing, I waited for a long time to win here. Up until today, this has been the last venue I have never won in. This is a special day for me."

Russia had a good day with Anton Shipulin in third, his first podium this season. This was important for his confidence: slowly but steadily, the Russian star's usual shape was coming back.

Boe's admitted that the battles this season are for second and third place with Fourcade almost winning by default. "You see the result list today, I am behind Martin, but I am in front

of many other guys. I didn't win today, but I won against many other strong athletes, so I am very happy."

### KUZMINA'S SENSATIONAL COMEBACK

The women's field added a Slovakian celebrity: two-time Olympic Sprint Gold

#### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0	0	19:51.7	0.0
2. BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	0+0	0	19:55.2	+3.5
3. OLSBU Marte	NOR	0+0	0	20:13.0	+21.3
4. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+1	1	20:14.5	+22.8
5. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0	0	20:20.1	+28.4
6. KUZMINA Anastasiya	SVK	0+0	0	20:22.4	+30.7
7. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+1	1	20:31.1	+39.4
8. PUSKARCIKOVA Eva	CZE	0+0	0	20:31.5	+39.8
9. AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+1	1	20:32.5	+40.8
10. GOESSNER Miriam	GER	0+1	1	20:34.5	+42.8

#### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0	0	23:11.7	0.0
2. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0	0	23:25.4	+13.7
3. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0	0	23:26.8	+15.1
4. SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0	0	23:32.6	+20.9
5. FILLON MAILLET Quentin	FRA	0+0	0	23:38.7	+27.0
6. SCHEMP Simon	GER	0+0	0	23:41.2	+29.5
7. BJOERNDAL Ole Einar	NOR	0+0	0	23:43.1	+31.4
8. LESSER Erik	GER	0+0	0	23:44.3	+32.6
9. KRČMAR Michal	CZE	0+0	0	23:47.8	+36.1
10. ELISEEV Matvey	RUS	1+0	1	23:50.1	+38.4

medalist Anastasiya Kuzmina, the only biathlete with two consecutive Olympic sprint titles. The day before the sprint, she commented to IBU TV about her last competition in the 2014 Oslo mass start. "I thought it was the end of my career, as it is always good to finish being on top." Since then, she gave birth to a daughter but last year made the decision to return; she had missed the "emotion and adrenaline." She was very careful regarding expectations, "I just want to start in two World Cups in December and January and see for myself." No one could have imagined that she would match her Vancouver and Sochi clean shooting and finish sixth in the Pokljuka sprint.

19-year-old Justine Braisaz was surprise number two, setting the time to beat at the finish line. It looked like her first career win was in hand, but the Yellow Bib Dahlmeier finished 3.5 seconds faster. Norway's Marte Olsbu challenged both women with clean shooting, but finished third.

Braisaz commented on her first career podium, "I am really happy about the competition today, I didn't believe the people when they told me I was in the lead. I didn't want to go out of my bed

this morning, but in the end, this was a good decision."

### **RÖSCH'S TEARS OF JOY**

After winning the Pokljuka sprint, Fourcade was hungry for his first pursuit win this season. As in Östersund, he faced a Russian challenge in the form of Shipulin who stayed with Fourcade until the final standing stage. His missed shot resulted in victory number two for Fourcade. Svendsen cleaned and left the stadium alongside Shipulin; the two battling for second, skiing together for the whole last loop. Emil Hegle Svendsen had a slight advantage coming into the stadium, holding off Shipulin for second place.

As in the previous day's women's sprint, sixth place was special: Belgium's Michael Rösch, shooting clean and skiing fast moved up from 16th at the start to sixth place. He commented, "For some peo-

ple, sixth place is just a silly sixth place. For me it means a lot; I had a perfect competition."

### **REPEAT PERFORMANCE FOR DAHLMEIER**

Dahlmeier started the Pokljuka pursuit, motivated and inspired by her sprint win just a day earlier. She repeated, but this time it did not come easily. In the second

#### **PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km**

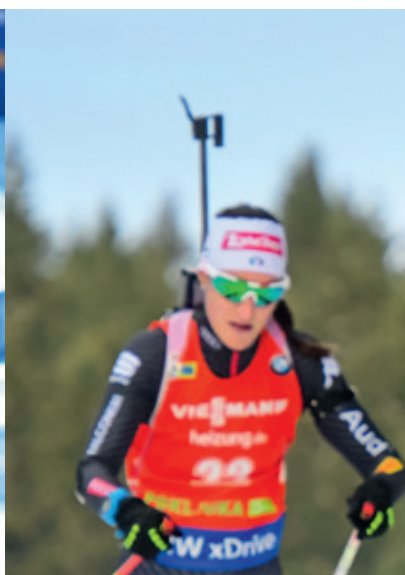
1.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+2+0+0	2	30:43.1
2.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+1+1	2	+16.8
3.	PUSKARCIKOVA Eva	CZE	1+0+0+0	1	+18.7
4.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	+18.8
5.	DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+0+0+1	1	+24.1
6.	HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+0+1	1	+26.4
7.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	1+1+1+0	3	+27.2
8.	HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+33.1
9.	OLSBU Marte	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+46.5
10.	GASPARIN Selina	SUI	1+0+0+1	2	+55.6

#### **PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km**

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	30:27.4
2.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	+6.0
3.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+6.2
4.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0+0+2	2	+48.0
5.	SCHEMP Simon	GER	0+0+1+0	1	+59.8
6.	ROESCH Michael	BEL	0+0+0+0	0	+1:21.0
7.	ELISEEV Matvey	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	+1:27.5
8.	TSVETKOV Maxim	RUS	0+1+0+1	2	+1:28.0
9.	BJØRNDAL Ole Einar	NOR	2+0+2+0	4	+1:31.5
10.	KRCMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+2+0	2	+1:34.3



**Michael Rösch - BEL**



**Justine Braisaz - FRA**





Eva Puskarcikova - CZE

prone, she had two penalties, having to pull back 37-second gap to the lead group. She closed the gap, then cleaned the remaining stages, while her rivals were touring the penalty loop. Kaisa Mäkäräinen left the shooting range in seventh, but flew around the tracks on the last loop to finish second.

The surprise of the day was the Czech Republic's Eva Puskarcikova, with her first-

ever podium, holding off Marie Dorin Habert, hot on her heels. Puskarcikova was perhaps the happiest person on the podium. She could not find the words to describe her feelings. "It's a very amazing moment for me. I am very happy; I don't know what to say. I never expected this."

### SUNNY RELAYS

The two relays were the cherry atop the biathlon Pokljuka cake, ending the sunny weekend. The men's relay with early misses from Norway and Germany set the scene for a surprising lead by Russia, followed by Italy and Ukraine. Germany, however, came back into contention with Schempp and Doll pulling them to third place. The spectators saw a Sunday déjà-vu: a duel of the Russian and French anchors, Shipulin and Fourcade. It did not happen. Fourcade crossed the finish line

first, after leaving Shipulin at the last standing, with Fourcade claiming three consecutive wins. He commented, "Yeah, I did three in a row this



Martin Fourcade and Simon Desthieux - FRA

week, and my first win in Pokljuka. What a sunny week!"

Twenty-three teams competed in the women's relay; after a long battle between their teams, Dahlmeier flew past Dorin Habert to give Germany the win.

However, the third place battle made the headlines. The day before at ten in the morning, 21-year-old Anastasiya Merkushyna was warming up for the Ridnaun IBU Cup Sprint. She had no idea she would shoot clean for her first-ever IBU Cup victory. Nor did she know that, as she was celebrating, she would get a message from her coach to pack up and take a 5-hour car ride to the Pokljuka World Cup. Of course, how could she know

German women celebrate a win in Pokljuka Relay

#### RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 km

1. GERMANY	GER	0+9	1:11:31.1	0.0
HINZ Vanessa, HILDEBRAND Franziska, HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren, DAHLMEIER Laura				
2. FRANCE	FRA	0+3	1:11:41.2	+10.1
CHEVALIER Anais, BRAISAZ Justine, AYMONIER Celia, DORIN HABERT Marie				
3. UKRAINE	UKR	0+3	1:12:08.8	+37.7
VARVYNETS Iryna, DZHIMA Yuliia, PIDHRUSHNA Olena, MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya				
4. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	2+9	1:12:27.4	+56.3
PUSKARCIKOVA Eva, CHARVATOVA Lucie, VITKOVA Veronika, KOUKALOVA Gabriela				
5. NORWAY	NOR	2+1	5 1:13:32.7	+2:01.6
BIRKELAND Fanny Horn, FENNE Hilde, ECKHOFF Tiril, OLSBU Marte				

#### RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 km

1. FRANCE	FRA	0+7	1:11:56.5	0.0
BEATRIX Jean Guillaume, FILLON MAILLET Quentin, DESTHIEUX Simon, FOURCADE Martin				
2. RUSSIA	RUS	1+6	1:12:12.2	+15.7
TSVETKOV Maxim, BABIKOV Anton, ELISEEV Matvey, SHIPULIN Anton				
3. GERMANY	GER	0+11	1:12:18.0	+21.5
LESSER Erik, DORFER Matthias, DOLL Benedikt, SCHEMPP Simon				
4. UKRAINE	UKR	0+6	1:12:32.8	+36.3
PRYMA Artem, SEMENOV Sergey, KILCHYTSKY Vitaliy, PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro				
5. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	0+6	1:12:45.4	+48.9
SLESINGR Michal, KRUPCIK Tomas, MORAVEC Ondrej, KRCDMAR Michal				





her task was to anchor Ukraine's relay team, against names like Dahlmeier and Dorin Habert and to bring her team across the finish line in third place?



**Womens Relay Competition**

The crazy, exciting and sunny biathlon week at Pokljuka ended on that note. It was a week dominated by Dahlmeier and Fourcade plus Rösch's tears of joy; Kuzmina's unbelievably strong comeback; and the will power of Merckushyna. More to come... **I**

**TEXT** Marina Dmukhovskaya

**PICTURES** Rene Miko



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**SWIX**  
YOUR WINNING MARGIN





Coming into the third BMW IBU World Cup stage in Nové Město Na Moravě, a massive crowd of more than 30,000 spectators per day had booked tickets for biathlon's return to the Czech Republic.

Many people were wondering if Martin Fourcade and Laura Dahlmeier, after hat tricks in Pokljuka were unstoppable forces. In the end, familiar faces popped up on the podium with Fourcade consistently on top. Alternatively, the women's competitions spiced things up with a few first timers.

### MEN'S SPRINT DECIDED BY...A SPRINT

It looked like there might be a new sprint winner when Martin Fourcade headed to the penalty loop for the first time in a sprint this season. Before him, Anton Shipulin was typically quick on the shooting range, leading the competition with clean shooting, something not many contenders could do on a cold evening. However, the steep uphill of Nove Mesto took a toll on the Russian; the last loop proved costly in the final results.

The Yellow Bib leader knew his rival's time, and showed his dominating speed,

for his fourth consecutive win. Until the last split, the French star was behind, but an exceptional final few hundred meters put just ahead of Shipulin by 1.6 seconds! Fourcade's big celebration at the end showed how much it meant to win in front of the spectacular Czech crowd. Yet, he was unaware that his leadership was still in danger. The threat came by the name of Vladimir Iliev, whose fast skiing put him in first after the prone stage.

One standing penalty from the Bulgarian cost him the chance of a surprising win, but he still managed a career-best fifth place. Johannes Thingnes Boe and Emil Helge Svendsen, both with one penalty finished ahead of

#### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1.	AKIMOVA Tatiana	RUS	0+0	0	21:58.9	0.0
2.	CHEVALIER Anais	FRA	0+0	0	22:03.2	+4.3
3.	DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+0	0	22:04.0	+5.1
4.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+2	2	22:15.4	+16.5
5.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	1+1	2	22:17.1	+18.2
6.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	0+2	2	22:17.3	+18.4
7.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+1	1	22:22.3	+23.4
8.	BESCOND Anais	FRA	0+0	0	22:23.7	+24.8
9.	BIRKELAND Fanny Horn	NOR	0+1	1	22:28.3	+29.4
10.	PREUSS Franziska	GER	0+1	1	22:29.8	+30.9

#### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1	1	23:48.0	0.0
2.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0	0	23:49.6	+1.6
3.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+1	1	23:54.4	+6.4
4.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	1+0	1	23:58.5	+10.5
5.	ILIEV Vladimir	BUL	0+1	1	24:03.8	+15.8
6.	RASTORGUEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+1	1	24:04.3	+16.3
7.	SEMOV Sergey	UKR	0+0	0	24:06.8	+18.8
8.	MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0	0	24:14.5	+26.5
9.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	2+1	3	24:16.6	+28.6
10.	BJOENTEGAARD Erlend	NOR	0+1	1	24:18.1	+30.1

him, but behind Shipulin, the only man in the top six to shoot clean.

"In five sprints, I did not miss any targets. I think this is the reason why I missed today. All the journalists told me that and

#### Podium Sprint Women





Vladimir Iliev - BUL

when I hit the first 2 standing I thought '7 for 7', here comes another 10 for 10: then I missed the 8th. It was an advantage knowing my opponent's time...I know how good these guys are on the last lap," Fourcade explained after win number one of the weekend.

## WOMEN'S SPRINT: UNEXPECTED PODIUM

With even a bigger turnout than the day before, women's sprint was treated to a packed house; not everyone dealt with the packed stadium perfectly. Dahlmeier was put off her stride by the unlucky coincidence of being on the shooting range the same time as Gabriela Koukalová. The German missed twice in standing and said goodbye to chance of a fourth consecutive win. Her strong skiing on the challenging track allowed her to finish fourth, collecting World Cup points on her rivals, as they fell further behind. Koukalová suffered the pressure of high expectations; her three penalties left her in 13th place.

Clean shooting proved essential for the podium. When Susan Dunklee of the USA finished ahead of Dahlmeier, it seemed like a victory was in the air. The lady from Vermont's lead did not last long. Tatiana Akimova confirmed the qualities that gave her the "IBU Rookie of the year" award in the past season and surprised everyone in the stadium by crossing the line first. Competition was not over yet and Anais Chevalier left the second range with the best time



OLE EINAR  
BJØRNDALEN

Team Madshus  
Biathlon

TEAM MADSHUS

and it was clear it would have been a matter of seconds: the French girl accused the long uphill before the finish and closed in the second place to get her first career podium, while Akimova captured her maiden win. "Of course I didn't expect I would win today. I am very excited about this victory. As usual I wanted to do my best; it's great I could do it."

### **EMOTIONAL MARTIN: FIST PUMP, HIGH FIVES**

With seven men starting within 18 seconds, it was clear the men's pursuit would be exciting. Fourcade passed Shipulin before the first prone; both cleaned and the duel was on. The Yellow Bib had a penalty in the second prone and cleaned the standing stages. Once the last target closed, he celebrated with a fist pump to the audience, toured the last 2.5K comfortably, taking time to high five numerous fans. He commented about his uncharacteristic gestures. "I hope people won't misunderstand my celebrations on the track. Often people say I don't show emotions for my wins and today I wanted



**Quentin Fillon Maillet - FRA**

to share my happiness with this fantastic crowd."

Shipulin had to settle for second, after falling out of contention two standing penalties and skiing that was no match for Fourcade. The battle for third was much more exciting. Quentin Fillon Maillet and Simon Schempp shot clean to close the gap to Boe, eventually leaving him behind, when he had two penalties in the last standing stage. Fillon Maillet flew past the German right at the finish line. Just behind this group, Michael Rösch picked up sixth place. Fillon Maillet, who completed

the podium on what was to become an even bigger day for the French team, was elated. "I am so happy about my competition. It was just perfect with clean shooting. I did not start well the season, so it is important for me to get back on the podium with such a performance."

### **CHEVALIER'S DREAM DAY**

When Anais Chevalier and Tatiana Akimova had first prone stage penalties in the women's pursuit, many thought it was a natural letdown after their first career podiums the day before. However, those sceptics changed their minds rather quickly. Dunklee took the lead after the first prone stage, but the pressure of keeping ahead of Dahlmeier and Dorothea Wierer led to a penalty loop in the second prone. The German entered the first standing shooting with a comfortable lead, but things soured with two tours of the penalty loop.

Clean shooting put Chevalier and Akimova back in the lead, chased by Wierer and Franziska Preuss with one stage left. The top three managed to stay calm and close those last targets, while Preuss and Dahlmeier both missed once again, ending their podium quest. The Italian pushed very hard to close the 20 second gap to Chevalier. Despite shaky legs, the budding French star found the strength to cross the line in the first place; shedding tears of joy over her first career win. Thirty minutes after the flower ceremony,



**Anais Chevalier - FRA and Dorothea Wierer - ITA**

**PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km**

1. CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	1+0+0+0	1	30:38.1
2. WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+1+1+0	2	+9.5
3. AKIMOVA Tatiana	RUS	1+0+0+0	1	+19.4
4. DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+1+1+0	2	+28.0
5. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+1+1	3	+43.8
6. PREUSS Franziska	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+48.9
7. DAHLMER Laura	GER	0+0+2+1	3	+57.0
8. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	1+0+1+1	3	+59.8
9. ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	2+0+1+1	4	+59.8
10. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+1:04.1

**PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km**

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	32:53.6
2. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	+30.2
3. FILLON MAILLET Quentin	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	+38.3
4. SCHEMPP Simon	GER	0+0+0+0	0	+38.4
5. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	1+0+0+2	3	+1:02.7
6. ROESCH Michael	BEL	0+0+0+0	0	+1:03.6
7. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+0+2+0	2	+1:03.8
8. BEATRIX Jean Guillaume	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	+1:20.9
9. BAILEY Lowell	USA	1+0+1+0	2	+1:22.1
10. KRČMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+1+0	1	+1:27.3

the smiling first-time World Cup winner said, "I want to dedicate this win to my boyfriend and my family. It's incredible; I've been crying until I got in here I think!...I

did not expect this when I came here; it's amazing to win here in front of so many people. In the last 100 meters, I was scared Doro could catch me, but then I enjoyed every moment until the end."

**SECOND HAT TRICK FOR MARTIN**

Even with a slightly modified course used, due to a way-too-icy-downhill, the mass start result had the same name at the top of the list: 2016 of biathlon ended with Fourcade's 6th consecutive win, his eighth in nine individual competitions.



Gabriela Koukalova - CZE

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## PREMIO SLG 10

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PREMIO SLG 10 & Dorothea Wierer

**MASS START WOMEN 12.5 km**

1. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+1+0+0	1	34:42.1
2. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	2+0+0+0	2	+3.1
3. WIERER Dorothea	ITA	1+0+0+0	1	+9.7
4. HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+0+1+0	1	+15.5
5. OLSBU Marte	NOR	1+1+0+0	2	+21.6
6. PREUSS Franziska	GER	0+1+1+0	2	+26.8
7. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+0+1	2	+33.2
8. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	1+1+0+1	3	+39.9
9. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+1+1	2	+43.1
10. AKIMOVA Tatiana	RUS	0+0+2+0	2	+48.1

**MASS START MEN 15 km**

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	36:18.9
2. SCHEMP Simon	GER	1+1+0+0	2	+8.3
3. BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+9.4
4. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	1+0+0+1	2	+9.7
5. PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro	UKR	0+0+0+1	1	+10.2
6. ELISEEV Matvey	RUS	0+1+1+0	2	+11.0
7. BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	1+0+1+0	2	+11.3
8. FILLON MAILLET Quentin	FRA	0+1+1+0	2	+13.7
9. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	2+0+1+0	3	+19.8
10. DESTHIEUX Simon	FRA	1+0+1+0	2	+28.8

On a track as hard as this one, the first loop was expected to be slower than in the previous two competitions. However, with sixteen men shooting clean; it was a bit shocking to see two others

coming back strong by cleaning the standing stages and Anton Babikov both passed the local hero. Schempp's second place could have been third had Jean

Guillaume Beatrix not made a huge error. He cleaned the last standing, leaving just behind Fourcade, but mistakenly veered to the penalty loop, thinking he had missed a shot. With that, Beatrix said goodbye to the first podium of his season.

"It was really exciting: a tense competition. I was nervous on the shooting range; I think everyone felt it," admitted Fourcade, who somehow blocked out the 35,000 screaming noisy fans just perfectly. He left for the Christmas break, having dominated the first third of the season.

**GOLD FOR GABI AND THE CROWD**

It would have been impossible to write a better ending to an amazing weekend of competitions in Nove Mesto Na Morave. Half-way through the women's mass start, Austria's fast-shooting Lisa Theresa Hauser was in the lead. All the big names were trying to close the gap: Laura Dahlmeier had two first-prone penalties, Koukalová, Wierer and Dorin Habert each with one penalty, were all pushing hard to close out the year in style.

The fan's beloved Koukalová, especially, had much to prove to the enormous crowd who cheered hard all week for the Czech team without seeing them once on the podium. The 2016 World Cup Total Score winner proved to be quick on her skis in the previous days, but had been let down by her shooting. When Hauser missed in the first standing, Koukalová pounced and took the lead. Two controlled standing stages found the Czech star leaving for the last loop with Wierer. However, Koukalová was not to be denied this win, pulling away to a 3.1 second win over Dahlmeier, who surged past Wierer just before the finish line for second place. The ever-nervous Koukalová said, "I was so nervous before the race so it was amazing...I have so many emotions; it's even more emotional than at the Olympics. I would like to say thanks to all the spectators. I hope I was able to make a nice Christmas present to all of them."

She certainly did, throwing kisses to the whole stadium, giving them a storybook ending to the weekend. **I**

**TEXT** Giulio Gasparin

**PICTURES** Petr Slavik, Rene Miko, Michal Cervený



Simon Schempp - GER



# EXPLORE THE EDGES



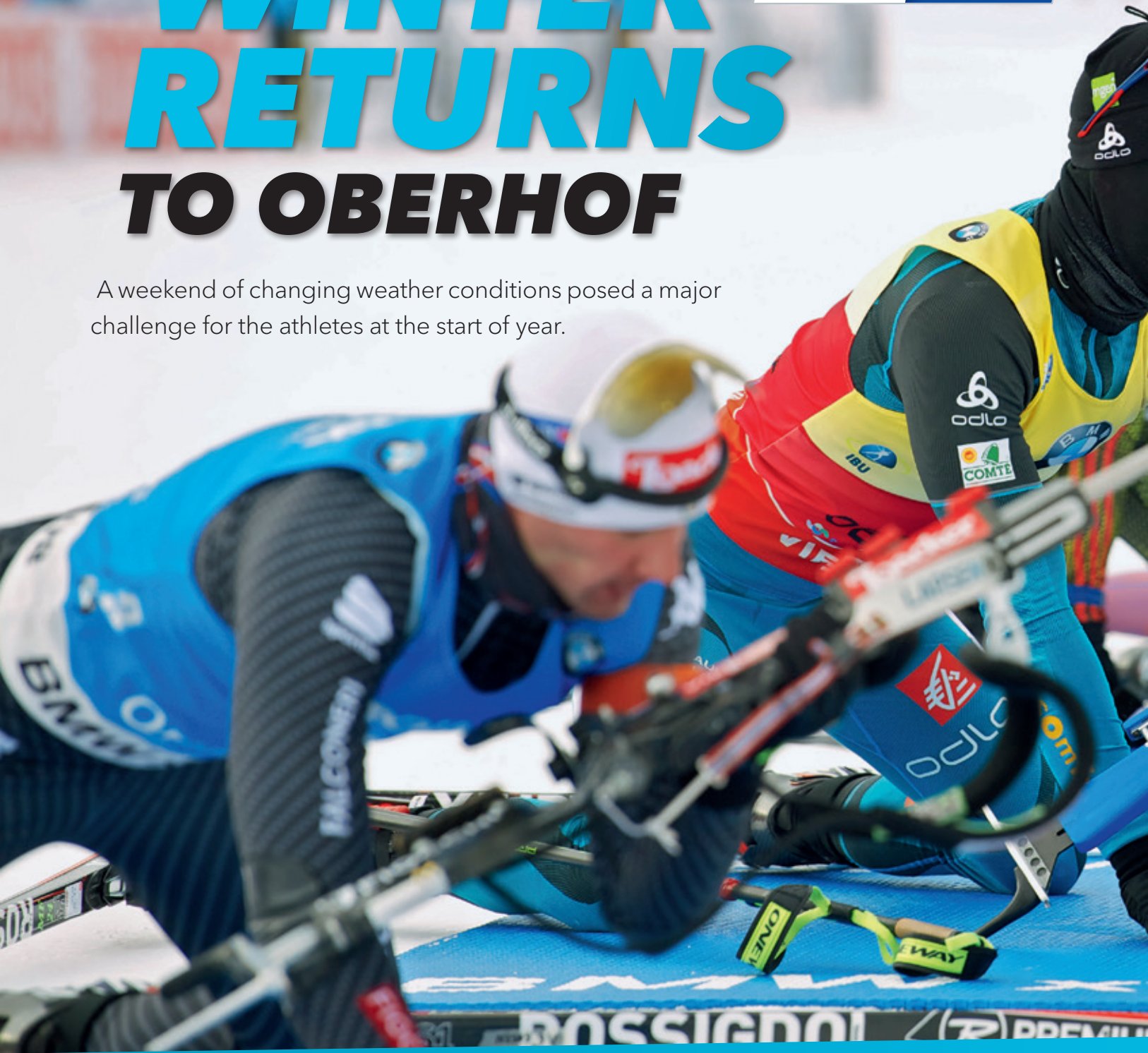
MARTIN FOURCADE



# WINTER RETURNS TO OBERHOF



A weekend of changing weather conditions posed a major challenge for the athletes at the start of year.







Podium Sprint Women



Michal Slesingr - CZE

The complete lack of snow in 2016 saw the Oberhof World Cup conducted in Ruhpolding, a painful experience for all of the dedicated volunteers who worked so hard to try to save the 2016 event. However, this year, Oberhof returned to its usual spot as the first BMW IBU World Cup of the New Year.

The weather gods cooperated this year and Oberhof's DKB Ski Arena was ready for both the fans and athletes.

## OVERWHELMED WITH SNOW

The Oberhof Organizing Committee and all of the volunteers welcomed the Biathlon family back, along with the weather that cooperated, covered the Thüringen forest in white just as the World Cup week started. That snow was just the icing on the cake; the organizers had covered the tracks in manmade snow. Then the new snow almost buried everything. On Wednesday, more volunteers were called in to shovel the stands clear for the next day.

From 6 to 10 numerous fan clubs, as well as the regular volunteers, ensured that the public would not have to stand knee-deep in snow the next day.

## WIND-BLOWN SPRINT

However, while the public was taken care of, the weather created havoc for the men's sprint. Strong gusting winds and heavy snow made shooting extremely difficult. Although the blizzard conditions subsided, it was still unpleasant on the shooting range. Only three men managed to shoot clean.

The almost unstoppable Martin Fourcade fell victim to the wind, touring the penalty loop three times, leaving him in eighth place. Three men stood on the podium for the first time this winter.

## NEW FACES

Instead, new faces were to be seen on the podium this winter. Julian Eberhard spent Christmas at the shooting range; it paid off impressively with a victory. One penalty and

his continued brilliant skiing proved his Khanty Mansiysk win at the end of last season was no flash-in-the-pan. Michal Slesingr and Dominik Windisch matched him but settled for second and third. The "chocolate medal" fourth place went to Windisch's friend and teammate Lukas Hofer who missed the podium by .1 seconds.

### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0	0	22:28.5	0.0
2.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+2	2	22:49.8	+21.3
3.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+1	1	22:52.5	+24.0
4.	CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+0	0	22:59.1	+30.6
5.	HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren	GER	0+0	0	23:04.4	+35.9
6.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+0	0	23:15.3	+46.8
7.	PIDHRUSHNA Olena	UKR	0+0	0	23:19.8	+51.3
8.	GWIZDON Magdalena	POL	0+0	0	23:24.9	+56.4
9.	AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+2	2	23:31.0	+1:02.5
10.	SLOOF Chardine	SWE	0+0	0	23:41.4	+1:12.9

### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1+0	1	27:26.8	0.0
2.	SLESINGR Michal	CZE	0+1	1	27:37.6	+10.8
3.	WINDISCH Dominik	ITA	0+1	1	28:07.1	+40.3
4.	HOFFER Lukas	ITA	0+0	0	28:07.2	+40.4
5.	LESSER Erik	GER	0+2	2	28:08.0	+41.2
6.	SCHEMPF Simon	GER	1+1	2	28:13.0	+46.2
7.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+1	1	28:15.2	+48.4
8.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+3	3	28:18.1	+51.3
9.	WEGER Benjamin	SUI	0+0	0	28:18.6	+51.8
10.	ILIEV Vladimir	BUL	0+2	2	28:25.2	+58.4

## NO LAURA AND A WEATHER TURNAROUND

The weather made a complete turnaround the next day for the women's sprint, with brilliant sunshine and calm winds. The Yellow Bib Laura Dahlmeier sat out the sprint/pursuit for a bit of extra rest and her pursuers Gabriela Koukalová and Marie Dorin Habert made the most of the opportunity. Koukalová started first and set the bar high, a standard no one else could match. Although Kaisa Mäkäräinen was by far the fastest on the tracks, two penalties cost her the win, while Dorin Habert's single penalty put her in third place.

The home team Germany had a rough start, missing the podium in the sprints. However Maren Hammerschmidt's fifth, and top sixes by Erik Lesser and Simon Schempp somewhat satisfied the partisan 10,000 person crowd.

## THE DOMINATOR RETURNS

Fourcade returned to his dominating ways in the men's pursuit, with an all-around spectacular performance on the shooting range and the tracks, although



**Dominik Windisch - ITA**

the weather was against him. The wind made a 180 degree turn and blew from the southwest as hard as it had blown from the northeast two days earlier. To the delight of the German fans, Arnd Peiffer delivered a podium with a thrilling move from 15th at the start to second behind Fourcade. Windisch delivered an-

other third place, outsprinting Emil Hegle Svendsen in the final meters.

## SAME NAMES; DIFFERENT PLACES

The women's pursuit saw the same podium as in the sprint, just in a different order. Marie Dorin-Habert won the battle with the winds for her first victory of the



**Julian Eberhard - AUT**

### PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+0+1	2	34:33.3
2.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+1+2	3	+38.8
3.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	1+0+1+2	4	+1:19.1
4.	HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren	GER	0+1+1+3	5	+2:05.9
5.	BESCOND Anaïs	FRA	0+0+1+1	2	+2:13.3
6.	HINZ Vanessa	GER	1+0+1+0	2	+2:23.4
7.	OLSBU Marte	NOR	1+0+0+1	2	+2:32.4
8.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+1+2+1	4	+2:34.4
9.	CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+1+0+3	4	+2:38.2
10.	VISHNEVSKAYA Galina	KAZ	1+1+0+1	3	+2:44.9

### PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	36:45.7
2.	PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0+1+2	3	+1:09.9
3.	WINDISCH Dominik	ITA	0+0+3+2	5	+1:32.4
4.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	1+1+2+1	5	+1:32.6
5.	LESSER Erik	GER	0+0+2+3	5	+1:36.1
6.	BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+0+5+0	5	+1:40.7
7.	SLESINGR Michal	CZE	0+1+2+3	6	+1:54.0
8.	L'ABEE-LUND Henrik	NOR	0+0+3+2	5	+1:55.3
9.	PRYMA Artem	UKR	1+0+0+1	2	+1:55.3
10.	TSVETKOV Maxim	RUS	0+1+0+3	4	+2:03.9

**MASS START WOMEN 12.5 km**

1. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	37:20.5
2. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0+1+0	1	+31.5
3. PUSKARCIKOVA Eva	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	+45.4
4. VISHNEVSKAYA Galina	KAZ	0+0+0+1	1	+1:11.6
5. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	1+0+2+0	3	+1:12.6
6. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+1+0+1	2	+1:14.0
7. GASPARIN Selina	SUI	0+0+0+1	1	+1:27.7
8. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	4+0+1+2	7	+1:39.9
9. DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+0+1+2	3	+1:43.5
10. OLSBU Marte	NOR	1+1+1+0	3	+1:46.6

**MASS START MEN 15 km**

1. SCHEMP Simon	GER	0+0+1+0	1	38:30.9
2. LESSER Erik	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+0.4
3. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+2+0	2	+0.4
4. BEATRIX Jean Guillaume	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	+13.2
5. BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	+19.5
6. DOLL Benedikt	GER	0+1+1+0	2	+47.8
7. SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+52.8
8. BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+1+0+1	2	+53.1
9. KRCMAR Michal	CZE	0+2+1+0	3	+58.9
10. WEGER Benjamin	SUI	0+0+1+0	1	+1:00.8

season. Koukalová seemed a little 'weak in the knees' when her legs started to shake in standing. A five-second crouch down did the trick; she finished the bout and crossed the line in second place. Mäkäräinen had four penalties but her great ski speed brought her back to the podium in third place. Behind her, Vanessa Hinz was on fire, moving up to 6th place after starting 34th. Not a woman shot clean in the wind-blown competition.

The French Saturday concluded with an appropriate popping of champagne corks at the awards ceremony that evening. No doubt that Fourcade's fans had as much fun as he did on that bitterly cold evening.

**FOG AND MASS STARTS**

The very wintery Oberhof weather roulette concluded with fog, but not as much as it looked. The shooting range was unaffected except that the gray low sky kept the wind under control.

The mass starts were a fantastic finale for the week. The men in particular, excited the home crowd. The leaders changed several times over the 15K route. In the last

loop, Simon Schempp once again showed his finishing speed, managing to edge Fourcade. However the bigger surprise for Fourcade came when Lesser nipped him for second place in a photo-finish at the line. The fans were doubly rewarded by this dramatic outcome.

Laura Dahlmeier's appearance and second place gave the 15,000-strong crowd cause for celebration, although the biggest rejoicing of the day happened in the Czech

team. Koukalová delivered another perfect performance, shooting clean for the victory and confirmation of her post-New Years fitness. Koukalová's teammate Eva Puskarcikova joined last year's Crystal Globe winner on the podium. The two Czech women's leaps of joy at the finish and after the Flower Ceremony left a lasting impression on everyone in the stadium.

A few new male faces on the podium surely added to the intrigue as the IBU

**Arnd Peiffer - GER**

World Championships approach. At the same time, four women now seemed locked in a battle for control of the Yellow Bib.

**CONSISTENTLY INCONSISTENT**

Although the week in Oberhof presented its winter weather quirks, the last day concluded with a spectacular sunset over the Thüringen Forest. Oberhof does not have the Antholz sun or Ruhpolding's calm shooting range. Oberhof's consist-

**Marie Dorin Habert - FRA and Gabriela Koukalova - CZE**



ency aspect is its inconsistency. Conditions change from day-to-day and year-to-year. The athletes battled the tough weather conditions as did the organizers. This year, once again, Oberhof was a windy



**Gabriela Koukalova - CZE and Laura Dahlmeier - GER**

winter wonderland, something unimaginable in 2016 and it returned as a success on all counts. **I**

**TEXT** René Denfeld

**PICTURES** Eberhard Thonfeld

# WHAT IS YOUR TARGET? MINE IS VICTORY.



*Ole Einar Bjørndal*

## EXEL

INNOVATION IN MOTION.



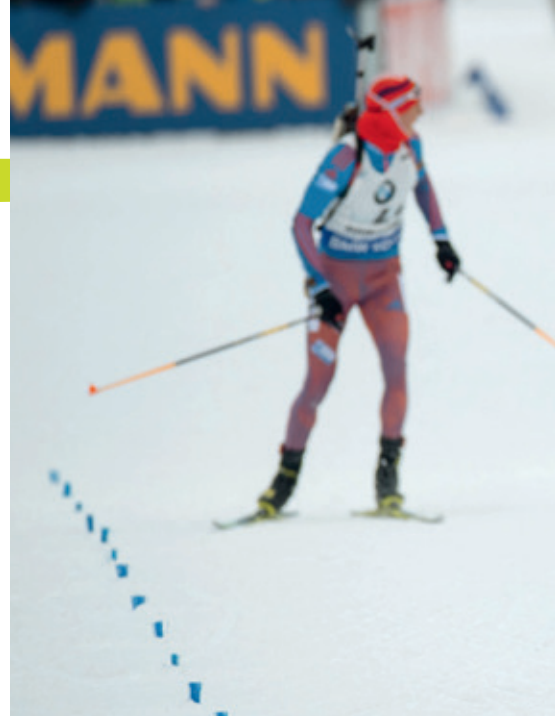
# BIATHLON FESTIVAL

IN WINTER  
RUHPOLDING





The annual Ruhpolding World Cup starts not with the first competition, but with the big party Opening Ceremonies at Champions Park in the middle of the village. This is the place where the fans and athletes get up close and personal; no one skips this light, music and fireworks-filled extravaganza.



Emil Hegle Svendsen - NOR and Anton Babikov - RUS in Relay Men

Svendsen was mainly thanks to a daring feat by Svendsen. In the last loop, he was 15 seconds back; too far behind Russia's Anton Babikov to dream of a win. Svendsen realistically considered his chances. "I actually only wanted to keep Simon Schempp in check." The German anchor was in third place. Babikov was slowly fading, nearing exhaustion. Svendsen sensed this and seized the opportunity. With both speed and mental toughness, he passed the fading Babikov, just before the finish.

#### RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 km

1. GERMANY	GER	0+6	1:09:53.0	0.0
HINZ Vanessa, HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren, PREUSS Franziska, DAHLMEIER Laura				
2. FRANCE	FRA	0+7	1:09:56.5	+3.5
CHEVALIER Anaïs, BRAISAZ Justine, BESCOND Anaïs, AYMONIER Celia				
3. NORWAY	NOR	0+1	1:09:57.5	+4.5
NICOLAISEN Kaia Woeien, FENNE Hilde, ECKHOFF Tiril, OLSBU Marte				
4. UKRAINE	UKR	0+3	1:10:01.8	+8.8
VARVYNETS Iryna, DZHIMA Yuliia, MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya, PIDHRUSHNA Olena				
5. ITALY	ITA	0+6	1:11:44.5	+1:51.5
VITTOZZI Lisa, SANFILIPPO Federica, Runggaldier Alexia, Gontier Nicole				

#### RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 km

1. NORWAY	NOR	0+5	1:13:40.7	0.0
BJØRNDALEN Ole Einar, CHRISTIANSEN Vetle S., L'ABÉE-LUND Henrik, SVENDSEN Emil Hegle				
2. RUSSIA	RUS	0+2	1:13:45.8	+5.1
VOLKOV Alexey, SHIPULIN Anton, ELISEEV Matvey, BABIKOV Anton				
3. GERMANY	GER	1+9	1:14:04.2	+23.5
LESSER Erik, DOLL Benedikt, PEIFFER Arnd, SCHEMPP Simon				
4. UKRAINE	UKR	0+6	1:14:08.7	+28.0
PRYMA Artem, SEMENOV Sergey, SEMAKOV Vladimir, KILCHYTSKY Vitaliy				
5. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	1+9	1:14:13.3	+32.6
MORAVEC Ondrej, SOUKUP Jaroslav, SLESINGER Michal, KRČMAR Michal				

The Swedes stood with their backs facing the crowd, spelled out "We Love Ruhpolding" on their parkas. Michael Rösch paraded in twice; first with Belgium and then with the Swiss team whom he trains with. As always, the home team Germany marched in last, to the roar of the crowd. With all of the happy faces and celebrat-

ing, it always seems like this second World Cup of the New Year is a mini World Championship. This was even more special because once again, Ruhpolding was blanketed in a pure white wintery overcoat, looking like something out of a fairy tale.

Ruhpolding attracts Norwegian fans like no other outside of Norway. They seem to have some connection, may-

#### Podium Relay Women





Russian Head Coach Ricco Gross, a Ruhpolding native grinned and commented, "The stretch was a hundred metres too long this time," the Germans, with their best team of Erik Lesser, Benedikt Doll, Arnd Peiffer and Schempp, were the clear favorites. However, their dreams of a home victory soon burst when leadoff leg Lesser visited the penalty loop. They spent the rest of the hour catching up, eventually finishing third. "After Oberhof we believed we could risk more here if the conditions were fast and not windy," was Peiffer's sober analysis of a perfor-



Erik Lesser - GER

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mance when the team hit every prone target and used all their spare rounds in standing.

## GERMAN WOMEN KEEP FANS SMILING

The fans had something to smile about after the men's relay, but it was not the win they so dearly hoped for. The day of the women's relay started with snow removal from cars and the path to the stadium; no complaints, all smiles because this was the winter they hoped for.

Of course, the German women delivered the win. The first leg belonged to Kaisa Mäkäräinen, looking like the 6K loop was nothing more than a good training session. The Finn tagged in first, but faded from there. Vanessa Hinz was just 23 seconds back at the exchange after needing a spare for her final standing shot. "I am definitely not disappointed,"



Julian Eberhard - AUT

she said, mentioning the cheering fans. "They celebrated my hits so loudly that I couldn't hear anything else." The atmosphere in the Chiemgau Arena is wonderful but also deceiving, such that it can lead to unnecessary penalties. Maren Hammerschmidt knew that, realizing she

needed to focus better and used just two spares. She expressed her delight into a single sentence, "2017 is going a lot better than 2016." However, Franziska Preuss was so nervous. "I was really shaking," she said. But all went well. She tagged Laura Dahlmeier in fifth, eleven seconds back. She was ahead of Norway's Marte Olsbu by 50 meters until the final standing stage. Olsbu shot clean and Dahlmeier needed a spare, leaving her 11 seconds back. The German star made her move on the last downhill. "I had super material and knew that if I am a little ahead in the last few meters she would not normally stand a chance." France's Celine Aymonier also passed Olsbu in the finish stretch, showing they were pretty good even without Marie Dorin Habert. The Norwegian women were not unhappy over their third place, using just one spare round for a brilliant performance.

## FOURCADE'S RETALIATION

The various weather reports make biathlon something like roulette at times. Will it snow or get colder and make the tracks faster; all come into play, making an eternally interesting and exciting game. Many of the top competitors chose high start numbers for the sprint, to the delight of the public and the television commentators. Nevertheless, when number 27 Julian Eberhard who did not join in the start



Kaisa Mäkäräinen - FIN

**SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km**

1.	MÄKÄRÄINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0	0	20:51.8	0.0
2.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0	0	21:13.8	+22.0
3.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0	0	21:21.9	+30.1
4.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+1	1	21:40.4	+48.6
5.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+0	0	21:49.5	+57.7
6.	HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0	0	21:51.6	+59.8
7.	OEBERG Hanna	SWE	0+0	0	22:10.6	+1:18.8
8.	VISHNEVSKAYA Galina	KAZ	0+1	1	22:12.1	+1:20.3
9.	BESCOND Anaïs	FRA	0+0	0	22:17.2	+1:25.4
10.	GWIZDON Magdalena	POL	0+0	0	22:18.4	+1:26.6

**SPRINT MEN 10 km**

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0	0	22:34.2	0.0
2.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	0+0	0	22:52.2	+18.0
3.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0	0	23:13.9	+39.7
4.	PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0	0	23:26.0	+51.8
5.	SCHEMPP Simon	GER	0+1	1	23:27.0	+52.8
6.	MALYSHKO Dmitry	RUS	0+0	0	23:30.4	+56.2
7.	PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro	UKR	0+0	0	23:33.7	+59.5
8.	BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+1	1	23:34.6	+1:00.4
9.	LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+1	1	23:37.0	+1:02.8
10.	BIRKELAND Lars Helge	NOR	0+0	0	23:41.9	+1:07.7

number poker game, crossed the finish line; the winner seemed obvious. "I had a perfect race today". It was not enough as he, and Svendsen, just behind him, had to watch Martin Fourcade's merciless retaliation, unable to do anything about it. "I knew I could not allow myself any penalties if I wanted to win." With number 60 and a little luck with two split bullets, he

**Podium Sprint Men**

had to fight for the win. "If some people are of the opinion that the victories came easily to me I can tell them that that is not the case," he said after his ninth win of the season. His rivals remained baffled. "All we can do is recognise that he is the boss," said Eberhard, while Svendsen declared war on Fourcade. "I want to be even better at the World Championships so that I can beat him."

**MÄKÄRÄINEN FILLS IN THE BLANK**

Somehow the weather gods did not smile on the ladies in Ruhpolding. Heavy snowfall did not impact the sprint but showed that best athletes usually win. This time Mäkäräinen delivered an especially liberating blow. She had never won in Germany. That blank in her resume is now gone. Three days after her 34th birth-

day she shot clean and had the best track time by far. "I knew that to win you had to shoot zero in Ruhpolding."

She admitted to being nervous. "Before the standing stage, the thought flashed through my mind as to what would happen if I didn't hit the target." Her competitors recognized her outstanding performance. "None of us could get anywhere near Kaisa today," said Dahlmeier in third stated. The Yellow Bib Gabriela Koukalová who finished second, was annoyed by the repeated questions about the Bib's significance.



#### Pursuit Women Competition

"Even if it is fun to run in Yellow I want to announce yet again that this year I am focusing on the IBU World Championships in Hochfilzen." Her reaction is understandable. She won the World Cup Total Score last season and yet did not win any titles at the competitions in Oslo.

#### FOURCADE REMAINS KING

On the final day Martin Fourcade showed that he is prepared for anything. His competitors thought that he would get stuck in the snow flurries this time. He had two prone penalties in the second stage. With a lot of clean shooting around him, it seemed that he might face defeat, when he missed a shot in the first standing. However Fourcade had the perfect answer for this. He skied so fast that he was back in contention at the final standing stage The Yellow Bib shot rapidly,

cleaned and flew to victory. Even a perfect Svendsen ungrudgingly recognized Fourcade's superiority. An impeccable day on the shooting range did not help

third place Michal Krčmar of Czech Republic, with his first-ever podium result. Fourcade finished 18 seconds ahead of Svendsen, the same as he started with... and skied three penalty loops!

#### Martin Fourcade - FRA and Michal Krčmar - CZE



## RUHPOLDING DOUBLE FOR MÄKÄRÄINEN

After her first win in Germany, Mäkäräinen doubled up her win, winning pursuit wire-to-wire. There were only a few shifts in the places behind her. Koukalová

stayed in second place but Marie Dorin Habert finished third with Dahlmeier fourth. Nevertheless for the fans in the Chiemgau Arena it



Marie Dorin Habert - FRA

### PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1.	MÄKÄRÄINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+1+0	1	30:58.0
2.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	2+0+0+0	2	+1:00.9
3.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+1+1	3	+1:23.1
4.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	2+0+1+1	4	+1:32.7
5.	OEBERG Hanna	SWE	0+0+0+1	1	+1:39.4
6.	PUSKARCIKOVA Eva	CZE	0+0+1+0	1	+1:49.9
7.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+0+1+1	2	+1:50.9
8.	CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	+1:51.5
9.	OLSBU Marte	NOR	0+1+0+0	1	+1:59.8
10.	VITTOZZI Lisa	ITA	0+0+0+0	0	+2:04.6

### PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+2+1+0	3	33:57.5
2.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	+18.3
3.	KRCMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	+19.5
4.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+21.3
5.	PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+24.1
6.	LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+0+1+0	1	+38.3
7.	SCHEMP Simon	GER	0+0+0+2	2	+39.7
8.	BJOENTEGAARD Erlend	NOR	0+0+1+0	1	+41.1
9.	MESOTITSCH Daniel	AUT	0+0+0+0	0	+46.7
10.	RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	1+0+1+0	2	+46.8

was a perfect day. It had been a biathlon party in a dreamy winter wonderland. **I**

**TEXT Siegi Heinrich**

**PICTURES Ernst Wukits**

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## TECHNOLOGY



# **SUNSHINE, SHIPULIN, SURPRISES AND SMILES IN ANTHOLZ**

The third week in January always means three things: Antholz World Cup, boisterous pro-German Team fans, and sunny days in the Dolomites. All three fell into place as scheduled, but with one slight difference; this was one of the most sun-bathed Antholz World Cups in years! Usually, the clouds or snow block out a day or two, but this year, it was wall-to-wall sunshine for all four days!





Podium Individual Men



Alexia Runggaldier - FRA

That sunshine set the stage for some expected results from the likes of Laura Dahlmeier, Anton Shipulin and the German women's relay team. At the same time, Nadine Horchler and yes, Johannes Thingnes Boe provided a couple of the unexpected surprises! As for the smiles, just think about the biggest smile on the Italian team!

## WINDS BLOW YELLOW BIB BACK TO DAHLMEIER

Although the sun dominated the week, the wind played a big factor in the first couple of competitions, but more so in the opening women's 15K individual on Thursday. The day started with Gabriela Koukalová wearing Yellow, but the winds helped put the Golden Bib back in the hands of Laura Dahlmeier. The winds in Antholz generally come up the valley and swirl left to right, but on this day, the winds were all over; blowing with a vengeance then stopping completely for a few seconds. No one was completely spared. For the first two stages, Dahlmeier and Koukalová were basically even, both with a single penalty, then as the German cleaned the second prone; the usually steady Koukalová added two minutes of penal-

ties. Dahlmeier took control and looked like an easy winner with another clean stage. Behind her, the young Anais Chevalier was making her claim for the win, with just a single penalty and a 19 second lead after the last standing. However she slowed over the last loop, missing her second world Cup win by 3.8 seconds. "I am satisfied to have only one penalty...I am happy to be second today."

Third in the 15K went to an Italian, but not their top woman, Dorothea Wierer, but the unheralded Alexia Runggaldier with her first-ever career podium. Dahlmeier's first place and Koukalová's 24th place flipped the Yellow Bib back to Dahlmeier for the rest of the weekend.

## ANTON REIGNS IN THE 20K

The men's 20K individual the next day was another windfest, but not as extreme; still only

one man, Leant Oblak of Slovenia, in 33rd place, shot clean. However, the day belonged to the man who would be "King of Antholz," Anton Shipulin. Shipulin made easy work of his old rival, racking up a single penalty to Fourcade's two. Shipulin won by 41 seconds for his first-ever 20K win, but most importantly his fifth victory (out of nine career wins) in Antholz. He was buoyed by the many fans cheering

### INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km

1. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	1+1+0+0	2	44:48.7	0.0
2. CHEVALIER Anais	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	44:52.5	+3.8
3. RUNGALDIER Alexia	ITA	0+1+0+0	1	45:34.7	+46.0
4. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+2+0+0	2	45:43.7	+55.0
5. HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren	GER	0+2+0+0	2	46:04.9	+1:16.2
6. HINZ Vanessa	GER	1+0+1+1	3	46:07.8	+1:19.1
7. HOJNISZ Monika	POL	1+1+0+1	3	46:26.5	+1:37.8
8. PODCHUFAROVA Olga	RUS	0+0+0+2	2	46:28.5	+1:39.8
9. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	1+0+1+1	3	46:33.8	+1:45.1
10. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+0+2	2	46:37.1	+1:48.4

### INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km

1. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	50:38.1	0.0
2. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1+1+0	2	51:19.1	+41.0
3. SEMENOV Sergey	UKR	0+0+0+1	1	51:34.9	+56.8
4. BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+0+1+0	1	51:43.0	+1:04.9
5. SCHEMPP Simon	GER	0+1+0+1	2	51:47.9	+1:09.8
6. ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+1+0+0	1	51:53.7	+1:15.6
7. TSVETKOV Maxim	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	52:06.8	+1:28.7
8. KRCCMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+0+1	1	52:07.9	+1:29.8
9. PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+1+0+1	2	52:08.5	+1:30.4
10. BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0+0+1	1	52:17.2	+1:39.1

him on. "I am very thankful to my fans for cheering, and for Martin for giving me this chance. I always wanted to score a win in this discipline, and I am happy to have done it here, in Antholz." Fourcade did try to win and further add to his huge lead in the World Cup Total Score, but it was a tough day for him. "It was one of the toughest competitions on the tracks. Even though I was in a good shape, it was still very painful."

## ROOMMATES NADINE AND LAURA 1-2

A brilliant Saturday morning saw the crowds of fans exiting the buses and filling the stadium and tracks; the party atmosphere reigned with music in the stadium and in the fields surrounding the Huberalm. Those crowds, heavily German were hoping for another Dahlmeier win in mass start and maybe a relay win by the men. After Dahlmeier's strong shooting in the winds of Thursday; the light winds on Saturday should have been easy to master. Yet, she quickly missed a first-stage prone shot and spent the rest of the 12.5K catching up. She got into the lead after the first standing and was being chased by teammate Nadine Horchler, who was

15-for-15 at that point. In the last standing, with a solid lead, the Yellow Bib shockingly missed the first two shots, leaving the packed stadium hushed. She hit the next two, but the door was open for someone else. Horchler and Koukalová both cleaned, with the Czech star leaving with a small lead and Dahlmeier 16 seconds back. The top two were together with 1400 meters to go with the Yellow Bib closing in. Horchler commented on her move. "In the race I thought I could not lose anything, I thought I could only win something."

## OVERWHELMED BY WIN

As they came up the final hill into the stadium, Horchler put on a strong move and passed the tired Koukalová. She cruised to the victory. Dahlmeier continued to push and moved into second just 50 meters before the finish, with Koukalová in third place. It was 1-2 finish for Ger-

### MASS START WOMEN 12.5 km

1.	HORCHLER Nadine	GER	0+0+0+0	0	36:11.5
2.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	1+0+0+2	3	+3.1
3.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	1+1+0+0	2	+8.0
4.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	2+0+0+1	3	+13.5
5.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	2+0+2+0	4	+19.0
6.	RUNGGALDIER Alexia	ITA	0+0+1+0	1	+24.1
7.	MAGNUSSON Anna	SWE	1+0+0+0	1	+26.4
8.	HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+1+1+0	2	+27.4
9.	NICOLAISEN Kaia Woeien	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	+27.9
10.	DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	1+1+0+1	3	+32.0

### MASS START MEN 15 km

1.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	37:04.3
2.	FILLON MAILLET Quentin	FRA	1+0+0+0	1	+3.7
3.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	+21.7
4.	SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	1+0+0+1	2	+25.2
5.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+1+2	3	+29.2
6.	BEATRIX Jean Guillaume	FRA	1+0+0+1	2	+33.4
7.	SCHEMP Simon	GER	1+0+0+0	1	+34.2
8.	LESSER Erik	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+54.2
9.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1+1+0+0	2	+59.2
10.	BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+1+0+2	3	+59.8

many, but the surprise was that Horchler was atop the podium for the first time in her career.

Horchler was overwhelmed by her victory. "I enjoyed being on the podium, but I still have not realized it...It's unbelievable to sit between Laura and Gabi." Her roommate Dahlmeier was almost as thrilled as if she had won herself. "It's a really great moment to be on the podium with a teammate... We share a room, so now we will have two Gold medals."

## GERMANY'S NARROW RELAY WIN

The men's relay with more picture-perfect conditions looked like a potential battle between the Russians and Germans; Norway was missing Ole Einar Björndalen, so their chances of victory, even with the rebounding-from-illness Johannes Thingnes Boe were slim. Russia grabbed the early lead, going to the third leg with Germany's Arnd Peiffer and Norway's Boe in hot pursuit. Boe took control after the prone stage, as Russia's Dmitry Malyshko used two spares and fell back, leaving the battle to Boe and Peiffer. After

Anais Chevalier - FRA



**Podium Mass Start Women**

the last standing, the speedy Norwegian took control with a burst of speed that left the Germans 12 seconds back at the final exchange. Emil Hegle Svendsen and Simon Schempp waged a classic battle, with neither giving an inch. Svendsen led the last loop; they battled right up to the finish line with Schempp winning by millimeters in a photo-finish. This was another of those biathlon-at-its-best days! Peiffer commented on Schempp's leg, "Now we know we can fight with the best; Simon did a perfect job." The German fans were delighted and left with thoughts of more glory for their heroes on the closing day of the World Cup week.

### COMEBACK COMPLETE FOR JOHANNES

Sunday was a blue sky day with not a cloud in sight, and most importantly, the wind flags were not moving at all. It was a day for the shooters. Boe proved that he was almost fully recovered from his early January illness, when he lasted the last loop of the relay on Saturday. The mass start would prove he was back to his best.

**Emil Hegle Svendsen - NOR and Simon Schempp - GER**

Fourcade had skipped the relay to rest and try to win the mass start. The strategy initially looked like the right move; he cleaned the prone stages and was in the lead. He lost it quickly with a penalty in the first standing, with Erik Lesser taking over followed by Boe, and Quentin Fillon Maillet. The rising French star cleaned the final standing stage and left with a slim margin over Boe, while Fourcade fell way

back with two penalty loops. Boe and Fillon Maillet battled over the next 3K. As they approached the stadium, the 2016 mass start World Champion made his move; it was over, a surprising first victory of the season, and the illness comeback was complete. "I had to fight really hard to pass Fillon Maillet. I was so bad before Christmas that I had to prove to everyone I am the favorite for World Championships." Shipulin slipped into third for his third podium of the weekend. Fourcade skied like a madman to get up to fourth,

**Mass Start Competition Men**



but ran out of energy in the closing stages, to finish fifth behind his old rival Svendsen.

Approaching the final standing stage, Fillon Maillet was in the lead. He mowed down all five, while his teammate Fourcade had two penalties and Lesser one. Boe also cleaned and left just seconds behind Fillon Maillet. Boe commented on the last loop, "I had to fight really hard to pass Fillon Maillet. I was so bad before Christmas that I had to prove to everyone I am the favorite for World Championships." Coming into the stadium, Boe made his move and passed his rival for the victory and his first win of the season.

### RELAY SWEEP FOR GERMANY

Before the week started, it was obvious that the favorite for the women's relay was none other than Dahlmeier and company. They had buried the competition in the first two relays of the season. This final competition was accordingly a bit anticlimactic. France led the first leg, but once Maren Hammerschmidt took over for the second leg; it was Germany all the way. It was not the prettiest of wins, with twelve spare rounds; four by the usually sharp-shooting Franziska Hildebrand and...five by Dahlmeier! However the victory was never in jeopardy. Germany won by 24

seconds, sweeping the relays so far this season. France finished second for the third time in a row.

### DORO'S DASH ENDS WITH SMILES

The big battle was for third place between the home-team Italy and Ukraine. Italy had missed the podium last year when Dorothea Wierer was nicked in the stadium by Russia's Olga Podchufarova. This year, Wierer was taking no chances. She wanted that podium spot. "I left the shooting range with Merkushyna. She seemed not so strong on her skis, but maybe she was playing with me. I was not sure. Finally on the last uphill, I passed her." Germany may have won, but the final cheers went

#### RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 km

1. GERMANY	GER	0+12	1:09:12.4	0.0
HINZ Vanessa, HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren, HILDEBRAND Franziska, DAHLMEIER Laura				
2. FRANCE	FRA	0+8	1:09:36.6	+24.2
CHEVALIER Anais, BRAISAZ Justine, BESCOND Anais, DORIN HABERT Marie				
3. ITALY	ITA	0+9	1:09:45.8	+33.4
VITTOZZI Lisa, SANFILIPPO Federica, RUNGGALDIER Alexia, WIERER Dorothea				
4. UKRAINE	UKR	0+6	1:09:49.9	+37.5
ZHURAVOK Yuliya, DZHIMA Yuliia, SEMERENKO Valj, MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya				
5. RUSSIA	RUS	0+5	1:10:28.4	+1:16.0
SLIVKO Victoria, AKIMOVA Tatiana, GLAZYRINA Ekaterina, PODCHUFAROVA Olga				

#### RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 km

1. GERMANY	GER	0+7	1:13:57.2	0.0
LESSER Erik, DOLL Benedikt, PEIFFER Arnd, SCHEMP Simon				
2. NORWAY	NOR	0+9	1:13:57.3	+0.1
BIRKELAND Lars Helge, L'ABEE-LUND Henrik, BOE Johannes Thingnes, SVENDSEN Emil Hegle				
3. RUSSIA	RUS	0+9	1:14:30.8	+33.6
TSVETKOV Maxim, GARANICHEV Evgeniy, MALYSHKO Dmitry, BABIKOV Anton				
4. UKRAINE	UKR	0+5	1:14:43.9	+46.7
PRYMA Artem, SEMENOV Sergey, SEMAKOV Vladimir, PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro				
5. AUSTRIA	AUT	0+8	1:14:46.4	+49.2
MESOTITSCH Daniel, GROSSEGGER Sven, WAEGER Lorenz, LANDERTINGER Dominik				

to the hometown girls; their smiles brightening the late afternoon sunshine and a fitting ending to another sunny, surprising World Cup in Antholz! **I**

**TEXT** Jerry Kokesh

**PICTURES** Christian Manzoni



German Relay Women Team



NEW CHAMPIONS  
IN THE BRAND NEW  
**DUSZNIKI  
ARENA**



If a perfectly brand-new stadium is a great place to award shiny new Gold medals to freshly-crowned, brand-new champions; then the Duszniki Arena, host to the 2017 IBU OECH fit the bill perfectly.



#### Podium Individual Men

### DUSZNIKI ARENA: EVERYTHING IS NEW

Although this venue has been used for years, including the 2010 IBU Summer Biathlon World Championships, the shooting range and tracks used at the Open European Championships were all new. Most of the construction has taken place in the last five months; the shooting range opened for the first time the day before Official Training!

This small, compact stadium in the spa town of 5,000 in Lower Silesia, just across the Czech Republic border was not 100% complete, but still proved to be a well-designed and very user-friendly facility. The four days of competition gave the stadium and the local organizers a good test, which they passed with flying colors. The stadium building project included the shooting range, permanent stadium buildings and tribune, snow-making and storage, and improving the track system cost around 18 million złoty (4.5million Euros). The funding came from the Poland's Ministry of Sports and Tourism, regional and local governments. The new 30-point shooting range is set into a pine-covered hillside, facing a new modernistic stadium building and tribunes. The wax

cabins and team are set just to the right side, 25 meters from the tracks; access to the tracks and stadium are via a new tunnel.

### IMPORTANT FOR POLISH BIATHLON

In a country with a small biathlon culture and its biathlon heritage in an aging basic stadium in southwest Poland at Zakopane, the Duszniki Arena is a huge step forward. It has the size, facilities and enthusiastic volunteers necessary to regularly host more competitions at the Junior/IBU Cup level. Although the crowds numbered in the 1000-1500 range, they were excited and engaged each day, while of course cheering wildly for their national team. 2013 IBU WCH Silver medalist Krystyna Guzik commented, "It is so nice to have a stadium like this in Poland; it is very important for biathlon in our country."

### ARTIFICIAL SNOW

Besides the newly-installed Kurvinen target system on the shooting

range, the tracks were completely redone and well-covered with artificial snow, plus a big dose of natural snow in the pristine forest, making it all look perfect. Race Director IBU Cup Felix Bitterling commented, "The really nice thing about these tracks is that they are very wide. They are completely covered with manmade snow. There was about 5 weeks of very cold weather and the organizers made a lot of snow in the stadium, on the tracks and down by the lake. They filled their depot and the tracks." The track profile was not too hard, with the biggest climb on each course between 30-40 meters. Italy's Pietro Dutto commented, "It is nice, rolling and not very technical. The shooting range approach is quite easy with a long downhill for recovery."

#### INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km

1. STARYKH Irina	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	44:24.7	0.0
2. SLEPTSOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	45:28.5	+1:03.8
3. MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya	UKR	0+1+0+0	1	45:29.7	+1:05.0
4. HOEGBERG Elisabeth	SWE	0+0+0+0	0	46:02.6	+1:37.9
5. MIRONOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	46:06.2	+1:41.5

#### INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	1+0+0+0	1	49:54.3	0.0
2. ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+0+0+0	0	50:05.7	+11.4
3. SLEPOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	50:47.9	+53.6
4. SHOPIN Yury	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	50:56.6	+1:02.3
5. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	51:29.9	+1:35.6

## MEN'S 20K TO ALEXANDER LOGINOV

The individual competitions kicked the week off on a cloudy, virtually windless day. The Russian team dominated; led by Gold medalist Alexander Loginov, they took five of the top six places. Loginov came back from a one-minute deficit after the first prone this morning to win the IBU OECH Gold medal in the men's 20K individual in 49:54.2. Loginov's 19-for-20 shooting gave him his fourth straight victory, including IBU Cup wins at Arber and Martell. Krasimir Anev of Bulgaria shot clean to break up the Russian sweep taking the Silver medal, 11.4 seconds back. The Bronze medal went to clean-shooting Alexey Slepov of Russia, 53.6 seconds back.

Of the three men on the podium, Slepov was possibly the happiest. "I was in bed sick for two weeks, only watching television, then two weeks of very little training and now today, I have a Bronze medal...It has been five years since I shot clean. My teammates are better shots, but I shot clean, so I am the best sniper on the team now!"

## 1-2 FOR STARYKH AND SLEPTSOVA

The Russian women went 1-2, with the Gold medal going to the clean-shooting Irina Starykh; her teammate Svetlana

Sleptsova with one penalty took the Silver medal, 1:03.8 back. 22-year-old Anastasiya Merkushyna of Ukraine surprised herself with a single penalty Bronze medal, 1:05.0 behind Starykh. She commented, "When I woke up today in the morning, I thought that everything is possible, but



Anastasiya Merkushyna - UKR

probably it is too early for me, I have to wait a little bit and to grow up...Then I finished in top 3, I even did not understand what happened at first, but it is a big result!"

## FIRST WIN FOR VLADIMIR ILIEV

A training/rest day set the stage for the sprints; cold, clear, sunny and windless. If there was ever a day to shoot clean in a sprint, this was it. Yet surprisingly, only 10 men managed to avoid the penalty

loop. The early starters dominated; over 40 men cleaned prone, but as usual the standing stage determined the podium. Krasimir Anev of Bulgaria was the first of the contenders to clean standing, followed by the 20K Gold medalist Loginov. They seemed headed for Gold and Silver. However Anev's teammate Vladimir Iliev had other ideas. He made one tour of the penalty loop and turned on the afterburners to claim his first IBU OECH gold medal 24:26.9. This career best was two spots better than his Bronze medal in the mass start last year in Tyumen. Loginov won the Silver, 4.9 seconds back with Anev in the Bronze spot, 16.7 seconds back.

Iliev cracked a smile as he commented on his long wait for this medal. "It was a long way to this medal and this win. I was ready for a high result for many years, but many things have happened, so I'm really happy to get a victory today."

## New Stadium in Duszniki Zdroj



## SPRINT GOLD TO CLEAN-SHOOTING JULIYA DZHYMA

Ukraine's Olympic Relay Gold medalist Juliya Dzhyima broke the Russian domination of Gold medals by taking the afternoon women's sprint in 21:03.3. Dzhyima shot clean for the first time this season to top Russia's Svetlana Sleptsova with second Silver medal of the week, also shooting clean, 27.0 seconds back. Her teammate the 15K individual Gold medalist Irina Starykh, won the Bronze medal, 37.8 seconds behind. Dzhyima, with late start number 53 commented, "When I saw that everyone was cleaning, I knew that to get in to top 3, I have to do the same. But honestly, I have no idea how I hit all the

several other Polish biathletes for a couple of hours each day before and after the competitions each day. That combined with well-produced broadcasts of every competition gave both the new stadium and biathlon excellent exposure both in Poland and across Europe.

## PURSUIT TO LOGINOV; FIRST MEDAL FOR RASTORGUJEVS

Loginov claimed his second Gold medal and his third medal of the Cham-

### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+0	0	21:02.3	0.0
2. SLEPTSOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+0	0	21:29.3	+27.0
3. STARYKH Irina	RUS	0+1	1	21:40.1	+37.8
4. HORCHLER Nadine	GER	0+0	0	21:44.5	+42.2
5. HERRMANN Denise	GER	0+2	2	21:50.0	+47.7

### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1. LIEV Vladimir	BUL	0+1	1	24:26.9	0.0
2. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+0	0	24:31.8	+4.9
3. ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+0	0	24:43.6	+16.7
4. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+2	2	24:44.2	+17.3
5. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0	0	24:55.0	+28.1

59.5 seconds back. The story of the day was Rastorgujevs with his first medal and podium of his career. After two penalties in the final standing stage, he came back like a man on a mission, to get a medal.



Krasimir Anev - BUL



Yulia Dzhyima - UKR

targets today; it was my first competition all season, when I had a zero."

## WORLD-CLASS TELEVISION COVERAGE

The weather stayed clear for the pursuits on Saturday, great conditions for the athletes, but also for the television production. The local organizers put together an excellent television package for the Polish market, with a world-class studio overlooking the stadium. Duszniki Zdrój native and double IBU WCH medalist Weronika Nowakowska provided analysis along with

pionships with a convincing 19-for-20 shooting win in the pursuit. He finished in 31:46.2, easily outdistancing Silver medalist and teammate Evgeniy Garanichev, with one penalty, but 27.8 seconds back. Loginov commented on the "easy" win. "It was not as easy as it seemed; on the first loop Vladimir Iliev set a really good pace. Today we had great sunny and windless weather again, so I managed to shoot well. Probably that is why it seemed so easy."

The Bronze medal went to Andrejs Rastorgujevs of Latvia, with four penalties,

He commented on that loop, "On the last loop I had the information about the guys who were behind me and in front of me. I was just fighting and did all I could do to get to the podium."

## PURSUIT GOLD TO STARYKH

With a big crowd on hand, the Russian women again claimed two medals, with Irina Starykh shooting clean to take the Gold medal in 30:04.4. She did not take the lead until the final standing stage, when sprint winner Juliya Dzhyima picked up her second penalty of the day, leaving

the stadium in third, and battling Sleptsova for Silver. The Ukrainian eventually pulled away from her rival, finishing 19.8 seconds behind Starykh but 22.3 seconds ahead of Bronze medalist Sleptsova.

Starykh knew clean shooting was the key. "I was aiming to shoot clean today; I understood it was the only chance to get a win. When I came for the last standing, I heard that Juliya did not hit the target, so I had to clean it. I am really glad I managed to do it."

## FINAL DAY: SINGLE AND MIXED RELAYS

The final day of competition was another opportunity for the Russian team to add more medals. They did not disappoint their fans. However, on the same note, the Polish team stepped and made their fans deliriously happy.

The best thing about the single mixed relay was the many lead changes and the tight competition from start to finish between the top six teams. The Russians were in this group, with Czech Republic, Poland, Norway, Austria and Germany. It was not until the final leg, with Evgeniy Garanichev on the tracks that they took

Andrejs Rastorgujevs - LAT



Weronika Nowakowska - POL commentating OECH for local TV station

control. He took a chance with five fast shots but needed a single spare to clean. That was all it took; he cruised to the Gold medal, with Norway and Poland trailing, but on the podium...and obviously the many Russian fans cheered wildly.

## GUZIKS FINISH LINE EMBRACE; MEDAL FOR POLAND

Still, 14 seconds later, the home team/married duo of Krystyna and Grzegorz Guzik, won a Bronze medal for Poland, the host country's first and only medal of the week. The noise from the grandstand

was deafening; this was what the locals had dreamed of, a medal in their shiny brand new stadium. They cheered ever loudly as the Guziks embraced at the finish line. Krystyna Guzik commented, "It is so nice to win a medal here in Poland... we were both very disappointed with all of our mistakes in the other competitions. So today, we were relaxed and laughing before the competition, hoping not to have those mistakes again. We did not... and now have a medal."

## 12TH MEDAL FOR RUSSIA

With the bright sunshine blanketing the tracks and stadium, Russia won its final Gold medal of the week in the mixed relay, bringing their total to five Gold, four Silver, and three Bronze for a total of twelve. Irina Starykh, Svetlana Sleptsova, Alexander Loginov and Alexey Volkov combined to take the mixed relay, with six spares, in 1:12:26. As in the other competitions, once a Russian athlete moved into

### PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1.	STARYKH Irina	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	30:04.4
2.	DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+0+1+1	2	+19.8
3.	SLEPTSOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	+32.1
4.	VITKOVA Veronika	CZE	0+1+1+0	2	+47.8
5.	MIRONOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+1+1+1	3	+1:29.6

### PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1.	LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	31:46.2
2.	GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	+27.8
3.	RASTORGUEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+1+1+2	4	+59.5
4.	VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+1:01.6
5.	ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+1+1+0	2	+1:28.6



Grzegorz and Krystyna Guzik - POL

the lead, no one else seemed to have a chance. The big battle was for the Silver medal between Norway and Ukraine. Ruslan Tkalenko cleaned the final standing stage, while Norway's Fredrik Gjesbakk needed a spare round. That gave the Ukrainian more than a 16-second advantage with 2.5K to go. Tkalenko commented, "I thought I put a good gap on the Norwegian in the middle of the loop. When he passed me on the last uphill just

before the finish, I was completely surprised." That quick move put Norway .7 seconds ahead, securing the Silver medal.

With the final competition over, this brand new stadium was quiet for the first time in the last week. The first major competition in Poland's new stadium at

Duszniki Zdrój was an unqualified success. Triple Gold medalist Loginov commented, "I won a lot here, so I have to say I like this stadium and the tracks; It has been a very good week." **I**

**TEXT** Mariya Osolodkina, Jerry Kokesh

**PICTURES** Christian Manzoni

#### MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 x 7.5 km

1. <b>RUSSIA</b>	RUS	0+6	1:12:26.0	0.0
STARYKH Irina, SLEPTSOVA Svetlana, VOLKOV Alexey, LOGINOV Alexander				
2. <b>NORWAY</b>	NOR	0+9	1:13:02.4	+36.4
ERDAL Karoline, HUBER Marion Roenning, BJOENTEGAARD Erlend, GJESBAKK Fredrik				
3. <b>UKRAINE</b>	UKR	1+6	1:13:03.1	+37.1
MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya, DZHIMA Yuliia, ZHYRNYI Oleksander, TKALENKO Ruslan				

#### SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km

1. <b>RUSSIA</b>	RUS	0+7	37:10.2	0.0
VIROLAYNEN Daria, GARANICHEV Evgeniy				
2. <b>NORWAY</b>	NOR	0+7	37:16.5	+6.3
TANDREVOLD Ingrid Landmark, CHRISTIANSEN Vetle Sjastad				
3. <b>POLAND</b>	POL	0+5	37:24.1	+13.9
GUZIK Krystyna, GUZIK Grzegorz				

**Russian  
Mixed Relay  
Team**





Photo: Fischer Sports GmbH / NordicFocus

# THE CHAMPION TAKES IT ALL

Fischer has dominated the Nordic World Cup year after year as the most successful ski and boot brand since the 09/10 season. Not only World Champions such as Laura Dahlmeier (GER) swears by Speedmax! Skis which, thanks to revolutionary Cold Base Bonding technology, guarantee maximum speed. And boots which are convincing through Carbon Chassis and Cuff, plus an extremely weight-reducing two-part sole with maximum lightness.

**RACECODE**  
BY FISCHER RACE DEPT.

SKIS: Speedmax Skate, BINDING: Xcelerator Pro Skate NIS, BOOT: Speedmax Skate / WS

[fischersports.com](http://fischersports.com)

# FIRST IBU CUPS



IBU CUP  
BIATHLON



BEITOSTØLEN



IBU CUP  
BIATHLON



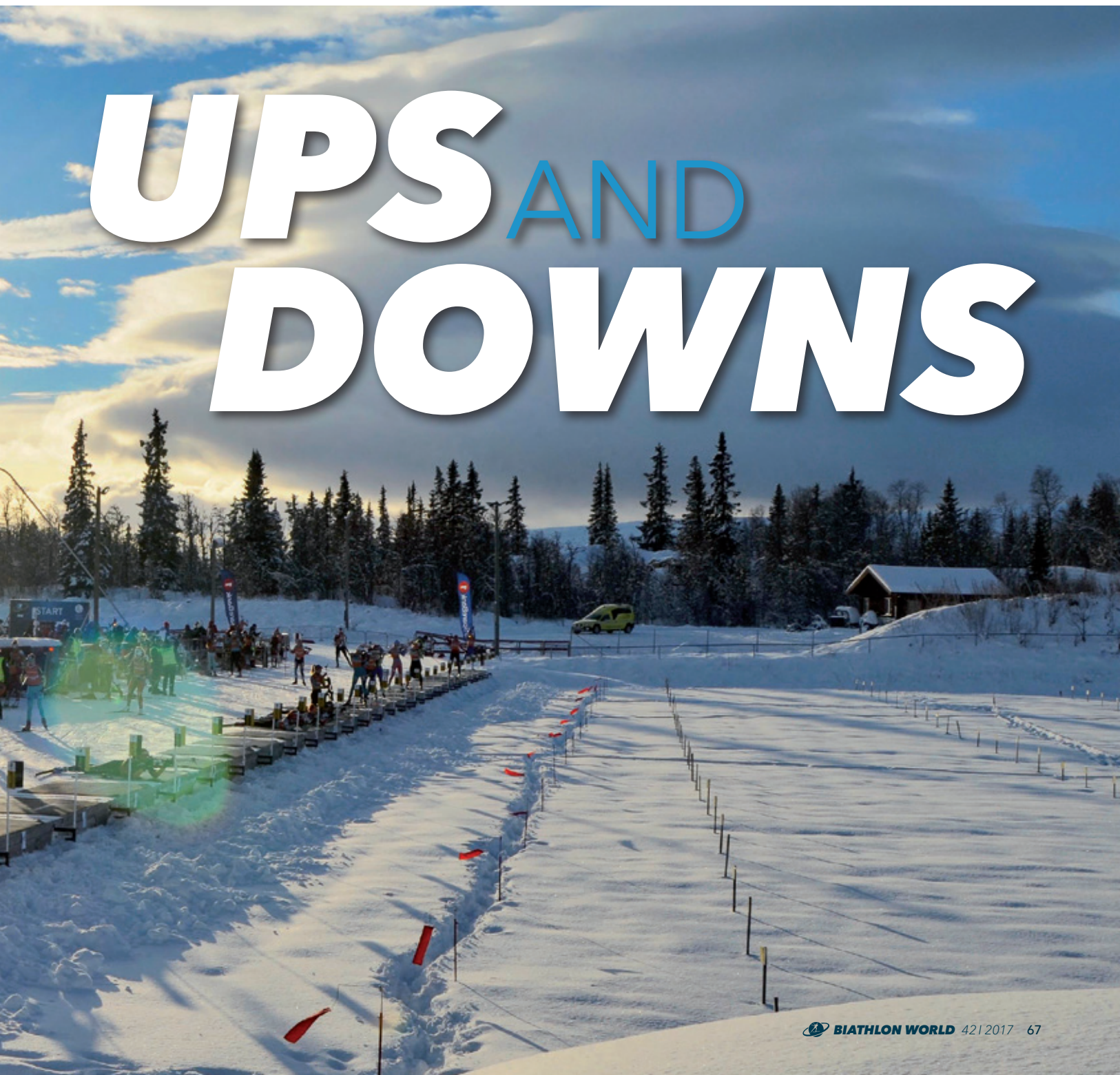
OBERTILLIACH  
Osttirol · Austria

The biathlon season is in full swing. Five IBU Cups have already been held; they were full of battles, victories and leader changes. There were some dramatic moments, mistakes and disappointments. However, this intertwining of ups and downs makes the IBU Cups more attractive and interesting; all unique and exciting.





# UPS AND DOWNS





# IBU CUP SEASON OPENER IN **SNOWY BEITOSTØLEN**

## NEW RULES

Some rules changes were made after the IBU Congress last September in Chisinau, Moldova. There was

quite a package of general rule changes, which affect all competitions on every IBU event level. However, there were few, which specifically related to the IBU Cup. IBU Cup Race Director Felix Bitterling explained, "First of all, we've enlarged the registration quota for the National federations, so it will be easier for them to exchange athletes between the three series now. One more change concerns sprint and individual competitions; now we have a new system of entering the athletes, which gives a better possibility for the top 15 biathletes in the Total Score to be placed in any draw group. Also, from this season we have the Relay Cup, which will be awarded at the end of the year and gives credit to those NFs regularly competing in relay competitions."

## NEW TARGET SYSTEM

Continuing on the season changes, Bitterling added, "We have a special event happening here in Beitostølen, a new target system from the Megalink Company is being tested. It's produced and developed in Norway; the company has requested to have the IBU authorize it as a target system which can be used in IBU competitions. The IBU has tested the targets for nearly 1.5 years at different places. Now there was a special temporary approval from the IBU for this first IBU Cup, so we will see how the target works under competition conditions, before making the decision about a general approval for the future." Arne Roaldsøy, CEO of Megalink, explained, "Our new target-

Snowy Beitostølen was the scene for IBU Cup 1 that kicked off the 2016-17 biathlon season on November 25th. As usual, it brought together the mixture of the athletes with different goals; from the juniors with their first starts at the

senior level, to IBU Cup and World Cup regulars. Some were aiming to grab a spot on their nation's World Cup roster for Östersund, while others used Beitostølen as a pre-season tune-up.



Marketa Davidova - CZE

**Malvey Eliseev - RUS**

ing system shows you where you hit and where you miss. The basic difference from the other systems is that ours is based on sensors, gives the athlete or the coach the exact position of every shot. Coaches can follow their athletes without using the scope; all the information is on the monitors in front of them."

## STRONG WIND

Strong winds were the main feature of the weekend. Although the weather stayed for the training days; everything

changed for the competitions. On a windy Friday 124 athletes left the starting gates to battle for the first honors of the new season. Despite strong gusts that prevailed during the whole competition, Vetle Sjastad Christiansen of Norway managed to shoot clean and win; the only man in the field to shoot clean. Second place went to Germany's Roman Rees with 1 penalty, 16.7 seconds back; a successful start for the first year senior. Another Norwegian Vegard Gjermundshaug with early start number 5 had three penalties to finish third, 47.7 seconds back.

ex cross-country skier and the Bronze Relay Olympic medalist in Sochi, won in her first international biathlon start! She showed incredible speed on the tracks and despite 6 penalties crossed the finish line first. Belarusian Dzinara Alimbekava had a single penalty, leaving standing in first. Until the last split she was battling for the win, but finished second, 5.6 seconds back. In her first start since the birth of her first child, third place went to World Cup regular Ekaterina Glazyrina of Russia with one penalty, 12.9 seconds back.

## BIATHLON IS GREAT

Herrmann was very happy. "It was my first international competition and the beginning was nearly perfect. I am really happy that I won and it was unbelievable when coaches on the track said that I was leading. Biathlon is great and it differs from the cross-country skiing; here you have to stay focused and to be clever."

## RESCHEDULED COMPETITIONS

Due to strong wind gusts on Saturday, the Competition Jury rescheduled the second sprint competitions for Sunday. In light of this, the single mixed and mixed relays were cancelled.

## NO CLEAN SHOOTING

For the second men's sprint the skies cleared in compared to the previous day, but the wind remained. Although the gusts were not as strong, they still crossed the shooting range from side to side, resulting in many penalties and no clean shooting. Matvey Eliseev of Russia, last season's winner of the IBU Cup Total Score, had a single prone penalty on the way to the win. He cleaned standing and flew over the last loop to seal his victory. His teammate, the Olympic Relay Gold medalist Dmitry Malyshko had a standing penalty, but remained in the lead going into the last loop with a 10-second advantage, but crossed the finish line second,

### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 1

1. HERRMANN Denise	GER	3+3	6	24:43.9	0.0
2. ALIMBEKAVA Dzinara	BLR	0+1	1	24:49.5	+5.6
3. GLAZYRINA Ekaterina	RUS	2+1	3	24:56.8	+12.9
4. INNERHOFER Katharina	AUT	0+4	4	24:58.5	+14.6
5. ZHURAVOK Yuliya	UKR	1+0	1	25:00.1	+16.2

### SPRINT MEN 10 km 1

1. CHRISTIANSEN Vetle Sjastad	NOR	0+0	0	26:56.6	0.0
2. REES Roman	GER	1+0	1	27:13.3	+16.7
3. GJERMUNDSHAUG Vegard	NOR	2+1	3	27:44.3	+47.7
4. WAEGER Lorenz	AUT	0+2	2	27:48.3	+51.7
5. ILIEV Vladimir	BUL	4+1	5	27:54.9	+58.3
5. SHOPIN Yuri	RUS	3+0	3	27:54.9	+58.3

### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 2

1. DAVIDOVA Marketa	CZE	1+0	1	24:18.3	0.0
2. HORCHLER Nadine	GER	0+1	1	24:21.9	+3.6
3. HERRMANN Denise	GER	1+2	3	24:48.2	+29.9
4. BONDAR Iana	UKR	1+2	3	24:50.0	+31.7
5. SHUMILOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+2	2	25:10.8	+52.5

### SPRINT MEN 10 km 2

1. ELISEEV Matvey	RUS	1+0	1	26:16.8	0.0
2. MALYSHKO Dmitry	RUS	0+1	1	26:20.0	+3.2
3. L'ABEE-LUND Henrik	NOR	1+3	4	27:32.7	+1:15.9
4. GRAF Florian	GER	1+0	1	27:35.7	+1:18.9
5. GUIGNONAT Antonin	FRA	0+1	1	27:39.0	+1:22.2

## HIT ONLY ONE TARGET

After the win Christiansen commented, "It is a great feeling to win the first international competition of the season and it's surely gives some self-confidence. Conditions were really difficult, especially during zeroing, where I hit only one target at the standing; so I didn't think I would manage to shoot clean."

## WIN, DESPITE 6 MISSES!

The same wind gusts remained during the women's sprint. Denise Herrmann of Germany,

3.2 seconds back. Third went to WCH Relay Gold medalist Henrik L'Abée-Lund of Norway. Despite four penalties, he was also fast on the tracks and took the last place on the podium, 1:15.9 back.

## WORKED HARD

After the finish Eliseev commented, "It's my first season win and I am very happy, because I worked hard for this. At zeroing the wind blew from one side and when I came to the prone, it started to blow from the other side. But in general, I managed to shoot well."

## ROOKIE WINNER

IBU Cup 1 closed with the women's sprint, accompanied by even stronger gusting winds and again no clean shoot-



Podium Sprint Men

ing. Marketa Davidova of Czech Republic, who competed in the IBU Junior Cup last season, had her first individual win with a single penalty. The 19-year old Czech was fast on the tracks to finish ahead of last season's IBU Cup Total Score Champion Nadine Horchler of Germany, also with one penalty. Horchler standing penalty put her 3.6 seconds behind Davidova. Her teammate Herrmann, who won the

first sprint, was not as fast as in the previous competition, and finished third, with one penalty, 29.9 seconds back.

## LIKE A DREAM

The IBU Cup rookie Davidova was thrilled with her victory, "It is an amazing feeling! When coaches told me I was leading I couldn't believe it. And actually I still do not believe that I won, it looks like a dream." ■



ATOMIC

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WORLD CUP SKATE



Beautiful, sunny Ridnaun in Italy's South Tyrol welcomed 157 men and 114 women from 38 nations to IBU Cup 2. The venue was covered with an artificial snow, as in the previous year but the Organizing Committee did an excellent job to prepare the tracks and provide excellent conditions.

### SNOW GUNS

The early snow which thickly covered Ridnaun melted due to rain and warm November temperatures, leaving the OC with a big task: to provide good conditions on time. IBU Cup Race Director Felix Bitterling explained, "The OC invested in huge snow making capacity within the last years; now they have a lot of snow guns. Besides that, there was some reconstruction done in the venue; leveling the soil

at the start/finish and on the penalty loop. This way less snow was needed. Also on the shooting range some work was done; it is now wider and has brand new LED target lights."

### SINGLE MIXED RELAY

Twenty-seven teams lined up on a clear, calm morning to compete in the first IBU Cup single mixed relay. Ukraine with Anastasiya Merkusyhina and Artem Tyshchenko took the lead after the first prone stage and never relinquished the top position. After the last exchange Russia with Olympic champion Alexey Volkov

secured second place, while a few other teams were battling for the last podium spot. Czech Republic, France and Belarus left the final standing few seconds apart. Czech's Tomas Vojik crossed the finished line in third, followed by Belarusian Yuri Liadov in fourth and Emilien Jacquelin in fifth.

### TIME ADJUSTMENTS

However, those results were not final. Due to a technical problem at the shooting range, the target of France's Coline Varcin did not close properly in the first prone and she went for two penalty loops.

#### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya	UKR	0+0	0	21:11.8	0.0
2. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	0+0	0	21:46.4	+34.6
3. HORCHLER Karolin	GER	0+0	0	22:02.3	+50.5
4. VARCIN Coline	FRA	0+1	1	22:22.0	+1:10.2
5. HORCHLER Nadine	GER	1+0	1	22:33.6	+1:21.8

#### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1. GJESBAKK Fredrik	NOR	0+1	1	23:44.7	0.0
2. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+1	1	23:52.6	+7.9
3. KOMATZ David	AUT	0+0	0	23:55.8	+11.1
4. SEMAKOV Vladimir	UKR	0+0	0	23:58.7	+14.0
5. BEGUE Aristide	FRA	1+0	1	24:02.9	+18.2

#### PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	31:48.6
2. HORCHLER Karolin	GER	1+0+1+0	2	+1:24.7
3. HORCHLER Nadine	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+1:36.1
4. GEREKOVA Jana	SVK	1+1+0+0	2	+1:45.2
5. NICOLAISEN Kaia Woeien	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	+2:00.2

#### PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1. BEGUE Aristide	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	33:45.9
2. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	+17.5
3. GJESBAKK Fredrik	NOR	0+1+1+1	3	+24.5
4. SEMAKOV Vladimir	UKR	1+0+0+1	2	+30.2
5. WILLEITNER Michael	GER	2+0+1+0	3	+53.4



Anastasiya Merkusyhina - UKR

**MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 X 7.5 km**

1. <b>RUSSIA</b>	RUS	0+5	1:15:17.6	0.0
SLIVKO Victoria, KAISHEVA Uliana, SUCHILOV Semen, SLEPOV Alexey				
2. <b>FRANCE</b>	FRA	0+2	1:15:41.9	+24.3
CHEVALIER Chloe, LATUILLIERE Enora, BEGUE Aristide, GUIGONNAT Antonin				
3. <b>GERMANY</b>	GER	1+14	1:17:23.3	+2:05.7
HORCHLER Nadine, HERRMANN Denise, ROMBACH Lukas, BISCHL Matthias				

**SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km**

1. <b>UKRAINE</b>	UKR	0+3	38:52.4	0.0
MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya, TYSHCHENKO Artem				
2. <b>RUSSIA</b>	RUS	0+5	39:14.1	+21.7
SHESTERIKOVA Olga, VOLKOV Alexey				
3. <b>FRANCE</b>	FRA	2+8	39:52.8	+1:00.4
VARCIN Coline, JACQUELIN Emilien				

After the final athlete shot, the Competition Jury checked the respective target, which was closed after Varcin's shooting bout. It showed that both misses were hits; the Jury decided to give France a positive time adjustment which tied them for third with the Czech Republic.

**MIXED RELAY**

The same good weather conditions remained during the mixed relay. Twenty-

four teams started, but just 14 squads finished the competition; the others lapped and removed from the course. Russia with Victoria Slivko, Uliana Kaisheva, Semen Suchilov and Alexey Slepov used five spares to get a win. France used only two spare rounds to finish second, 24.3 seconds

back. The German team, despite one penalty and fourteen spares, finished third, 2:05.7 behind.

**THREE TEAMS**

From the second exchange on, Russia, France and Germany were the top three teams, changing places from time to time. Germany lost their chance to finish higher than 3rd after the penalty loop on the third leg. In the last prone Slepov used

all three spares, letting the France's clean shooting Antonin Guigonnat to close within 12.6 seconds. But the speedy Russian increased the gap until the final standing, used one spare, securing the victory.

**SECOND WIN FOR MERKUSHYNA**

Clean-shooting Merkushyna of Ukraine confidently won the women's sprint, scoring her second victory of the week. After the successful single mixed relay, the young Ukrainian took the lead after prone, increasing her lead with each split. Russia's Kaisheva shot clean to finish second, 34.6 seconds back. Early starter number 8 Karolin Horchler of Germany was also perfect at the shooting range, but finished third, 50.5 seconds behind.

Merkushyna was tired and nervous before the competition. "In the morning I woke up and my legs and hands were shaking, I was really worried to go to the start. I gave all my power and emotions in the single mixed relay, so today I felt tired."

**FIRST CAREER VICTORY FOR GJESBAKK**

Norway's Fredrik Gjesbakk, despite one penalty, won the men's 10K sprint in 23:44.7. Volkov of Russia, also with one penalty finished second, 7.9 seconds back. Third went to Austria's David Komatz, who shot clean, but crossed the finish line 11.1 seconds behind. Late starter 117 Gjesbakk was only third after standing, 4.7 seconds behind the leader, but went on for his first career IBU Cup win. On the last lap with an incredible burst of speed he pushed hard, crossing the finish in the top spot. The happy Norwegian admitted that he has been waiting for a while to get on the podium. "I've been waiting for a good race for 3 or 4



Antonin Guigonnat - FRA

**Daniel Böhm - GER**

years now, so it feels great! I had 0+1 at the range and this year it is my best shooting, I'm happy about it."

### **MALYSHKO AND PASHCHENKO DISQUALIFIED**

Russia's Dmitry Malyshko, with one penalty crossed the finish line as the leader, hoping for the win. However, Malyshko and his teammate Petr Pashchenko accidentally mixed their start numbers (87&89). As a result both were disqualified according to IBU rules.

### **KAISHEVA WINS PURSUIT**

Russia's Kaisheva with start number 2 took advantage of sprint winner Merkushyna's absence to win the pursuit. Merkushyna moved over to Pokljuka to anchor the World Cup relay team. With the same perfect, windless conditions as in previous competition days, she was one of the two athletes to shoot clean. Second went to Karolin Horchler of Germany with two penalties, starting 16 seconds after Kaisheva. Horchler's sister Nadine had a single penalty in the last stand-

ing, left the stadium in fourth, but with a strong final lap finished third, 1:36.1 behind.

Kaisheva was satisfied with her win, but admitted that the rivalry was not the same without Merkushyna. "I am not happy that Anastasiya did not start today, that made the competition not full. But there were many strong competi-

tors behind my back; even at the last lap, knowing that the gap was big, I did not relax."

### **FIRST WIN FOR BEGUE**

Aristide Begue of France started the competition 18 seconds after the leader and made one miss on his way to the win in men's pursuit. Cleaning stage after stage, he moved to the top and even one penalty at the last standing did not stop his path to the top of the podium. Russia's Volkov matched his sprint result and with two penalties finished second. After clean prone stages, he stayed in the lead, but

one miss in each standing stage kept him from the win, 17.5 seconds back. The last spot on the podium went to sprint winner Gjesbakk of Norway with three penalties, 24.5 seconds behind.

Begue was thrilled about his first individual IBU Cup win, "Since this summer I have realized that I have to approach competitions with pleasure and knowing that here the sun is shining and I'm doing what I love, there is no reason I should feel stressed up about something."

### **BÖHM RETIRES**

This competition was also very special for the German Olympic medalist and World Champion Daniel Böhm. The pursuit became his last as he retired. After the finish, where the German team was waiting for him, Böhm was very emotional, "Honestly, that was even more emotional than I expected. I thought I would be more objective... On the last lap a lot of emotions came through, but they were only positive and I did not regret anything. At the first four laps it was like a normal competition, but on the last one I just wanted to enjoy it and was nice that the whole team was waiting for me. Nice last race and I am happy to be here!" **I**

**Russian Mixed Relay Team**



# 15K AND 20K INDIVIDUALS HIGHLIGHT IBU CUP 3

The first 15K and 20K individual competitions of the season highlighted IBU Cup 3 in Obertilliach; the last competitions before the holiday break. 151 men and 107 women from 41 federations tried to make a good present for themselves for the holidays.



Henrik L'abee-Lund - NOR

## FIRST WIN OF NEW SEASON FOR GUIGNONNAT

On a clear and chilly winter morning, with the temperature around -7C, 122 men skied on the tracks covered with a thin blanket of a fresh snow. Antonin Guignonnat of France missed once to score the first season win in the men's 20K individual. Second place went to Russia's Yury Shopin with one penalty, 32.2 seconds back. Florian Graf of Germany matched the rivals on the shooting range and finished third, 35.6 seconds behind.

## DECISIVE FINAL STANDING

Graf, the fourth starter cleaned the first three

stages and missed once on the last standing. Despite that he remained the leader a long time, until bib 31 Guignonnat crossed the finish line with more than a 30-second advantage. There were few more contenders, who could move Guignonnat from the first, but they all missed in the final standing and could not overtake the speedy French. Shopin was a leader after the second and third stages, but one additional minute at the standing put him in second at the finish.

Guignonnat commented, "I am really happy to win, because the race was tough, and the level of all athletes was very high, some guys just got back from the World Cup. I know they have WC level and it's really good to be ahead of them."

## HORCHLER SHOTS CLEAN; WINS BY 1.1 SECONDS

Clean-shooting Karolin Horchler of Germany claimed the victory in women's 15K individual. France's Colin Varcin fin-

Antonin Guignonnat - FRA



ished second, missing the win only by 1.1 seconds. With one penalty in the first prone, Varcin cleaned the other stages, moving up at each split. Daria Virolaynen

Philipp Nawrath of Germany, who started his season at this IBU Cup, broke up a Norwegian



**Daria Virolaynen - RUS**

of Russia also missed once and was in fourth after the last standing stage. With a quick last loop, she finished third, 30.2 seconds back.

## ONE SECOND

Horchler, whose strong side is always shooting, admitted, "After I hit the last shot, I believed I could make it to the podium, but not to the top place because I had very early start number. I was waiting for the finish of the French girl and was really happy about this 1 second advantage."

## L'ABEE-LUND WINS SPRINT

Norway's Henrik L'Abée-Lund opened the last IBU Cup competition day before the Christmas break, with his first win of the season, shooting clean in the men's sprint. His teammate Vetle Sjastad Christiansen, fifth in individual, also shot clean, but finished second, 13.9 seconds back.

### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+1	1	20:31.9	0.0
2. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	0+0	0 2	0:35.6	+3.7
3. NIKULINA Anna	RUS	0+1	1	20:55.0	+23.1
4. LATUILLIERE Enora	FRA	1+0	1	20:59.4	+27.5
5. HORCHLER Nadine	GER	1+0	1	21:18.8	+46.9

### SPRINT MEN 10 km

1. L'ABEE-LUND Henrik	NOR	0+0	0	23:29.9	0.0
2. CHRISTIANSEN Vetle S.	NOR	0+0	0	23:43.8	+13.9
3. NAWRATH Philipp	GER	0+0	0	23:59.4	+29.5
4. GJERMUNDSHAUG Vegard	NOR	0+1	1	24:03.8	+33.9
5. SHOPIN Yuri	RUS	0+1	1	24:05.6	+35.7

### INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km

1. HORCHLER Karolin	GER	0+0+0+0	0	44:54.7	0.0
2. VARCIN Coline	FRA	1+0+0+0	1	44:55.8	+1.1
3. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	45:24.9	+30.2
4. POLIAKOVA Terezia	SVK	0+0+0+0	0	45:30.5	+35.8
5. MAKAL Anna	POL	0+0+0+0	0	45:47.0	+52.3

### INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km

1. GUIGNONAT Antonin	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	49:58.6	0.0
2. SHOPIN Yuri	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	50:30.8	+32.2
3. GRAF Florian	GER	0+0+0+1	1	50:34.2	+35.6
4. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	1+0+0+1	2	50:58.8	+1:00.2
5. CHRISTIANSEN Vetle S.	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	51:03.8	+1:05.2

## GOOD MOTIVATION

sweep, pushing Vegard Gjermundshaug with one penalty down to the fourth. Nawrath shot clean to claim his first career podium in third place, 29.5 seconds back.

L'Abée-Lund was satisfied with his shooting, "It's not so often than I shoot clean. I've been struggling a little bit on the standing, so I am very satisfied I could



**Podium Sprint Men**



**Karolin Horchler - GER**

hit all targets. It was exciting after the finish to stay, wait and see what's happening. It is really nice to end 2016 like this and to have good motivation for Christmas training!"

## **WOMEN'S SPRINT TO VIROLAYNEN**

Virolaynen with one penalty won women's sprint later in the day. The Russian left in second after the standing stage, with a 13.6 second gap to first. By the next split,

she reduced it to 6.1 seconds and crossed the finish line 3.6 seconds ahead of her teammate Uliana Kaisheva. Kaisheva was perfect on the shooting range, leaving the stadium as the leader after standing, but slowed on the last loop to finish second. Anna Nikulina finished third, making an all-Russian podium. Nikulina, with the first start number, missed once in standing, finishing 23.1 seconds behind the leader.

## **BELIEVE IN BEST**

Despite the penalty and only second place after the standing, Virolaynen believed she could top the podium. "I knew about the gap from the first place, coaches gave me that information on the last lap, but I still believed I could win. You always have to believe in the best!"

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# 2017 STARTS IN MARTELL

## SEASON'S HIGHEST ALTITUDE IBU CUP VENUE



**Podium Sprint Men 1**

Picturesque Martell in Italy's South Tyrol hosted the first IBU Cup of 2017. Despite the lack of snow, which caused problems for the organizing committee, they did everything to provide good conditions. Martell, at 1700 meters, is the highest-altitude location among the venues that regularly host IBU Cups. The thin air is hard on the competitors, especially in the longer competitions. Martell is also known for the unpredictable wind gusts due to the river that crosses the shooting range which accordingly makes shooting a challenge.

### ADVANTAGE

The first competition, the 7.5K sprint, was a big challenge for 99 women who

started the day. Those unpredictable strong gusts, crossing range from time to time, made shooting a true lottery, especially for the first starters. Late bib 94 was an advantage for Austria's Fabienne Hartweger, as the wind calmed down in the second part of the competition. The Austrian was one of three athletes who managed to shoot clean, claiming her first IBU Cup win. Svetlana Sleptsova of Russia finished second despite two penalties, 14.4 seconds back. After the standing stage she left in fifth, but with a fast final lap, moved up to a podium place. Young

Julia Simon of France, who won the individual at the IBU Junior Cup 1 in Lenzerheide, also shot clean to finish third, 26.8 seconds back.

At the finish Hartweger could not believe she won. "Today is my first IBU Cup podium and first time I shot zero. It was a great day for me! During the Christmas break I was sick and it is the first start after the illness, so it was very hard."

### ONLY ONE CLEAN-SHOOTER

Before the start of the men's sprint, the wind seemed to calm down, but as soon as the athletes started, it returned, crowding the penalty loop. As in the women's sprint, a late start number became an advantage for the men's winner. Andreas Dahloe Waernes of Norway with bib 117 had a penalty in each stage, leaving the stadium after standing in second, 10.8 seconds back. Flying around the last loop, the Norwegian closed this gap and finished with the victory, his first in IBU Cup. Austria's Nikolaus Leitinger was the only

#### SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 1

1.	HARTWEGER Fabienne	AUT	0+0	0	24:00.8	0.0
2.	SLEPTSOVA Svetlana	RUS	1+1	2	24:15.2	+14.4
3.	SIMON Julia	FRA	0+0	0	24:27.6	+26.8
4.	NIKULINA Anna	RUS	2+0	2	24:29.5	+28.7
5.	SLIVKO Victoria	RUS	1+0	1	24:30.0	+29.2

#### SPRINT MEN 10 km 1

1.	WAERNES Andreas Dahloe	NOR	1+1	2	25:45.0	0.0
2.	LEITINGER Nikolaus	AUT	0+0	0	25:54.6	+9.6
3.	POVARNITSYN Alexander	RUS	0+1	1	26:18.3	+33.3
4.	LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+3	3	26:22.3	+37.3
5.	WAEGER Lorenz	AUT	1+2	3	26:23.1	+38.1

**SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 2**

1. SIMON Julia	FRA	1+0	1	24:32.6	0.0
2. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+3	3	24:50.2	+17.6
3. BENDIKA Baiba	LAT	1+1	2	24:54.7	+22.1
4. SLIVKO Victoria	RUS	0+1	1	24:59.3	+26.7
4. MIRONOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+4	4	24:59.3	+26.7

**SPRINT MEN 10 km 2**

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+2	2	24:34.0	0.0
2. FEMSTEINEVIK Martin	NOR	0+0	0	25:18.2	+44.2
3. WILLEITNER Michael	GER	0+1	1	25:57.4	+1:23.4
4. HOERL Fabian	AUT	1+1	2	26:08.9	+1:34.9
5. GROSSEGGER Sven	AUT	1+1	2	26:12.2	+1:38.2

**PURSUIT WOMEN 10 KM**

1. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+2+0+1	3	33:07.8
2. STARYKH Irina	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+13.6
3. SLIVKO Victoria	RUS	1+0+0+1	2	+27.8
4. MIRONOVA Svetlana	RUS	2+0+1+1	4	+47.9
5. SIMON Julia	FRA	1+0+1+1	3	+55.7

**PURSUIT MEN 12.5 KM**

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+2+0+2	4	37:13.8
2. JACQUELIN Emilien	FRA	0+1+1+0	2	+53.4
3. WILLEITNER Michael	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+1:00.0
4. FEMSTEINEVIK Martin	NOR	0+0+2+1	3	+1:16.0
5. MAKHAMBETOV Timur	RUS	1+0+0+1	2	+1:22.5

athlete of the 116 starters, who managed to shoot clean. Despite that, he still finished second, taking the first international podium, 9.6 seconds back. Alexander Povarnitsyn of Russia, who started his season in Martell, with a single standing penalty finished third, 33.3 seconds behind.

Waernes, who has already been on the podium in Martell, admitted, "I like this place a lot. Last year I was third here, so I was looking forward to compete in Martell. I am very happy to score my first IBU Cup victory, which gives me the motivation for the rest of the season."

**FIRST PODIUM IN 8 YEARS**

After a calm, sunny training day, the wind came back to Martell, resulting in a new challenging competition in the second set of sprints. 20-year old Simon, who hit all the targets in the first sprint, demonstrated great shooting skills in the second 7.5K. Starting with bib number 5, she had a prone penalty, but cleaned standing and left the stadium as the leader, keeping the top position until the finish. Russia's Daria

Virolaynen was perfect in the first prone, but missed three times in standing, leaving after the penalty loop only in 7th; she flew over the last lap, picking up places one-by-one until she finished second, 17.6 seconds back. Late start number 82 Baiba Bendika of Latvia had a penalty in each stage, leaving in sixth after standing. As with Virolaynen, she was really fast at the final lap and claimed the second position, 22.1 seconds behind. On the last downhill before the finish line she fell, losing precious seconds. Nevertheless, finishing third, she brought Latvia its

first women's podium in the last 8 years!

Simon, also competing at the IBU Junior Cup this season, with a win there, was happy to get a senior victory. "It was a very good race for me; I am in a good shape and very pleased to win. I like to compete at the IBU Cup with seniors; the level is very high here."

**Baiba Bendika - LAT****EASILY REDUCED**

The same weather conditions prevailed during the second men's sprint. Despite the wind, Alexander Loginov of Russia was lucky in the prone stage, with no gusts and shot clean. In standing he missed twice, but his rivals were also making mistakes, allowing the fast Russian to overcome those penalties and finish first. Norway's Martin Femsteinevik, who started few minutes after Loginov, managed to hit all the targets, but was not fast enough on the track, finishing second for first international podium, 44.2 seconds back. After standing, where he missed once, Michael Willeitner of Germany left in fourth with a 10-second gap to third. On the last lap he easily reduced it, taking the last place at the podium, 1:23.4 behind.

After the finish Loginov commented, "In the previous competition I was really unlucky. I spent 1:50 minutes on the standing; it only seems that it is better to come, shoot fast and go to the penalties. But when you stay, you think that the gust cannot last 3 minutes... it turned out that it can."

**NO GUSTS**

The last day of the IBU Cup 4, with pursuits in schedule, greeted the athletes with better weather conditions than in two pre-

**Emilien Jacquelin and Aristide Begue - FRA**

vious competitions, bringing a light wind and no gusts on the range. That resulted in lots of clean shooting in the first prone, after which Virolaynen with bib number 2 left in first. In the second prone sprint winner Simon cleaned and left as the leader, while Virolaynen was going around two penalty loops. The young French star was followed by Russia's Iryna Starykh and Victoria Slivko. The first standing changed the leaders, as Simon went for a penalty; Slivko, Virolaynen and Starykh hit all the targets and left within 3.5 seconds. In the last standing, they came almost together and matched each other with one missed shot. Virolaynen left the penalty loop first, keeping the top position until the finish; she was followed by Slivko 2.8 seconds later and Starykh at 8.6 seconds back. On the last lap Starykh was faster and passed the teammate, finishing second and leaving Slivko in third.

Virolaynen, with her fourth podium of the season, was happy to get the victory. "Sure, I am very glad to win and to get on the podium second day in a row. The track here is not hard for me, but to compete at such a high altitude is a little bit tough."

### UNDEFEATABLE

Starting the competition with a 44 second gap on his rivals, Russia's Loginov

was unchallenged, claiming another win, despite total four penalties on the second and fourth shooting stages. After the second prone, he let the clean-shooting Femsteinevik to get closer, but the Russian was still in the lead. At the first standing Norwegian made two mistakes and left second in 1:28.4 seconds behind Loginov, followed by Willeitner, France's Aristide Begue and Emilien Jacquelin. Those four were battling for the last two spots on the podium, as Loginov, who mistakenly went for three penalty loops instead of two after the final standing, was still unchallenged! Willeitner, Femsteinevik and Begue came to the range together, did

not hit one target, allowing clean shooting Jacquelin to leave in second with 12 seconds gap. On the last lap the German was faster than his rivals and securely finished in third, matching his start number.

Jacquelin, who moved up from seventh at the start, claiming his first IBU Cup po-

**Daria Virolaynen and Victoria Slivko - RUS**

dium, admitted that the competition was hard. "The German was really close to me at the last lap, but on the final uphill my brother was staying and I thought that I had to fight until the end!" **I**

**Fabienne Hartweger - AUT**



# HEAVY SNOW AT ARBER

## WEATHER CHALLENGES

Last season, after a long break, the IBU Cup returned to the Hohenzollern Ski Stadium, alongside the Great Arber Lake in the municipality of Bayerisch Eisenstein. The facility is located 950 to 1035 meters above sea level, with pretty tough and elevated courses with few chances for rest.

### TOUGH CONDITIONS

116 men left the starting gates on a snowy and windy morning to battle for the 20K win. During the competition, conditions were constantly changing, bringing snow and gusts at times followed by calm winds. Russia's Alexander Loginov had four penalties in the two first stages,

unclosed targets in the first prone and standing, but cleaning the other stages. World Cup regular, late start number 95 Michail Kletcherov of Bulgaria, finished third with three penalties, also taking the first career podium.

### SAVE POWER

Loginov said that in the morning he felt a little tired. "I did not feel as good as I would want to, but then in the end it came out that I was fast enough on the distance. From the first lap I had some reserve, because track here is hard, so I understood I have to try to save some power for the last part of the race."

### RUSSIAN PODIUM SWEEP

Later in the day, another Russian Iryna Starykh finished first in the women's 15K individual with only one penalty. Starykh missed once in the first prone, cleaning the other three stages. After the second prone, she took the lead with teammate Daria Virolaynen as the only person who could possibly top her. Missing twice at the first standing, Virolaynen hit the rest of



Stadium "Bayerischer Wald"

### RESCHEDULED INDIVIDUALS

The individual competitions were planned for Friday with single mixed and mixed relays on Saturday. Due to the very bad weather conditions, with strong winds and heavy snowfall, the 20K and 15K were cancelled and rescheduled for Saturday by a Jury decision. Accordingly, the relays were cancelled; the IBU may either reschedule them or drop completely.

but then managed to shoot clean, heading to the finish with a solid lead, and earning his third victory in a row. Second place went to Jeremy Finello of Switzerland, 1:12.2 back. Finello, with his first IBU Cup podium, matched Loginov on the shooting range, leaving two

#### INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 KM

1.	STARYKH Irina	RUS	1+0+0+0	1	51:09.2	0.0
2.	VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+2+0+0	2	51:09.5	+0.3
3.	SLEPTSOVA Svetlana	RUS	0+1+1+2	4	54:05.4	+2:56.2
4.	LATUILLIERE Enora	FRA	1+1+0+1	3	54:05.9	+2:56.7
5.	ZHURAVOK Yuliya	UKR	1+2+0+0	3	54:13.2	+3:04.0

#### INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 KM

1.	LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	2+2+0+0	4	58:05.2	0.0
2.	FINELLO Jeremy	SUI	1+1+0+0	2	59:17.4	+1:12.2
3.	KLETCHEROV Michail	BUL	1+1+0+1	3	1:00:13.6	+2:08.4
4.	ZHYRNYI Oleksander	UKR	0+1+0+1	2	1:00:34.3	+2:29.1
4.	KRUPCIK Tomas	CZE	0+1+1+1	3	1:00:34.3	+2:29.1

the targets, closing the gap to Starykh with each split time. Leaving the stadium for the last lap 11.5 seconds out of first, she missed the win by only meters, 0.3 seconds back. Unlike her teammates, Svetlana Sleptsova cleaned just the first shooting, leaving unclosed targets in the



Jeremy Finello - SUI



Michael Kletcherov - BUL

next three stages. She left sixth after the last standing, but with a fast final lap finished third, making the podium an all-Russian affair, 2:56.2 back. By finishing third, she moved France's Enora Latuilliere with three penalties from the podium by mere 0.5 seconds.

### LUCKY

Starykh was very excited about her win, "I am really glad! I was waiting for Daria's finish until the end, and was very happy to win those 0.3 seconds! Probably, I had some luck today." **I**

**TEXT** Maria Osolodkina

**PICTURES** Maria Osolodkina

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GROWTH, EXCITEMENT, AND NEW  
VENUES FOR IBU JUNIOR CUP

# FUTURE STARS IN THE MAKING

First time at IBU Junior Cup:  
Sofie Hopkins - GBR



In its second season, the IBU Junior Cup continues to grow with large fields close to 300 entrants, and mature with World Cup style competitions at both new and established major venues. The future stars of biathlon from around the world now have a stage of their own to shine and hone their biathlon skills.

Last season, there were just three events while this season, the circuit has expanded to five including Lenzerheide, Hochfilzen, Pokljuka, then the IBU Junior Open European Championships in Nove Mesto na Morave and concluding with the IBU YJWCH in Osrblie.

## SEASON-OPENER AT NEW BIATHLON ARENA LENZERHEIDE

The arrival of the teams in the small village of Lenzerheide was a like a reunion

for many who became friends last season. The young enthusiastic athletes arrived eager to show off new skills and fitness acquired over the summer. The next several days would be an international biathlon festival, with biathletes from across the globe challenging each other in two disciplines.

## STUNNING CONDITIONS

Biathlon Arena Lenzerheide, with IBU Junior Cup 1 featured the first

Lenzerheide: Podium Individual Junior Men





Lenzerheide: Podium Individual Junior Women



Lenzerheide: Podium Sprint Junior Men

individual and sprint competitions of the season. Good weather, with abundant sunshine reigned for both days. The tracks were well-covered with artificial snow, providing enjoyable and fair conditions.

## RESULTS

### IBU JUNIOR CUP 1 LENZERHEIDE - SUI

#### INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR WOMEN 12.5 km

1. SIMON Julia	FRA	1+0+1+0	2	38:19.7	0.0
2. HETTICH Janina	GER	0+0+0+0	0	39:18.3	+58.6
3. MOSHKOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	40:20.1	+2:00.4
4. TSAKIRI Maria	GRE	0+0+0+0	0	40:34.5	+2:14.8
5. SCHREDER Anna-Maria	AUT	0+0+1+1	2	40:39.6	+2:19.9

#### INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR MEN 15 km

1. DUDCHENKO Anton	UKR	0+1+0+0	1	39:54.5	0.0
2. STRELTSOV Kirill	RUS	0+1+0+1	2	39:55.9	+1.4
3. COTTET PUINEL Felix	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	40:10.4	+15.9
4. MALINOVSKII Igor	RUS	0+2+0+0	2	40:22.0	+27.5
5. PERRILLAT BOTTONET Martin	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	40:29.2	+34.7

#### SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN 7.5 km

1. COLOMBO Caroline	FRA	0+0	0	21:10.9	0.0
2. DMYTRENKO Khrystyna	UKR	0+0	0	21:17.4	+6.5
3. VOIGT Vanessa	GER	1+0	1	21:47.7	+36.8
4. USHKINA Natalia	RUS	0+0	0	21:58.7	+47.8
5. BENED Camille	FRA	1+0	1	22:15.0	+1:04.1

#### SPRINT JUNIOR MEN 10 km

1. TRUSH Vitaliy	UKR	0+0	0	24:40.9	0.0
2. ZOBEL David	GER	1+0	1	24:41.0	+0.1
3. RIVAIL Hugo	FRA	0+0	0	24:59.5	+18.6
4. STRELTSOV Kirill	RUS	0+1	1	25:05.3	+24.4
5. MALEEVI Viacheslav	RUS	1+0	1	25:09.8	+28.9

## INDIVIDUALS TO ANTON DUDCHENKO AND JULIA SIMON

Anton Dudchenko of Ukraine won the 15K individual with one penalty in 39:54.5 for his first career win. Russia's

Kirill Streltsov was second, with two penalties, 1.4 seconds back while France's Feli Cottet Pui-nel was third, with one penalty, 15.9 seconds back.

Dudchenko commented, "It was hard day for me on the track today; my skis were gliding well in some places and not so well in others, because half of the track is out in the sun and the other half is the shadow."

Despite winning the first Junior Cup competition of the season, the 20-year-old admitted his current shape was not perfect. "My form is not at peak at the moment. We did our season preparations in low ground and now we are competing at a decent height, it is tough." France's



Lenzerheide: Podium Sprint Junior Women

Julia Simon was outstanding on the tracks in Lenzerheide, picking up just two penalties on the way to her 38:19.7 win. Janina Hettich of Germany shot clean, but could not challenge Simon's ski speed, finishing 58.6 seconds back. Russia's Ekaterina Moshkova secured third place, with two penalties, 2:00.4 back. Simon commented, "It is a very good day for me, my shape was perfect today and my shooting was good." Simon's teammates showed their support, congratulating her with hugs at the prize-giving ceremony. Her strong

performance resulted in a promotion to the IBU Cup a few days later.

### SPRINTS TO TRUSH AND COLOMBO

The next day, Vitaliy Trush of Ukraine shot clean to win the men's 10K sprint in 24:40.9, for his first IBU Junior Cup victory. Trush commented, "I felt really good before the competition today and my skis were well prepared. On the track I was only thinking about myself. When it comes to the shooting range I can shoot

faster, but I took my time and it paid off."

Caroline Colombo of France matched Trush with clean shooting to take the women's sprint in 21:10.9, also her first IBU Junior Cup victory. Colombo commented, "Yesterday was a really difficult course, and today I was not sure of my shape. After the first the first loop I felt great, and my shooting was perfect. It is a fantastic race for me."

After the women's sprint, the biathlon family with many athletes and coaches, gathered in the Lenzerheide Arena Club-



Hochfilzen: David Zobel - GER

## RESULTS

### IBU JUNIOR CUP 2 HOCHFILZEN - AUT

#### SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN 7.5 km

1.	VASNETCOVA Valeriia	RUS	0+1	1	22:14.2	0.0
2.	USHKINA Natalia	RUS	0+0	0	22:20.9	+6.7
3.	ARNAUD Lena	FRA	0+0	0	22:23.6	+9.4
4.	DMYTRENKO Khrystyna	UKR	0+0	0	22:29.4	+15.2
5.	PANTOVA Arina	KAZ	1+0	1	22:38.2	+24.0

#### SPRINT JUNIOR MEN 10 km

1.	WEICK Lars-Erik	GER	0+1	1	25:30.0	0.0
2.	TRUSH Vitaliy	UKR	0+0	0	25:35.4	+5.4
3.	YEREMIN Roman	KAZ	1+1	2	25:53.4	+23.4
4.	SHYNKEVICH Raman	BLR	1+0	1	26:11.2	+41.2
5.	STRELTsov Kirill	RUS	0+1	1	26:12.3	+42.3

#### PURSUIT JUNIOR WOMEN 10 km

1.	WEIDEL Anna	GER	1+1+0+0	2	31:49.6	
2.	BEGUE Myrtille	FRA	0+1+1+0	2	+33.3	
3.	MOSHKOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0+0+2	2	+39.8	
4.	MAIER Christin	GER	0+1+0+1	2	+41.4	
5.	VOIGT Vanessa	GER	0+1+0+1	2	+56.1	

#### PURSUIT JUNIOR MEN 12.5 km

1.	TRUSH Vitaliy	UKR	0+0+1+0	1	34:08.3	
2.	STRELTsov Kirill	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+11.4	
3.	YEREMIN Roman	KAZ	2+2+0+0	4	+44.3	
4.	ZOBEL David	GER	0+0+2+1	3	+1:03.2	
5.	WEICK Erik	GER	0+2+3+2	7	+1:15.1	

#### RELAY JUNIOR WOMEN 3 x 6 km

1.	<b>FRANCE</b> BENED Camille, BEGUE Myrtille, ARNAUD Lena	FRA	0+7	56:19.0	0.0
2.	<b>GERMANY</b> VOIGT Vanessa, MAIER Christin, WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+13	57:05.8	+46.8
3.	<b>KAZAKHSTAN</b> PANTOVA Arina, SLEPENKO Alina, BELCHENKO Yelizaveta	KAZ	1+8	57:31.1	+1:12.1

#### RELAY JUNIOR MEN 4 x 7.5 km

1.	<b>RUSSIA</b> NASEKIN Aleksandr, MALINOVSKII Igor, PORSHNEV Nikita, STRELTsov Kirill	RUS	0+5	1:19:36.0	0.0
2.	<b>BELARUS</b> SHYNKEVICH Raman, RADZIUK Vadzim, KARPIUK Ihar, SMOLSKI Anton M	BLR	1+8	1:20:31.2	+55.2
3.	<b>CZECH REPUBLIC</b> ZEMLICKA Milan, STVRTECKY Jakub, PROCHAZKA Jakub, SANTORA Ondrej	CZE	0+9	1:20:42.4	+1:06.4



**Hochfilzen: Podium Pursuit Junior Men**

house watch the last kilometers of the World Cup women's relay.

### **IBU JUNIOR CUP 2 TESTS HOCHFILZEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TRACKS**

The second IBU Junior Cup in Hochfilzen was a unique opportunity for these young athletes: competing at a historic

World Cup venue on the 2107 WCH tracks. For some athletes it was a dream that comes true: competing on the World Championships tracks, in the shadow of big stars like Martin Fourcade, Laura Dahlmeier, Gabriela Koukalová. The Junior Cup athletes

had full access to the stadium facilities the World Cup athletes use. It clearly meant a lot to them. "When I stepped on the track, I immediately recognized the famous Hochfilzen tunnels," commented Russia's Valeriia Vasnetcova.

Like her peers, the smiling Vasnetcova had only seen these tracks on television, let alone compete on them. "The tracks here are really tough; the uphill look

much easier and shorter on television. When I skied the 2.5K loop I thought it was the 3.5K, but that was not the case. I was surprised."

### **SPRINTS**

Vasnetcova accordingly won the women's sprint, with one penalty in 22:14.2. Her teammate Natalia Ushkina shot clean to finish second, 6.7 seconds back, while Lena Arnaud of France, also shooting clean finished third, 9.4 seconds back.

Germany's Lars-Erik Weick won the men's sprint with one penalty in 25:30. Ukrainian Trush shot clean but finished second 5.4 seconds back, Roman Yerminev of Kazakhstan, with two penalties finished third, 23.4 seconds back.

### **WOMEN'S PURSUIT TO WEIDEL**

Bib number 7, Germany's Anna Weidel climbed six places to win the women's pursuit, with two penalties, in 31:49.6.



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Russian Relay Junior Men Team with Staff

France's Myrtille Begue also had two penalties in second place, 33.3 seconds back. Russia's Ekaterina Moshkova won a finish line sprint in the last 100 meters to claim third, 39.8 seconds back over fourth place Christin Maier of Germany. Moshkova, also with two penalties, 41.1 seconds back.

### MEN'S PURSUIT: FRIENDS FROM LAST SEASON

Sprint runner-up Trush won the men's pursuit, with one penalty in 34:08.3. Russia's Kirill Streltsov shot clean, challenging Trush for the win in the last loop, but could not handle Trush's ski speed and finished second, 11.4 seconds back. Kazakhstan's Roman Yeremin matched his sprint third place, despite four penalties in third, 44.3 seconds back.

Trush and Streltsov know each other very well from the last season. Trush commented "I was definitely afraid that Kirill will catch me on the last loop, I know how

strong athlete he is, but I'm very happy to finish first"

### "TOO STRONG"

France's Camille Bened, Myrtille Begue and Lena Arnaud dominated the very first IBU Junior Cup relay competition, with seven spare rounds in 56:19.0. Germany's finished second, with thirteen spares, 46.8 seconds back. Kazakhstan finished third, with one penalty and eight spares 1:12.1 back.

The German and French women gathered together for a group photo after the relay. Weidel, on her Instagram account

Hochfilzen: Podium Relay Junior Women



commented, "Those three girls were definitely too strong for us today!"

### RUSSIA DOMINATES MEN'S RELAY

Russia's Aleksandr Nasekin, Igor Malinovskii, Nikita Porshnev, Kirill Streltsov were unmatched in their relay victory in a wire-to-wire win, with five spare rounds in 1:19:36. Belarus finished second, with one penalty and eight spare rounds, 55



Hochfilzen: Podium Sprint Junior Women

seconds back, followed Czech Republic in third place, with nine spare rounds, 1:06.4 back.

The relay closed the weekend and the athletes headed home for the holidays. They did not say, "Good-bye" but "see you at Pokljuka," the next venue in January as the sun dropped behind the mountains and they went their separate ways. **I**

**TEXT** Valera Patotskij

**PICTURES** Valera Patotskij



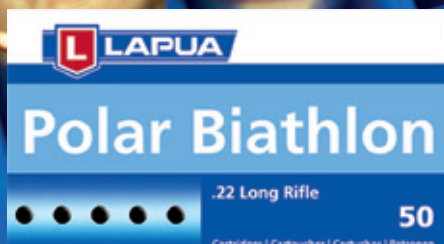
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Once again, he was the quickest – almost too quick. „Has he blown the whistle yet?“ asked Michael Rösch during training in Antholz, as he got ready to aim in standing position. (He meant the referee, who signals the official start of training.)

“Ok,” rasped the voice of Jörn Wollschläger from the walkie-talking beside the shooting mat, and seconds later, thousands of shots were being fired in mesmerising rhythm, one hit following another. It did not take long before the first compliments were made: “That’s all fine,” said his coach. The Swiss team has a familiar duo of its own: previously, while Wollschläger was still an active athlete on the German team, they often shared a room. “Wolle” [wool], as they call him, and ‘Ebbs junior’ (‘Ebbs senior’ is his dad) are a good team. In this team, trust and respect are paramount. “I do absolutely everything my coach tells me to,” says Michael Rösch convincingly – and his coach set the rules from the outset. “If I should ever notice that he is not keeping up with the rest, that he’s lagging behind, then he’s out,” he says authoritatively. Of course, both have long known that it will not come to that, because

# THE RETURN OF THE WARRIOR





# ..MICHAEL **RÖSCH**

Michael Rösch has regained his footing – which is almost a miracle for one who was so close to the top then fell so low. His career hasn't just been a roller coaster: it has been survival training – a boot camp for the advanced, verging on insanity.

### **BIATHLON: A FAMILY TRADITION**

He just had to become a biathlete – it was pretty much inevitable, since his dad Eberhard had been a successful biathlete in East Germany, a silver medallist at Lake Placid in the 20 km and the relay, and a multiple world champion. That's how Ebbs Junior started biathlon, at the age of nine. It got off to a good start: after four Junior World Champion titles, he scored his first World Cup points at the World Cup Finale at Fort Kent, followed by his first podium placing in Osrblie (Slovakia) just 1.5 years later. His potential was visible from the very first competitions, but he did not get too worried about it. Nonchalance was his strength, especially at the shooting range. In terms of shooting speed, he was ahead of his time. He was also a really likeable guy. His fans loved him from the very beginning: even at the beginning of his career he dared to take on the best of the best. In Ruhpolding for instance, before the Olympic Games in Turin, he initially lost the sprint against Norway's Frode Andresen by a narrow margin, then just one day later he gave the top Frenchman at the time, Raphael Poiree, a real run for his money on the home straight. It was a true photo finish. Michael Rösch



was the new favorite, not least because he was different. Young, fresh, cheeky, brash, unconventional, open, honest: he did not really fit the mould of the German national coach at the time, Frank Ulrich, who tended to pick athletes of a more obedient nature, but Ulrich could not ignore Rösch. Calls were heard for Rösch to be put on the Olympic team for Turin, but at the time it was a brave move by Ulrich to actually include him. Osrbliie and Ruhpolding, they were one thing – but would the youngster manage to withstand the pressure at the Olympics? For Rösch at the time, the biathlon stadium at San Suario was probably no more than an oversized adventure playground: he approached it without a care in the world, hit all ten targets without a second's hesitation, and even had the second best time of all the competitors after Ole Einar Björndalen. He won gold along with Ricco Gross, Sven Fischer and Michael Greis. Was that the beginning of the early demise? Is the German saying really true, that speedy success kills its own kind?

### **FROM THE OLYMPICS TO THE ALPINE CUP**


In hindsight, "A lot of things were less than perfect," says Rösch today. This is an exaggerated euphemism for the many lost years dominated by chaos. Rösch lost his foothold and failed – both due to his own inflated expectations and, to some extent, also to public pressure. In the years following his Olympic victory, the press wrote repeatedly that he was the new biathlon prince par excellence, the veritable successor of that golden generation of Fischer,

Gross, Luck and Sendel; a child prodigy. Trigger-happy at the shooting range, quick on the course. But suddenly, his ease of hand grew heavy as lead – and with each disappointing result came the rigidity, the uncertainty, and those previously so promising income streams started to dry up. A large mortgage devoured his few remaining revenues. In retrospect, Rösch says that this was a mistake. "It was more work than I had ever imagined." The Olympic champion was demoted, first losing his starting place on the World Cup team and then even in the IBU Cup. They sent him the Alpine Cup, the nadir of his fall from grace. He learned of his ousting on the Internet. The German Ski Association's handling of the Rösch situation was also very unfortunate. 2012 was the final straw in their disagreement, and Rösch threw in the towel. Completely – his entire life until that time. He even gave up his stable permanent position at the federal police, and chose to change countries and start for Belgium. "They make the best fries, the best chocolate and the best beer," was his half-serious explanation – a statement typical of Michael Rösch, who has always been good for a snappy one-liner.

### **INTERMINABLE SUFFERING**

What followed was a period of suffering, in every respect. He went in search of training partners in Norway, where he did manage to find a few sympathisers. The team called itself 'Feskslog' (Norwegian dialect for 'fish guts') – Rösch could never resist a hint of sarcasm. He kept it up, slogging away on his own, sometimes refusing to accept reality. He went in search of sponsors – often in vain – and frequently had no idea how he was going to make it through the season financially. Then his permit to change to Belgium came so late that he had to give up his dream, which had been keeping



**RÖSCH Michael** 

**GENDER** Male  
**DATE OF BIRTH** 04.05.1983  
**RESIDENCE** Zinnwald (GER)  
**PROFESSION** Police Officer/  
 Athlete  
**HOBBIES** Snooker, Kart, Soccer

**BIATHLON SINCE** 1991  
**TRAINER** Peter THOMÉ  
**SKIS** Fischer  
**RIFLE** Anschütz

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	IN	SP	PU	MS	RL	MR
2007		18.	10.	23.	3.	
2008	25.	5.	7.	28.	3.	
2009	18.	14.	9.	5.	3.	
2015	13.	22.	23.	26.		
2016	45.	80.			24.	

**YOUTH/JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

	IN	SP	PU	RL
2001		9.J	8.J	1.J
2002	2.J	24.J	4.J	1.J
2003	33.J	1.J	8.J	2.J
2004	9.J	2.J	2.J	1.J

**WORLD CUP TOTAL**

03/04	51.	04/05	49.	05/06	5.
06/07	11.	07/08	11.	08/09	16.
09/10	76.	11/12	50.	14/15	50.
16/17	23.*				

**TOP RESULTS BY COMPETITION**

	IN	SP	PU	MS
1.		1	1	
2.		5		
3.	1		1	

**TOP RESULTS**

- 06/07 SP Khanty-Mansiysk
- 05/06 PU Ruhpolding
- 08/09 SP Oberhof
- 07/08 SP Oslo Holmenkollen
- 06/07 SP Hochfilzen
- 05/06 SP Ruhpolding
- 05/06 SP Brezno-Osrbie
- 05/06 PU Brezno-Osrbie
- 05/06 IN Brezno-Osrbie

\*Standings after 15 of 26 competitions (January 23rd, 2017)

him afloat, of competing at the Sochi Winter Olympics. And as if that were not enough, a bout of glandular fever gave him a hard knock, followed by a rather stubborn hamstring injury to boot. But give up? In Altenberg they make them stubborn: persevering fighter-types, grounded, down-to-earth. Their motto: there are no problems, just solutions. "I had to give up so much. Plenty of people gave me the finger, turned their backs on me. I gave my sport absolutely everything I have," says Rösch, admitting self-critically: "And I also made a lot of mistakes." To cover the costs, he even sold his house in the end, moving back in with his parents, who had been his constant support throughout all the difficult years.

### COSY ON THE SWISS TEAM

The new Rösch not only sports a beard bushy enough to make any lumberjack envious, but has also found a new sporting home without having to change nationalities again. During the 2016 World Championships in Oslo, the Belgian Biathlon Association and the Swiss Ski Federation hatched the Rösch plan.

take: "He contributes enormously, and he really pushes the boys too," Jörn Wollschläger tells us. Rösch is also an important adhesive in the social structure of the team. "Michael is always in a good mood," says Wollschläger. Michael Rösch appears to have finally made it, and this feeling of optimism seems to be improving his performance. His sixth place in the Slovenian venue of Pokljuka after faultless shooting was the emotional climax of years of battling against the clock and a thousand unfortunate coincidences. "As I was approaching the finish, I kept thinking of Klaus," said Rösch, not ashamed to show his tears. Klaus Siebert - Rösch's long-term mentor - had bravely fought a protracted battle against cancer, a battle he lost last year. Michael Rösch dedicated this sixth place

Since then, the lone wolf has become a true team player - in the truest sense of the word. Where in the past he had to organise everything himself (equipment, accommodation, physiotherapy, training, etc.) he can now avail himself of the resources and expertise of the Swiss team. "He has become one of us," says Benjamin Weger, with whom he often shares a hotel room during the World Cup. It is a give and

- which felt like a win, or even a rebirth - to Klaus Siebert.

### REBORN WITH A BEARD

Now, at age 33, Rösch is starting life all over again. He is back to getting positive press, he is enjoying his newfound reputation, and he is back in the game. "I fought so long and hard for this, and am so glad to be back." Then Rösch adds a touching sentence, hinting at the true motivation behind his come-back: "I really love this sport," he says. He is at peace with himself, and is not resentful - he's no longer his own worst enemy, nor is he angry at those who he perhaps



might have wanted to have supported him more in his darkest hours. There are further challenges ahead: the Olympics next year in particular are his biggest priority. And after that? Who knows? Anything might happen. He might indeed keep training with the Swiss team – at least long enough to determine once and for all whether it is Benjamin Weger or Michael Rösch who has the nicest, bushiest beard. The Valais native is still leading, but Rösch is fighting hard at his heels: like the warrior he is. **I**

**TEXT** Siegi Heinrich

**PICTURES** Christian Manzoni



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# ANAIS CHEVALIER

## HARD WORK, SACRIFICE, AND A

# WORLD CUP WIN!

### FEELING PERFECT!

Now she is back at age 23, with a World Cup victory to her name, plus two second places and ninth in the World Cup Total Score this season. Her story has been a bit of a wild and sometimes painful discouraging ride, but now Chevalier is a happy lady! "At this stage of the season, I am feeling perfect; I am very happy about what I accomplished. Still, I am hoping to do better in the rest of the season."

### RELUCTANT CROSS-COUNTRY SKIER

Winter sports, like Alpine skiing have always been a part of her life, but biathlon was never even a thought until age 13. I have always loved being in the mountains; skiing was my first sport. I actually first tried cross-country at school and did not like it at first because it was for old people! But finally I won some races and then I liked it!"

Anais Chevalier was a bit of a wunderkind, jumping from Junior Open European Champion in the 2012-13 season to the World Cup and the Sochi Olympic Winter Games the next year at the age of 20. Just as quickly, she disappeared from the "big stage," the World Cup circuit.

Biathlon popped up when she went to the sports high school in Villard de Lans; the school with such famous alumni as Martin and Simon Fourcade and Marie Dorin Habert.

### ALWAYS A GOOD SHOT

For Chevalier, biathlon was not exactly and easy fit; she was good at one half, not the other. She recalled her first competition. "In my first race, I shot clean but was not very fast on the skis. That was usually what happened in my early days; shoot good but not fast on the skis. I think that may still be the case sometimes. I have always been a good shooter, but skiing was the problem then." With a successful season so far, she added, "But now, I think they are closer to equal."

### SOCHI

Her youth/junior career flew by with a nice collection of medals from four IBU YJWCH and IBU OECH. Then she got the call up to the World Cup where she became a reliable member of the French relay team. "I really was not surprised to jump to the World Cup, because we had a very strong French team. Still, it was a big surprise to be in the Olympic Games. I really did not expect that; but I am very happy I did that. It was very good to get





that experience. I think it will be a big help for the next Olympics."

## THEN... AN INJURY

Although she did not win a medal of make any big splashes that Olympic season, the young sharpshooter demonstrated her shooting skills, with a single penalty in both the sprint and pursuit. Those results made Chevalier think of bigger things and better results, so she went into the training season pushing from Day 1. "After Sochi, I was really motivated to improve, but after the Olympics I started to train too fast and too hard and developed a back problem." That problem lingered and after a futile start to the next World Cup season, she found herself on the IBU Cup circuit in January 2015. The IBU Cup was her home until January 2016. By then the form had returned; a clean-shooting sprint victory in Nove Mesto was her ticket

and help the French team win the Silver medal. It was an emotional day, after almost two years, "I always trusted in hard work and the hard work finally paid off with that medal. It was a great moment!"

## SUMMER TRAINING WITH MARIE

Being back in the World Cup training group and training with fellow Villard de Lans resident Marie Dorin Habert last summer helped Chevalier immensely. We are lucky to have Marie in our training group; we know she could win every weekend, so training with her was very important for me."

## "HAVE TO DO THE JOB"

The summer training did not pay off until after Pokljuka last December; before that all her results started had two number and started with a 3, 4, or 5. The 54th

place in the Pokljuka sprint made her look deep inside. "I had a very bad race; I was very frustrated. I told myself, 'If you are here in the World Cup; you have to do the job in every race. You have sacrificed so much.'"

## FIRST INDIVIDUAL PODIUM

Those thoughts changed her whole world. The next week in Nove Mesto na Morave: clean-shooting second place in the sprint. On the tracks, she had no idea that a podium was in her immediate future. "On the last loop, I did not know where I was. I knew it was a good place

## CHEVALIER Anais



**GENDER** Female  
**DATE OF BIRTH** 12.02.1993  
**RESIDENCE** Villard De Lans  
**PROFESSION** Custom Officer  
**HOBBIES** Mountains, Traveling, Painting

**BIATHLON SINCE** 2006  
**TRAINER** Jean Paul GIACHINO  
**SKIS** Rossignol  
**RIFLE** Anschütz

### 2016/2017 SEASON

**WORLD CUP TOTAL SCORE** 9.\*  
**SHOOTING STATISTICS** 85%\*

### OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

	IN	SP	PU	MS	RL	MR
2014		47.	44.		DNF	

### WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

	IN	SP	PU	MS	RL	MR
2016	28.	26.	15.	30.	2.	

### YOUTH/JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

	IN	SP	PU	RL
2010	32.Y	DSQ		8.Y
2011	7.Y	2.Y		3.Y
2012	42.J	2.J	12.J	5.J
2013	31.J	4.J	9.J	7.J

### WORLD CUP TOTAL

13/14 48. 15/16 39. 16/17 9.\*

### TOP RESULTS BY COMPETITION

	IN	SP	PU	MS
1.			1	
2.	1	1		

### TOP RESULTS

1. 16/17 PU Nove Mesto
2. 16/17 IN Antholz-Anterselva

16/17 SP Nove Mesto

\*Standings after 15 of 26 competitions (January 23rd, 2017)

## Thoughts from Anais Chevalier

**FAVORITE SUMMER TRAINING:** Go for a Run  
**HOLIDAY AT THE BEACH OR IN THE MOUNTAINS:** Mountains  
**FAVORITE APP ON MY PHONE:** Facebook  
**MY COACHING ADVICE TO ANAIS CHEVALIER:** Go out and Train!  
**FIRST PERSON I CALLED AFTER MY WORLD CUP WIN:** My boyfriend!  
**PAINT A PICTURE OR GO TO A GALLERY:** Paint, of course.  
**EVENING OUT AT A CLUB OR AT HOME:** Stay at Home.  
**WATCH A FILM OR READ A BOOK:** Read the Book.  
**BEST ADVICE FROM MARIE DORIN HABERT:** Have a Baby!

back to the World Cup and the IBU World Championships.

She is philosophical about her long time at the IBU Cup level. "You need to have great races to stay in the World Cup, so I stayed in the IBU Cup and learned a lot. I think that year helps me a lot today."

## TURNING POINT IN OSLO

Oslo was another turning point. Although she could not match some of the top women on the tracks, her shooting was on target with again just single penalties in the sprint and pursuit. In the relay, Chevalier needed just one spare to clean

but I did not know which place. I would find out at the end, so I just skied hard."

## THE LONG-SOUGHT VICTORY

...and then, the next day, one penalty but first-ever World Cup victory in the pursuit!



"I was so happy, because the past two years had been very hard for me; always some questions; my back problem was a very hard situation. I knew I had worked hard to get to this victory; I was so full of emotions."

Ironically, Nove Mesto was the place where she won her first IBU Youth medal with a clean-shooting sprint on January 29, 2011. That medal crossed Chevalier's mind before that the sprint this year. "I am not superstitious but I did think I could get on the podium that day because I love that place!"

### **GOLD MEDAL(S)**

As the IBU World Championships approach, the re-born Anais Chevalier is still perking along: some clean shooting, a couple of single-penalty days, two relay podiums and second in the Antholz 15K. Only one thing left this season that would make her smile more than that first World Cup win. "I think a gold medal in the relay for the team would be very great." An individual Gold medal for this rising star would also probably be "very great." **I**

**TEXT** Jerry Kokesh

**PICTURES** Rene Miko, Christian Manzoni



Martin Fourcade (FRA)

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## PERISCOPE CHAT WITH **DOMINIK**

At every World Cup, the IBU Social Media team selects one athlete for a Periscope interview, allowing fans to pose questions to the athlete. The Antholz interview featured local favorite Dominik Windisch. The team met him at his family home, not far from the Südtirol Arena where they chatted about the Sochi Olympic Winter Games, the upcoming IBU World Championships and some words to live by.



**BW** How are you feeling now after five World Cups, and two podiums in Oberhof?

**DW** I feel really good, but I didn't expect the podium, I was sick at Christmas. I came to Oberhof without any expectations. Maybe it's the best way for things to happen; when you have no expectations, things happen much easier.

**BW** Is your hometown of Antholz also your favorite World Cup venue?

**DW** I don't have a favorite one; each place has something good and bad about it. I really like Nove Mesto, as it's really big and it's fun to run there.

**BW** What is your favorite competition?

**DW** Maybe the mass start, where a lot depends on strategy. You have to find your rhythm and do your own work. One can also say it's easier in the mass start, because you simply don't have time to think about everything. In the individual, for example, you ski alone on your loop, and you have time to think about everything.

## **WINDISCH**

**BW** You had your first World Cup victory in the Canmore mass start last season; what was that like?

**DW** That was incredible; I was not ready for this. I could believe it only a week later; it happened really fast. On the last loop I kept thinking that someone chasing would beat me. It was an intense battle.

**BW** Speaking of memories, what was it like to win that Bronze mixed relay medal in Sochi?

**DW** That medal is the biggest thing that happened to me until now. It was a dream, but I didn't expect a medal at the Olympics, it was my first Olympic Winter Games. At the finish, we were waiting for Lukas who was skiing his last loop; I was so excited. I still remember every second of that day.

**BW** What is on your mind before a competition?

**DW** I try to have my goals, and to make them happen. During the competition, I keep thinking about them. It happens sometimes that even when my competition is not going well, I am still satisfied, since I might have reached my goals.

**BW** Your motto and words to live by is "People who give up are not winners, and winners never give up". Where did that come from?

**DW** When I was young, I was really bad; I was last in every





really warm at the stadium, I forgot my shirt and he let me borrow his!

**BW** How do you feel about upcoming World Championships and the upcoming home WCH at Antholz in 2020?

**DW** I am excited since the WCH are the most important event of the year. Hochfilzen is very close to my home; many members of my family will be there, in-

cluding my parents, which makes it very special.

Having the 2020 IBU World Championships 2020 at home in Antholz, is like a dream-come-true for any athlete. Not every athlete has a home World Championships during their career. **I**

**TEXT** Marina Dmukhovskaya

**PICTURES** Christian Manzoni

competition. One time I received a gift from a girl on my team. Those words, which later became my motto, were written on this gift. From that moment on my results got better.

**BW** Who is your favorite biathlete, not yourself?

**DW** It is my teammate, Thomas Bormolini. We are really good friends. Outside of the Italian athletes, I think Simon Fourcade is a great athlete. One time it was



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**ANTON  
SHIPULIN** *RUS*

*Shipulin's Dragon,  
Boe's Trendy Pink  
and the Gasparin  
Sisters' Charm*

# CREATIVE RIFLE DESIGNS

It's their pride and joy, their best friend, their precious diamond... It's their... rifle! Many biathletes express themselves through their rifles, putting their imagination and creativity into the designs. Biathlonworld took a look at the most creative rifles on the World Cup and IBU Cup tours and here is what we found.

## SHIPULIN'S DRAGON

As the top men approach the shooting range during the pursuit, the camera focuses on Russian star Anton Shipulin's famous dragon. A closer look reveals the dragon's sharp teeth and fearsome flames coming from its mouth. Shipulin shares a story on his rifle: made in Russia.

"Two years ago I had a friend help me with a design for my rifle. She told me you can pick any drawing or object. I didn't have to think long, I had two ideas

in my head: a lion or a dragon, and we opted for the dragon. I like the way my rifle looks, and it has become a talisman for me. The most important thing for me is not how it looks, but how comfortable it is, and my rifle combines the two."

## JOHANNES THINGNES BOE: PINK IS THE NEW BLACK

Another famous design can be found on Johannes Thingnes Boe's rifle. To be more precise, its outrageously, eye-catching pink color! The Norwegian star also sets the trend for other athletes: a bi-



**JOHANNES  
THINGNES BØ** *NOR*

athlete from Korea, Kim Jongmin, painted his rifle pink just to look and shoot like Johannes!

Boe explained the choice of color for his rifle "Last year my rifle was all pink. Before the season I got a new rifle stock, and I didn't have the time to design it, so it's pink in some places and the rest is standard. I tried pink because it was something new, and I hadn't seen anything like it before. Next season I will choose another color. Maybe if people send me some drawings and I like some of them, I might pick one of them."

Boe said that he's happy to hear that his rifle is trendy this season, "It's cool to be someone who guys from the smaller nations follow."



**QUENTIN FILLON MAILLET FRA**

### **QUENTIN FILLON MAILLET: SELF-MADE**

The uniqueness of Fillon Maillet's rifle is not its design, but rather the fact that the Frenchman is all three: constructor, designer and user of his rifle! It's a time-consuming hobby and took this rising star six months on his computer. He talked about the process,

"I never stop looking for new ideas and solutions to shoot better. Nobody can know better than you yourself, what rifles suits you best. Last spring I also worked on a design for my rifle: I tried to incorporate a mirror on my rifle, but I couldn't find a solution for it. Perhaps next year I will work more on the design before the Olympics."



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**SELINA  
GASPARIN SUI**

### PATRIOTIC SLEPOV

Russia's Alexey Slepov is a very funny and positive person. He's always in a good mood with a smile on his face, but when it comes to the competitions, he's concentrated and serious, admitting, "It's better to work on yourself first and then

on some sort of design." After last season Slepov changed his rifle stock and had a Russian flag painted on it. However, he wasn't the



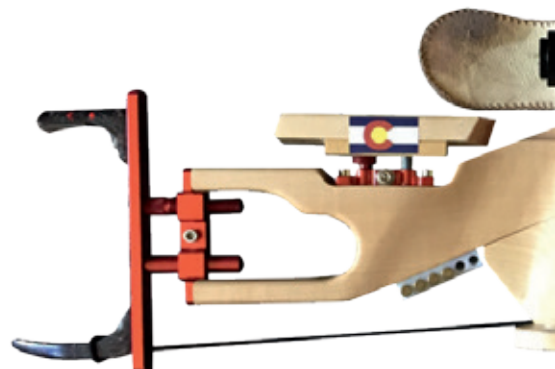
**ALEXEY  
SLEPOV RUS**

### THE GASPARIN SISTERS' CHARM

Selina, Elisa and Aita Gasparin are not only a unique trio in biathlon as three sisters competing in the same sport, but also have special rifle stocks. Aita, the youngest, was the one who came up with the idea to put drawings on them, "We did it in summer 2015. I had a crowd funding project on the internet and lots of people sent me money so that I could get a new rifle. After that I came up with the idea for the paintings." The main thing was to choose the design, because the sisters already knew who would be the painter. "We got to know an artist from Switzerland, who usually designs masks for ice hockey players. His paintings are really great, so we thought maybe it would be cool to have such nice drawings on our rifles. In the beginning it was really hard to choose just one picture, but then I decided to have the face of a snow leopard. I really like animals, and the snow leopard is really strong and fast, and it's also very elegant."

Aita also told us about the designs on her sisters' rifle stocks. "Elisa has a painting of the mountains in the place where we were born with blue skies and snow. It's a real biathlon picture." Selina, the oldest sister, asked the fans to help her with her drawing, "She had some kind of a competition on the internet, where people sent her suggestions of what to do. In the end, she chose the best one and it was a piece of wood on fire."

one who chose the design, "My personal coach has made this amazing rifle for me. It was originally only black and I trained with it for about two months. I actually wanted to leave the rifle as just black, but my coach said, "If you compete for Russia, you have to have the national flag," so he painted it for me and I really like it!"





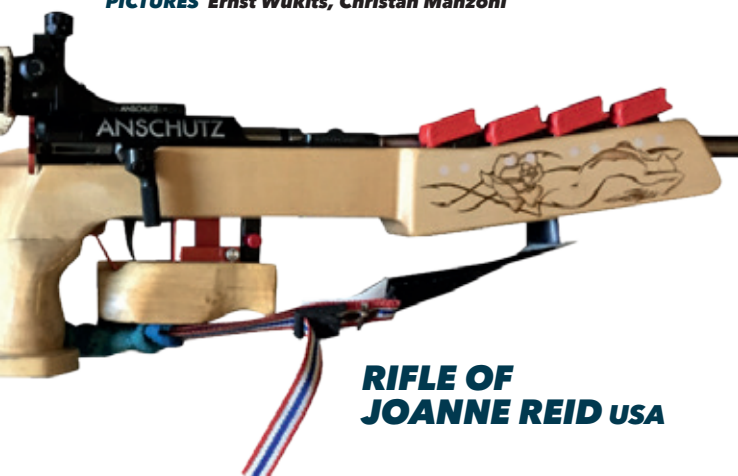
**AITA  
GASPARIN sui**

## LADY FORTUNE ON JOANNE REID'S RIFLE

USA's Joanne Reid believes that luck is an integral part of biathlon; this belief is reflected in her rifle. She explained, "The lady on the front of my rifle is the Lady Fortune - the mistress of biathlon. In a sport full of ups and downs, dependent on both skill and luck, chance is a part of our lives. Without Fortune's favor, we cannot succeed, and she is a fickle mistress indeed. But remember, Fortune favors the bold! This representation of her I found beautiful, wild, and free, and yet tasteful at the same time. **I**

**TEXT** Marina Dmukhovskaya, Maria Osolodkina

**PICTURES** Ernst Wukits, Christian Manzoni



**RIFLE OF  
JOANNE REID USA**

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## Canadian Touch in Bavarian Cuisine

# COOKING MASTER CLASS IN RUHPOLDING

What happens if you take the Canadian women's relay team to the kitchen of a top Bavarian chef and try to recreate local specialties? Having attended the master class and even tasted a bite created by the duet, Biathlonworld can reveal that the outcome is... simply delicious!



It all started from Canadian head coach Matthias Ahrens' special connection to Ruhpolding, and his friendship to Johann Herrler, the local celebrity chef. During the BMW IBU World Cup in Ruhpolding, Herrler was responsible for the kitchen of the Biathlon Family Club, making sure that all the biathletes were well-fed and happy.

### FAR AWAY FROM HOME

Traditionally, Team Canada stays in an apartment complex, which offers the at-

mosphere of a home away from their native North American home. On the other hand, living in an apartment also means more cooking and the need for recipe ideas.

Rosanna Crawford commented, "When you're on the road, you get tired of the hotel food, and in Ruhpolding it's a real treat to be able to cook for ourselves. Julia (Ransom) chatted with a chef last year, and she jokingly asked him if we could have a cooking class and





he said yes!"The team learned a lot during the two several-hour 'classes', "Last year we made five different dishes. My favorite was salmon cooked at a temperature of 50°C. It was the best salmon I ever tasted. Another trick Chef Herrler taught us was to

***"I like cooking for myself and for others, so when I get to cook for all the girls, it's always great."***

Julia Ransom - CAN

cook your vegetables separately, and add them at the end to preserve the taste."

This January the cooking 'class' focused on desserts: the team made typical Bavarian Kaiserschmarrn, shredded pancake, and jam-filled sweet rolls made of yeast dough: Rohrnudel.

### CHEF RANSOM

When asked, who the head chef in the Canadian apartment was, all the women immediately pointed at Julia Ransom. Smiling, she said, "I like cooking for myself and for others, so when I get to cook for all the girls, it's always great."

Chef Herrler was also very satisfied with the result, "The girls on the team are really good cooks, I could offer them a job in the kitchen when they end their biathlon careers." His friend Matthias Ahrens agrees, "Maybe one day Team Canada could publish a cooking book!" **I**

**TEXT** Marina Dmukhovskaya

**PICTURES** Ernst Wukits



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## IBU on Social Media: **THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION**

The world of sport is more and more deeply connected to these technologies and this is why 2016 marked a big step in this direction from the Biathlon World. The whole point of "going social" isn't to do it for its own sake, though, but to provide the public exclusive contents

and bring the sport to a new life: in the past few months you might have noticed an increased activity on the social media channels we had before, but also the birth of a few more and with this article we want to guide you through them and give you some reasons to follow them.

### DIFFERENT IDENTITY

Each of the channels we created has a different identity in order to satisfy the needs of the different followers of our platforms, so our Facebook focuses on post-competition, while Twitter emphasises on almost-live action and commentary; Youtube is the place for video contents, interviews and previews, while Snapchat meets the need for a quirky and fun platform for the younger audience; Instagram is the main place for

Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, Snapchat... most people nowadays are familiar with several if not all these apps, while many more enter our lives constantly in an age of digital revolution.

great pictures, while the new feature of Instagram-stories is a great opportunity for behind the scenes looks on the world of biathlon.

### RESTYLED TWITTER

Twitter, especially, has gone through a great restyling, with a differentiation of the channels to make it easier for fans to find and keep track of the contents produced from the different leagues: BMW IBU World Cup, IBU Cup and IBU Junior Cup. The three channels serve as spin-offs from the main account, IBU Biathlon-world, where the most relevant contents are then reposted and where all institutional messages are shared. Each of these channels does not only provide different contents, but has a different identity, tone and target:

- **IBU\_WC focuses on the action of the main circuit** and aims to provide a great second screen experience for biathlon enthusiasts with live moments from competitions, including highlights and behind the scene looks.
- **IBU\_Cup** is the place for the ones who want to see **who is coming next to the big tour**: the activity is smaller than the World Cup account, but it looks for more insights and a different kind of approach to athletes and the sport.
- **IBU\_Junior** is **where one can discover the champions of tomorrow**, but it is also a place for youngsters to find their language and style merged with biathlon. It is a fresh, funny and never-banal account, even though the main platform for this series remains Snapchat.



The channels do not act as a different heads on the same body, but aim to collaborate for the growth of the sport, involving fans in activities that connect the different leagues and different athletes. It is the spirit of what we call "biathlon family", a very strong connection between people who share the love for the sport, and through different ways even the activity on social wants to strengthen this connection. The clearest example was the successful campaign #adventcalendar as throughout the 25 days ahead of Christmas, we produced exclusive contents of various kind from all competitions, creating a very biathlon countdown. The result was a series of short clips on festive (and non) topics which led to the grand-finale where we had different teams singing a famous Christmas tune and then seasons greetings in most languages present in biathlon.

### GOING LIVE: PERISCOPE

But why following all of these social media channels and not only watching the sport on TV and checking the website?

The answer is easy: there are some exclusive contents and some possibilities that more conventional and traditional forms don't allow. Above all, the possibility to interact with us and with the athletes. This is especially true this year thanks to Periscope and the choice to broadcast live. We created three regular fixtures in our weekly schedule: one

athlete before the start of the World Cup competitions' week, once per event with an athlete on the podium and every Monday with our reporters for a "biathlon breakfast". Those three appointments allow fans to ask questions to their idols and to our experts, bringing them closer to the athletes and the sport. How often does one get the chance to ask a question to Martin Fourcade? Thanks to these live interviews, biathlon lovers can do it and discover more about athletes they

might have only known because of their sports skills.

Another good reason is that through our social media channels we try and engage with fans, being very open to requests and suggestions, with local organizing committees and of course with athletes. More and more often, we are allowing our stars to show their lives and their daily routine to fans from everywhere in the world through takeovers: during these days, an athlete is given ac-

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cess to one of our social media platforms and is given the freedom to express himself, show the team's life and what it is like to live on the tour.

## SOCIAL WALL AND HASHTAGS

Restyled accounts and changes on all IBU platforms are reflected in the new biathlonworld.com website, launched in September last year. Scrolling down the homepage, you can see Social Wall: the most interesting posts from athletes and fans on their social accounts. To target the most relevant posts and to create a sense of community for each event, IBU Social Media team came up with hashtags for each event.

Here are the hashtags for the upcoming events:

- IBU World Championships Biathlon  
#HOCHFILZEN2017
- BMW IBU World Cup 7  
#PYC17
- BMW IBU World Cup 8  
#KON17
- BMW IBU World Cup 9  
#HOL17

So what's next? We may not know for sure what the next step will be in the world of social media, but our best effort is to give a 360° view around biathlon, keeping up with new technologies to please our fans and charm more and more people with the sport we love the most. **I**

**TEXT** Giulio Gasparin

**PICTURES** IBU Social Media



## FOLLOW IBU ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- f** **BIATHLONWORLD**
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- YouTube** **IBU TV**
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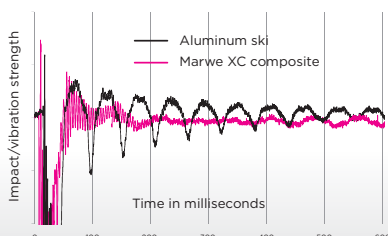
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# BUILDING BIG BIATHLON MOMENTS

Infront Sports & Media wishes all fans, athletes and commercial partners an exciting 2016/17 BMW IBU World Cup Biathlon.

Since 1992, Infront has shared a fruitful working relationship with the International Biathlon Union (IBU) and the national federations hosting IBU World Cup events. As marketing partner, it has helped develop biathlon from a niche sport into one of the most popular winter sports around and will further enhance its premium value and commercial strength in the future. The successful partnership has been extended until 2018.

Infront is one of the leading sports marketing companies in the world and enjoys long-lasting partnerships with 170 rights holders and hundreds of sponsors and media companies.

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## IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF BIATHLON WORLD MAGAZINE:

### HOT TOPIC

- **IBU WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS BIATHLON 2017**  
HOCHFILZEN - AUT

### EVENTS

- **BMW IBU WORLD CUP BIATHLON**  
PYEONGCHANG - KOR, KONTIOLAHTI - FIN,  
OSLO-HOLMENKOLLEN - NOR
- **IBU CUP BIATHLON**  
BREZNO-OSRBLIE - SVK, KONTIOLAHTI - FIN,  
OTEPÄÄ - EST
- **IBU JUNIOR CUP BIATHLON**  
POKLJUKA - SLO, NOVÉ MĚSTO NM - CZE
- **IBU YJWCH BIATHLON 2017**  
BREZNO-OSRBLIE - SVK

**The next issue of Biathlon World Magazine is  
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