



THE WORLD OF BIATHLON | PERSONALITIES | EVENTS | RESULTS

BIATHLON WORLD



LOWELL BAILEY

TWO LIVES, ONE TARGET

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR:
**HANNAH OEBERG AND
SEBASTIAN SAMUELSSON**

IBU WCH BIATHLON HOCHFILZEN 2017
**BRILLIANT SUNSHINE AND
GLEAMING GOLD MEDALS**



**MARTIN'S SWEEP,
LAURA'S TRIPLE AND TWO
GLOBES FOR GABI**

TOPPING OFF THE SEASON WITH CRYSTAL

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Dear Biathlonworld Reader,

You are holding an issue dedicated to the last trimester of the 2016/17 season. The season finale showed once again why so many people are crazy about our sport. Biathlon drama and thrillers, pushing limits and achieving perfection, never giving up even when chances for the win are small-- this all draws the public to TV screens. We can learn what biathlon is about just by watching the individual competition of the IBU World Championships in Hochfilzen, when Lowell Bailey wrote a new chapter in biathlon history by becoming the first American World Champion. In this issue you will find a fea-

ture on Bailey's life and his long and difficult path to this precious medal.

A biathlete success story starts in early childhood, back when biathletes' parents bought them their first skis. An article on biathletes' first skis tells the story of how they got into biathlon. Another moment for any athlete to remember is his or her debut at the World Cup. Read an interview with Swedish biathletes Hanna Oeberg and Sebastian Samuelsson after they received the prestigious IBU award "Rookie of the Year."

Another cherished award for a biathlete is the Big Crystal Globe. This year saw

tremendous success for Martin Fourcade and Laura Dahlmeier; the story on Globes explains their evolving success and the key to their domination throughout the 2016/17 season.

Biathlon would not be so fascinating without our fans. This year, the IBU ran a fan contest at the World Championships in Hochfilzen. Check out the creative posts from our fans confessing their love for biathlon in the Fans Zone.

We hope you will enjoy the exciting stories about our sport. Have a fun read!

Your Biathlonworld team



Editorial

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SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 (PART 1)

PORTILLO CHI

03.08. - 08.08.2017

03.08. - 08.08.2017

SPRINT MEN
SPRINT WOMEN
MASS START MEN
MASS START WOMEN

SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 (PART 2)

BARILOCHE ARG

22.08. - 25.08.2017

22.08. - 25.08.2017

SPRINT MEN
SPRINT WOMEN
PURSUIT MEN
PURSUIT WOMEN
MASS START MEN
MASS START WOMEN

IBU SUMMER BIATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017

CHAYKOVSKIY RUS

23.08. - 27.08.2017

FRIDAY

25.08.2017

MIXED RELAY JUN. MEN / JUN. WOMEN
MIXED RELAY MEN / WOMEN

SATURDAY

26.08.2017

SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN
SPRINT JUNIOR MEN
SPRINT WOMEN
SPRINT MEN

SUNDAY

27.08.2017

PURSUIT JUNIOR WOMEN
PURSUIT JUNIOR MEN
PURSUIT WOMEN
PURSUIT MEN

Technical Delegate

Kristian OJA

IBU Referees

Robert ZWAHLEN or Lachezar ILIEV,
Matej KORDEZ





February 2017 was all about the highlight of the season. After the big city flair of last year's IBU World Championships in Oslo, the biggest event of the year returned to the Alpine idyll of Hochfilzen for the third time.

BRILLIANT SUNSHINE

AND GLEAMING GOLD MEDALS IN HOCHFILZEN



The over 250 athletes arriving in the Pillerseetal valley were greeted by the familiar view of cloud of smoke billowing up over Mount Schornstein (Schornstein: chimney in German) and ideal winter conditions with plenty of snow and brilliant sunshine.

Nestled in this spectacular backdrop was the superbly reimagined and easily accessible Hochfilzen stadium, after a three-year makeover, with its shooting

range, finish line, mixed zone and press center all just a few meter's apart, garlanded by enthusiastic spectators.

FIRST GOLD MEDAL TO GERMANY

After Tuesday and Wednesday's training days, to get reacquainted with the sometimes tricky shooting range and the redesigned courses, the athletes were ea-

MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 x 7.5 km

1. GERMANY	GER	0+7	1:09:06.4	0.0
HINZ Vanessa, DAHLMEIER Laura, PEIFFER Arnd, SCHEMP Simon				
2. FRANCE	FRA	1+8	1:09:08.6	+2.2
CHEVALIER Anaïs, DORIN HABERT Marie, FILLON MAILLET Quentin, FOURCADE Martin				
3. RUSSIA	RUS	0+4	1:09:09.6	+3.2
PODCHUFAROVA Olga, AKIMOVA Tatiana, LOGINOV Alexander, SHIPULIN Anton				
4. ITALY	ITA	0+6	1:09:35.1	+28.7
VITTOZZI Lisa, WIERER Dorothea, HOFER Lukas, WINDISCH Dominik				
5. UKRAINE	UKR	0+8	1:09:42.0	+35.6
PIDHRUSHNA Olena, DZHIMA Yuliia, SEMENOV Sergey, PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro				

ger for the competitions to start. The long-awaited fight for the medals commenced on Thursday, with Germany grabbing the mixed relay Gold medal in a heart-stopping race to the finish line. Vanessa Hinz, Laura Dahlmeier and Arnd Peiffer gave Simon Schempp a lead before his leg. However there was little he could do to stop Martin Fourcade and Anton Shipulin drawing relentlessly closer in the last loop. The French team of Fourcade, Anaïs Chevalier, Marie Dorin-Habert and Quentin Fillon Maillet missed the Gold medal by just 2.2 seconds. The Russian team of Shipulin, Olga Podchufarova, Tatiana Akimova and Alexander Loginov claimed the Bronze medal, just 3.2 seconds back.

NAIL-BITING SPRINTS

The next day, Gabriela Koukalová reaped the fruit of her hard work, adding the first individual Gold medal of her career. Dahlmeier battled valiantly, adding to her string of medals, coming in four seconds behind her long time Czech rival. Chevalier also continued her string of podium finishes. Like the other two, the French athlete shot clean, pushing Lisa Vittozzi down to fourth place by the phenomenally narrow margin of .2 seconds. The choice of start groups affected the results. The French team chose early groups, with Germany putting Dahlmeier mid-field, but it was late starter number 96 Koukalová who would decide the final results, guaranteeing excitement until the very end.

SURPRISING BENEDIKT DOLL

The excitement continued in the dramatic men's sprint the following day.



(top) Start Mixed Relay (below) Schempp anchors Germany to win in mixed relay

**Arnd Peiffer and Laura Dahlmeier - GER**

While Martin Fourcade opted for the first start group, the Norwegian team chose the last, hoping the course would get

Johannes Thingnes Boe - NOR

faster in the late afternoon. Despite a superb performance on the tracks, the 28-year-old French favorite, with a penalty in both prone and standing left the door open for the rest of the field. Initially, it was unclear who would top the leader in the World Cup Total Score, until Benedikt Doll's flawless shooting put him atop the leader board. The German had skied fast all season, but was frequently plagued by few pesky standing targets that never seemed to close. Finally, in the biggest competition of the season, all ten turned white. Doll picked up speed in the last loop finishing with 23 second lead. However, he

and the crowd again had to wait with baited breath for bib number 96, the equally speedy and sure-shooting Johannes Thingnes Boe. The Norwegian missed the top spot by just .7 seconds, ceding his 2016 title of World Champion to the unheralded Doll.

DAHLMEIER, FOURCADE DEFEND PURSUIT TITLES

Pursuit competitions ended the first week, with both 2016 IBU World Champions Dahlmeier and Fourcade defending their titles. After a first prone stage penalty, Dahlmeier was flawless while putting in a superior skiing performance to grab her second Gold medal. The pursuit proved to be a rollercoaster of emotions for Koukalová. After problems during zero-





Benedikt Doll - GER

ing, the Sprint World Champion, despite three penalties and lost time at the range won the Bronze medal. The surprise of

the day came from Darya Domracheva who jumped from 27th in the sprint to the Silver medal, less than five months after the birth of her daughter Xenia.

WCH MEDAL NUMBER 45 FOR OLE

Like Dahlmeier, Sprint Bronze medalist Fourcade had a single penalty in his Gold medal effort that left his Norwegian rivals

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 KM					
1. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0	0	19:12.6	0.0
2. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0	0	19:16.6	+4.0
3. CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+0	0	19:37.7	+25.1
4. VITTOZZI Lisa	ITA	0+0	0	19:37.9	+25.3
5. SANFILIPPO Federica	ITA	0+0	0	19:44.5	+31.9
6. HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+0	0	19:50.5	+37.9
7. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0	1	19:55.4	+42.8
8. KUZMINA Anastasiya	SVK	0+1	1	19:56.6	+44.0
9. AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+1	1	20:06.5	+53.9
10. MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya	UKR	0+0	0	20:07.9	+55.3

SPRINT MEN 10 KM					
1. DOLL Benedikt	GER	0+0	0	23:27.4	0.0
2. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0	0	23:28.1	+0.7
3. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	1+1	2	23:50.5	+23.1
4. BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0	0	23:56.9	+29.5
5. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+1	1	23:58.1	+30.7
6. ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+0	0	24:00.9	+33.5
7. EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1+1	2	24:02.7	+35.3
8. BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+1	1	24:05.8	+38.4
9. SCHEMPP Simon	GER	1+0	1	24:07.4	+40.0
10. GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	1+0	1	24:12.5	+45.1

Gabriela Koukalova - CZE





Martin Fourcade - FRA

battling for Silver and Bronze. Boe matched his sprint result with another Silver medal despite three penalty loops, but with an impressive performance on the tracks. Ole Einar Björndalen was again in top form for the highlight of the season, winning the Bronze, his 45th WCH medal, and rounding out a perfect Sunday for the Domracheva/Björndalen family.

The evening medals ceremony at the Medals Plaza closed the weekend, with the champagne flowing, as the winners showered each other and the fans instead of drinking the sparkling wine. Following the impressive conclusion to the first week, Monday and Tuesday were off days, for recovery classic skiing and light training in the fantastic winter conditions.

DAHLMEIER DOMINATES: BAILEY'S BREAKTHROUGH

The women's 15K and men's 20K individual were next on the program. Hochfilzen was again spectacularly sunny, again making start group choice extremely important, as it had been in the sprint. How warm would it get and would the tracks get faster were the key questions to which each nation had a



GABRIELA KOUKALOVA [CZE]

**3 MEDALS @
BIATHLON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
HOCHFILZEN 2017**

GOLD @ SPRINT / SILVER @ INDIVIDUAL / BRONZE @ PURSUIT

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different answer. This time, Dahlmeier decided in favor of a late start and number 93, while Koukalová started mid-field with number 51. The long-time rivals each had two penalties, but this time it was the 23-year old German who managed to 'go the extra mile', securing her third Gold medal in four competitions. Koukalová won the Silver medal adding to her string of precious metal, while South Tyrolean Alexia Runggaldier, proving her Antholz third place was not a fluke, shot clean to quench the Italian team's thirst a WCH medal.

FIRST-EVER GOLD MEDAL FOR USA

Fourcade started the 20K once again sporting number four as in the sprint, had a penalty in each of the prone stages to take the early lead. That is until number

51 Ondrej Moravec, with the same number as Koukalová shot clean to pull into pole position 18 seconds ahead of Fourcade. The 32-year-old Moravec was almost assured a medal.

Boe and Lowell Bailey both looked like potential Gold medalists, until Boe missed a target in his speedy final standing stage. Bailey, on the other hand, shot clean, and tenaciously fought his to the top, second by second, in dramatic pursuit of Moravec. Battling fatigue he powered up the final hills and the uphill finish straight to settle the match, a sensational 3.4 seconds ahead

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 KM

1.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	1+0+0+0	1	28:02.3 60
2.	DOMRACHEVA Darya	BLR	0+0+0+0	0	+11.6 54
3.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	2+0+1+0	3	+16.6 48
4.	STARYKH Irina	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+35.9 43
5.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	0+1+0+0	1	+36.1 40
6.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+2+0	3	+36.3 38
7.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+0+1	1	+37.2 36
8.	MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya	UKR	0+0+0+0	0	+48.5 34
9.	AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+1+0+1	2	+57.7 32
10.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	1+0+2+0	3	+1:02.9

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 KM

1.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	30:16.9 60
2.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	1+1+1+0	3	+22.8 54
3.	BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	+25.6 48
4.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	+33.6 43
5.	MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0+1+1	2	+34.0 40
6.	BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0+1+0	1	+34.7 38
7.	ANEV Krasimir	BUL	0+0+0+1	1	+38.3 36
8.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1+1+0+1	3	+48.1 34
9.	BOE Tarjei	NOR	1+0+0+1	2	+52.3 32
10.	SCHEMPF Simon	GER	0+0+2+1	3	+52.4

of the field. The US team's joy at that moment was boundless; they had been working decades for this moment. De-



Ondrej Moravec - CZE

**Alexia Runggaldier - ITA**

spite a season of convincing top 15 performances, few expected this outcome. Bailey had won the first-ever IBU World Championship Gold medal for the USA

RELAYS BATTLE CHANGEABLE WEATHER

Just a day after double-digit temperatures in the men's 20K, the women dealt with a completely different situation; sleet, snow and difficult shooting conditions resulted in a turbulent relay filled with spare rounds and ever-changing leaders. With Maren Hammerschmidt and Celia Aymonier getting through their legs without a penalty loop, Germany and France seemed likely to win medals. German anchor Dahlmeier took over from Franziska Hildebrand with an ample lead and even with three spare rounds, claimed another Gold medal, giving the Ger-

man women a sweep of the season's relay competitions. This left France, Ukraine and the Czech Republic struggling in their wake in the battle for the remaining medals. Ukraine's Olga Pidhrushna secured the Silver medal for her overjoyed team of Iryna Varvynets, Juliya Dzhyrna and Anastasia Merkushyna, in a the last hundred meters the French team of Chevalier, Aymonier, Justine Braisaz and Marie Dorin Habert in the Bronze spot.

RUSSIAN RELAY GOLD

The snow and sleet let diminished on Saturday, leaving fantastic weather for the men's relay and Russia's Gold medal performance. Shipulin had a mixed relay Bronze medal and had been close to the podium in several competitions, but beyond that, the Russian team was empty-handed. However, the penultimate day of the IBU WCH was

INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 KM

1. DAHLEMEIER Laura	GER	1+0+0+0	1	41:30.1	0.0
2. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	1+0+0+0	1	41:54.8	+24.7
3. RUNGGALDIER Alexia	ITA	0+0+0+0	0	43:15.7	+1:45.6
4. LAUKKANEN Mari	FIN	0+0+1+0	1	43:26.9	+1:56.8
5. AVVAKUMOVA Ekaterina	KOR	0+0+0+0	0	43:33.7	+2:03.6
6. DUNKLEE Susan	USA	1+0+0+1	2	43:36.9	+2:06.8
7. HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren	GER	0+0+2+0	2	43:57.6	+2:27.5
8. HINZ Vanessa	GER	0+1+0+1	2	44:15.6	+2:45.5
9. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+0+1+1	2	44:16.2	+2:46.1
10. PIDHRUSHNA Olena	UKR	1+0+0+1	2	44:24.7	+2:54.6

INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 KM

1. BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0+0+0	0	48:07.4	0.0
2. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	48:10.7	+3.3
3. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	1+0+1+0	2	48:28.6	+21.2
4. LESSER Erik	GER	0+1+0+0	1	48:39.4	+32.0
5. SEMENOV Sergey	UKR	0+0+1+0	1	48:46.0	+38.6
6. KRČMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	48:51.0	+43.6
7. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	2+0+0+0	2	48:51.3	+43.9
8. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	49:19.3	+1:11.9
9. BIRKELAND Lars Helge	NOR	0+0+1+0	1	49:21.7	+1:14.3
10. WEGER Benjamin	SUI	0+0+0+1	1	49:30.2	+1:22.8



Susan Dunklee - USA

magical for the quartet of Shipulin, Anton Babikov, Maxim Tsvetkov and Alexey Volkov. They made it to the top of the

podium thanks to an almost flawless, two spare-round performance on the shooting range. The French team of Fourcade, Fillon Maillet, Simon Desthieux and Jean

Guillaume Beatrix, hot on the heels of the Russians all afternoon won the Silver medal, just 5.8 seconds back. The loudest cheering however was the home team



Simon Schempp - GER

MASS START WOMEN 12.5 KM

1.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0+0+0	0	33:13.8 60
2.	DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+0+0+0	0	+4.6 54
3.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	1+0+0+0	1	+20.1 48
4.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+0+1	1	+24.0 43
5.	GREGORIN Teja	SLO	0+1+0+0	1	+24.2 40
6.	DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+1+0+0	1	+24.4 38
7.	DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	+40.3 36
8.	WIERER Dorothea	ITA	0+0+1+1	2	+1:05.6 34
9.	RUNGGALDIER Alexia	ITA	0+0+0+0	0	+1:06.9 32
10.	FIALKOVA Paulina	SVK	0+1+1+0	2	+1:14.1

MASS START MEN 15 KM

1.	SCHEMPP Simon	GER	0+0+0+0	0	35:38.3 60
2.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	+9.0 54
3.	EDER Simon	AUT	0+0+0+0	0	+10.1 48
4.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+1+1+0	2	+25.3 43
5.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	1+0+0+2	3	+31.3 40
6.	BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0+0+0	0	+33.5 38
7.	LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+0+0+2	2	+38.0 36
8.	LINDSTROEM Fredrik	SWE	0+0+1+0	1	+39.7 34
9.	DOLL Benedikt	GER	0+0+2+0	2	+42.9 32
10.	PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0+0+2	2	+46.1



Simon Eder - AUT

Austria who matched their 2005 IBU WCH Bronze medal in this same home stadium. Daniel Mesotitsch, also the leadoff leg in 2005 Julian Eberhard, Simon Eder and Dominik Landertinger gave the Austrians their first medal of the week.

FURIOUS FINALE; MEDAL NUMBER FIVE FOR DAHLMEIER

Perfect weather dominated the last day as the biathlon elite battled in the mass starts. Dahlmeier dominated as she had during the past two weeks. The undisputed Hochfilzen star, with a flawless shooting performance secured her fifth Gold medal; more IBU WCH medals than any other biathlete, male or female before her. This does mean the final Gold medal came easily for the 23-year-old German. Susan Dunklee put Dahlmeier under pressure with her speedy, clean shooting, gaining a second medal for the USA after Bailey's 20K Gold. After a tense final lap, Kaisa Mäkäräinen won the Bronze medal ending the World Championships on a positive note for the Finnish athlete.

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GOLD FOR SCHEMP

Germany's sensational string of medals in the Pillerseetal valley continued in the men's mass start. Although Schempp was sporting the mass start red bib prior to these Championships, his luck in Hochfilzen initially seemed to have run out. Yet it returned in the closing competition. The 28-year-old won the Mass Start Gold medal, his first-ever individual medal without a single penalty loop. The young Norwegian Boe completed his Silver medal run in Hochfilzen with another second place, after passing Lowell Bailey and Simon Eder on the final lap. After a bronze the previous day in the relay, the

fast-shooting Austrian won another Bronze in the final competition of his home WCH.

LASTING MEMORIES

After the competitions ended and the last medals handed out, all eyes were focused on Östersund. It will be hard for the Swedish competitions in 2019 to be as thrilling as the ones this year in Hochfilzen. The start number gambles in the

RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 KM

1. GERMANY	GER	0+9	1:11:16.6	0.0
HINZ Vanessa, HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren, HILDEBRAND Franziska, DAHLMEIER Laura				
2. UKRAINE	UKR	0+4	1:11:23.0	+6.4
VARVYNETS Iryna, DZHIMA Yuliia, MERKUSHYNA Anastasiya, PIDHRUSHNA Olena				
3. FRANCE	FRA	0+7	1:11:24.7	+8.1
CHEVALIER Anaïs, AYMONIER Celia, BRAISAZ Justine, DORIN HABERT Marie				
4. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	0+6	1:11:30.6	+14.0
JISLOVA Jessica, PUSKARCIKOVA Eva, VITKOVA Veronika, KOUKALOVA Gabriela				
5. ITALY	ITA	0+6	1:11:53.1	+36.5
VITTOZZI Lisa, SANFILIPPO Federica, RUNGGALDIER Alexia, WIERER Dorothea				

RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 KM

1. RUSSIA	RUS	0+3	1:14:15.0	0.0
VOLKOV Alexey, TSVETKOV Maxim, BABIKOV Anton, SHIPULIN Anton				
2. FRANCE	FRA	0+4	1:14:20.8	+5.8
BEATRIX Jean Guillaume, FILLON MAILLET Quentin, DESTHIEUX Simon, FOURCADE Martin				
3. AUSTRIA	AUT	0+10	1:14:35.1	+20.1
MESOTITSCH Daniel, EBERHARD Julian, EDER Simon, LANDERTINGER Dominik				
4. GERMANY	GER	0+8	1:14:44.6	+29.6
LESSER Erik, DOLL Benedikt, PEIFFER Arnd, SCHEMP Simon				
5. ITALY	ITA	0+5	1:15:45.8	+1:30.8
HOFER Lukas, WINDISCH Dominik, MONTELO Giuseppe, BORMOLINI Thomas				



Women Relay Competition



Austrian Relay Team

sprint and individual made for enthralling competitions, undecided until the very end.

World Cup Total Score winners Dahlmeier and Fourcade, with a six and five medals respectively, were omnipresent in every competition, while Koukalová can also be extremely proud of her achievements in the stated main goal of the season, the IBU World Championships.

This was an eventful WCH, full of highlights; among the most memorable were Lowell Bailey's Gold medal, Daria Domracheva's Silver medal and the Austrian relay Bronze. ■

TEXT Rene Denfeld

PICTURES Christian Manzoni, Evgeny Tumashov







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TOPPING OFF THE SEASON WITH CRYSTAL

MARTIN'S SWEEP LAURA'S TRIPLE AND TWO FOR GABI

Fourcade and Dahlmeier made the 2016-17 BMW IBU World Cup season their exclusive playground, flashing the Yellow Bibs as they regularly romped past their competitors. By the end of December, Fourcade's domination was again clear; leaving his rivals scratching their heads and battling for second behind the French star. Dahlmeier was clearly at the top of her game after three wins and a second in the new season's first two weeks. Koukalová wore Yellow for a short time, but Dahlmeier was just getting her second wind. After Dahlmeier's come-from behind Antholz 15K win and three Gold medals at the IBU WCH, few doubted that the young German would be wearing Yellow when the season ended in Oslo...and she was. Koukalová, the 2016 Total Score winner settled for two small globes.

MASTERFUL MARTIN

Fourcade proved again this season that he IS the man to beat, with talent and abilities that every one of his rivals try to emulate, but with little success. From the

The new biathlon season always starts with many contenders for the Crystal Globes, big and small. Yet, once again, a select group of three: Total Score titlists Martin Fourcade and Laura Dahlmeier plus Gabriela Koukalová claimed all ten of the precious individual crystal awards.

new season's outset, first competition and victory, albeit in the Östersund single mixed relay, he was in masterfully in control; skiing with ease and authority and skillfully dropping targets with equal ease. Unlike some other seasons, where there was a blip at some point; this year was spotless. Fourcade's worst individual result of the season was 8th in the Oberhof sprint where he had an uncharacteristic three penalties. He started the season in Yellow, with a 20K victory, never was threatened in the top spot, won 14 times while on the podium 22 times and closed the year with a dominating mass start win wearing a Yellow Number 1.

AWESOME DECEMBER

This dominating season is one that will probably be remembered and looked back

on with a bit of awe at some point in the future. A few of the statistics bear this out. Östersund opened the season but the whole month of December set the tone. Ten starts including one relay and one single mix resulted in a December record seven individual wins plus the two relays; the only letdown was third place in the Östersund pursuit. In all competitions that month, the French star missed just nine of 130 shots fired in competition, for a 93% success rate. The skiing was equally impeccable; 41seconds separated the Yellow Bib from second place in the season's first sprint. When Emil Hegle Svendsen matched Fourcade's 20-for-20 shooting in the Pokljuka pursuit, the man in Yellow prevailed by six huge seconds. The Nove Mesto Hat trick with two wins over Anton





Reflecting on this amazing season, Martin commented:

"I never imagined a season like it. It's the best season in biathlon ever and honestly I didn't think it was possible!"



Martin Fourcade on top of the podium in Hochfilzen WCH Pursuit

Shipulin and one over Simon Schempp basically took both men out of the equation for the World Cup Total Score title. Going into the holiday break, the points were piling up: Fourcade 468, Shipulin 310, Johannes Thingnes Bø 308, Ole Einar Björndalen 258 and Schempp 251. None would ever get closer to the number 1 spot than this.

BIG WIN; PHOTO FINISH JANUARY

The Fourcade rout continued in January with three more wins including the snowy win in the Ruhpolding pursuit over Svendsen; three penalties would mean something less than first place for

most athletes, but not Fourcade. Svendsen shot clean but crossed the line 18.3 seconds back, crumpled to the ground and had to be helped from the finish area by his teammates. Just a few days earlier, Fourcade lost to Schempp and Erik Lesser in a dramatic photo-finish in the Oberhof mass start, but the total margin was a mere .4 seconds. Both had one less penalty than Fourcade and barely beat him. Victory was not always guaranteed, but this version of Martin Fourcade was always in the hunt.

Ten victories in the bag at the end of January; the point total was 824 to Shipulin's 548.

WCH PURSUIT GOLD NUMBER 4 AND ... GLOBE NUMBER 1

Winning medals at the IBU WCH is always hard but two relay medals and three individual medals, including pursuit Gold brought Fourcade's lifetime total of WCH medals to 25. The Bronze medal in the 20K started the march to a Crystal sweep; the small globe for the individual competitions was ready to be engraved with... Martin Fourcade. The pursuit Gold medal was pursuit win number 5 in a row and title number 4 in that discipline. Dahlmeier was the undisputed star in Hochfilzen, but the man from Villard de Lans was padding his point totals. The score stood at 1020 to 690.

DESTINY AND PERFECTION

Pyeongchang is everyone's goal for 2018. Other than a two-penalty third place hiccup in the sprint; the Yellow bib made it clear that this Olympic venue could be another place of destiny for him. Pursuit win number six and season victory number twelve was another dominating performance. Twelve wins matched Björndalen's season record. Fourcade admitted the record-tying win was, "far from the perfect race. There were others behind me; they kept pushing and pushing. I am keeping the perfect race for next winter."

CRYSTAL GLOBE EXPRESS

The quick trip back to Kontiolahti could have been named the Crystal Globe Express. The World Cup Total score and



Team France celebrates successful season: 50 podiums in 2016/2017

the big Crystal Globe were now ready to go home to France; no one could match the 1169 points before the plane landed in Finland. A sprint win and pursuit fifth place added those two to the awaiting trophy case back in France.

MY DAY: MASS START CAPS THE SEASON

Only one piece of crystal remained in limbo when the last week of the season started, the mass start globe. Two second places in the Oslo sprint and pursuit further added to the Total Score numbers. The mass start win, even with a bit of shooting range drama was the finishing touch on Fourcade's brilliant season. After the prone stages, he left the field gasping for breath; twenty shots, twenty targets down; record-setting win number 14 and the Crystal Sweep was complete. In his typical confident manner, Fourcade closed the season with, "I wanted to show to everyone, that today it was my day."

A TRULY "SPECIAL" SEASON

Actually, this was not just his day, but Fourcade's season, memorable in so many ways from start to finish. He summed up, "It's really special to equal Ole Einar's record. I'm really proud about it! Regarding the sweep of the Crystal Globes, Raphaël Poirée was the only biathlete who has done this before; I realize how special it is to do it 3 times!"

LAURA'S FIRST CRYSTAL GLOBES

It seems like Dahlmeier has been around for years, yet she is just four years removed from her IBU YJWCH Sprint Gold medal in 2013. Her star has been on the rise since that year's IBU WCH in Nove Mesto na Morave; a clean-shooting debut in the women's relay. She has done nothing but improve each season, climaxing this season with her first-ever Crystal Globes, for the individual, pursuit and the

biggest prize of all, the World Cup total Score. Hard as it is to believe, Dahlmeier is just 23 years old. Few athletes (except Magdalena Neuner) ever reach the pinnacle of their sport at such a young age.

DECEMBER SUCCESS

Like the six-time winner Fourcade, the young German star asserted herself from the first days of the new season in Östersund. She put her team that eventually finished second in contention with sterling second leg in the mixed relay. A couple of days later, with two one-minute penalties beside her name, she skied to victory with the fastest course time to win the women's 15K individual. The stage was set. The Laura Dahlmeier who usually missed parts of December due to illness and injury was well-prepared, healthy and ready for the season of her life. She donned the Yellow Bib and wore it all month. Two more wins in the Pokljuka sprint and pursuit put her solidly atop the Total Score by the holiday break, with 410 points to Kaisa



Mäkäräinen's 312 and Gabriela Koukalová's 305.

EXTRA REST

As the New Year rolled around, she announced that the sprint/pursuit in Oberhof was off the schedule, but she would be on the line for the mass start. "My coaches decided that a few more days of training and rest were important." That suddenly put the Yellow Bib up for grabs; Koukalová was in Yellow. At the same time, Dahlmeier had always deferred regarding the World Cup Total Score/Yellow Bib and Big Crystal Globe as not her focus early in the season. Koukalová supplanted her in that top spot for 12 days, until the second 15K individual of the season in Antholz. Two penalties again, but another win for the German, while the



Laura Dahlmeier in Hochfilzen - AUT

Czech star finished 24th; put Dahlmeier back in Yellow for good.

AMAZING RUN: WINS, MEDALS AND SHOOTING

That day in Antholz kicked off an amazing run for Dahlmeier. In the next 12 com-

petitions (9 individual, 3 relays), the results looked like this: 2nd, 1st, 1st, 2nd, 1st, 1st, 1st, 1st, 1st, 2nd, and 1st! In that span of the IBU WCH, Pyeongchang and Kontiolahti World Cups, the Yellow Bib fired 120 shots in the 9 individual competitions and hit 115 of them, a brilliant 95% success rate. She was the star of the IBU WCH with 5 Gold medals (individual, pursuit, mass start, relay and mixed relay) plus a sprint Silver for good measure. As the World Cup circus packed for the long trip to Pyeongchang, the multi-medalist had secured the small globe for the individual competitions with a perfect score. She now had 903 points to Koukalová's 857 in the Total score.

"GREAT DREAM COME TRUE"

The four competitions with three wins and a second in Korea and Finland sealed the deal for Dahlmeier on the big Crystal Globe. Beaming with huge smile, she was almost speechless. "It is amazing...I have no words. It is such a great dream come true at this moment; just amazing."

With the big Globe in hand, the last week in Oslo became a victory lap of sorts. She had a chance to claim the sprint globe, with a 28 point lead before the start. However an out-of-character 31st place let that one slip away. The 41-point lead in the pursuit score over Mäkäräinen after Kontiolahti looked like a better bet. Although the Finn finished second in Oslo, Dahlmeier's hard-won 9th place was enough to give her another small globe to close the season.

OVERWHELMING HER RIVALS

The now top-ranked woman in biathlon can be forgiven for the slight end-of-season letdown. She had a brilliant year. It was the one that many had been predict-



Laura Dahlmeier in yellow bib, which she barely gave up throughout the season





ing for some time. Her route to the three globes was not an easy one. Although the numbers showed 1211 points to runner-up Koukalová with 1089, the German never had the hundreds of points bulge like Fourcade. She proved to be the best by overwhelming all of the top women when it counted the most, at the IBU WCH and in the weeks that followed. The three pieces of crystal that are now in her trophy case may be the first, but surely will not be the last. When Laura has some spare time this summer, she might want to add some extra shelves for the next rounds of medals and trophies.

KOUKALOVÁ FOCUSED ON MEDALS

Martin and Laura dominated the crystal globes competition, but in the season's waning days, 2016 World Cup Total Score winner Koukalová swooped in to take home two small chunks of shiny glass in the sprint and mass start competitions. From the first press conference of the season through the short time she was in Yellow, the Czech star insisted that the big globe and Crystal Globe were not her focus. The goal was simply IBU WCH medals; something she missed in the 2015-16 campaign. She left Hochfilzen with a sprint Gold, 15K individual Silver and pursuit Bronze, a nice collection by anyone's standards: mission accomplished.

HIGHLIGHTS, OSLO REVIVAL AND CRYSTAL

With that focus and the Total Score pressure off, Koukalová had a very nice season. She was not the model of con-



Gabriela Koukalova celebrates her first WCH title in Hochfilzen Sprint

sistency of last year; she shooting consistency was down a bit and there were some results in double digits. However, the red-head won five times, and kept the pressure on Dahlmeier for the top spot, even though neither woman said it was her focus. The highlights of Koukalová's season probably come down to the stunning mass start win in her pressure packed home stadium in Nove Mesto na Morave and the equally exciting clean-shooting four-second win over Dahlmeier in the WCH sprint. After Hochfilzen, Koukalová had just a single podium Pyeongchang and Kontiolahti. Yet, in Oslo, where she claimed to be thinking about the "closing party" during the mass start, her season was revived. The sprint fourth place combined with Dahlmeier's 31st turned the tables in the sprint globe battle. The Sprint World Champion won the globe by five points. With a nice piece of crystal in hand, she "did her job" with just a single penalty in the season-ending mass

start, topping Dahlmeier for the mass start globe by just nine points.

"ONE OF MY BEST"

WCH medals, a win in front of her adoring Czech fans, runner-up in the Total Score and two small globes all point to a very good year. Flashing her typical big smile, Koukalová understatedly said after the mass start, "This was one of the best seasons in my career."

MARTIN, LAURA AND GABRIELA

106 men and 102 women scored World Cup points this season in the 26 scored competitions. When the season ended, Martin Fourcade, Laura Dahlmeier and Gabriela Koukalová were the only ones to top off their seasons with Crystal Globes. Hats off to them! **I**

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

PICTURES Christian Manzoni,
Evgeny Tumasho





FOUR OF FIVE TEAM GLOBES TO GERMANY

The German team almost equaled Martin Fourcade's sweep of crystal globes in the 2016-17 season. While Fourcade carried home five of the crystal awards from Oslo, the Germans took home four, winning all of the team categories except one; the Men's Relay Globe went to the World Champions, Russia.

FOUR GLOBES

The German team has always been one of the strongest squads in biathlon, but this year, they truly flexed their muscles to claim crystal in the both the Men's and Women's Nations Cup, the Women's Relay and the Mixed Relay.

WOMEN'S RELAY TEAM SWEEPS

Germany's wins in the Women's Nations Cup and Relay are not big surprises. The Nations Cup title was their third in a row, the Relay title was the third in the past four years. Both of these highlight the depth of the German women's team; they had seven women among the top 50 in the World Cup Total Score. With this depth, they swept the relays, winning six times. The last team to sweep the relays in a season was...Germany in the 2007-2008 season. That year they won all five

relays. The six consecutive relay victories this season are an outstanding accomplishment.

FIRST MEN'S NATIONS CUP SINCE 2006

The German men wrested the top spot in the Nations Cup from perennial winner Norway for their first Nations Cup Globe since 2006. Norway with seven wins and Russia with three wins have claimed the title every year since then.

Although France won the IBU Mixed

Relay World Championship, Germany topped them 264 points to 257 points over the five competitions in the season. The difference maker was Germany's five podiums versus France's three.

The Russian men under Coach Ricco Gross won the Relay Globe, after losing the title to Norway last year. Although the Russian team only won once; it was the most important relay of the season, at the IBU World Championships. **I**

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

PICTURES Christian Manzoni



WC 6 Antholz - ITA: German Relay Women Team

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COMPETITIONS ON **OLYMPIC SOIL**

After the overwhelming World Championships in Hochfilzen, biathlon crew took a week off to go home, see their family and friends and recharge for the last trimester of pre-Olympic 2017/18 season.



Podium Sprint Women



Julian Eberhard - AUT

Next event took biathletes to a future Olympic stadium in Pyeongchang, Korea just a year before the big event takes place. For many biathletes competing in Pyeongchang was not for the first time, as IBU World Championships Biathlon back in 2009 took place there. Apart from a different track profile, there was something else new in the air: pre-Olympic excitement and special atmosphere of the big event approaching.

With the season slowly but steadily coming to an end, Big Crystal Globes were in the main focus of media. Whereas it seemed that Martin Fourcade has secured his sixth Crystal Globe in a row, suspense remained in the women's field as opportunity was open for both Gabriela Koukalova and Laura Dahlmeier.

Seven hours separate Korea from Central European time, and each team had to deal with the time difference and late evening competitions. Most teams just refused to switch to a local time zone, staying up till 2 or 3 am in the morning and waking up in the afternoon.

DAHLMEIER WINNING STRATEGY WORKS

Unusually warm weather met biathlon family in Korea, but a heavy snowfall

kicked off sprints on the first competition day. Ladies were starting first; yellow bib Dahlmeier used her traditional strategy that helped her so many times this season. She had a slower start, cleaned the prone and accelerated on the final loops. The German star will try to repeat the same next year, "It's important to see the shooting range, the crowd, it's good to come back to a place from which you have the best emotions."

Yet, she was not unchallenged, as Norway's Tiril Eickhoff finally found her zero on the shooting range to take the second. The 2016 Sprint Champion had a tough season, giving up her title in Hochfilzen, but today everything seemed right again, "I struggled the whole season, I was sick, I am so happy to be on the podium today." The new leader on French team Anais Chevalier demonstrated consistency as she repeated her third place from Hochfilzen. Dahl-

meier's main rival for Crystal Globe Gabriela Koukalova picked up a penalty in each stage to finish only in 21st place.

EBERHARD ON FIRE

Team Austria stayed on European time; this has proved to be the right strategy as Landertinger cleaned all ten targets despite the strong wind at the shooting range to set the time to beat at the finish line. But the big names were yet to start.

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1.	DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0	0	20:43.7	0.0
2.	ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	0+0	0	20:52.1	+8.4
3.	CHEVALIER Anais	FRA	0+0	0	21:25.3	+41.6
4.	MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+2	2	21:42.4	+58.7
5.	DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+1	1	21:43.4	+59.7
6.	DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+0	0	21:44.7	+1:01.0
7.	HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	1+0	1	21:48.3	+1:04.6
8.	BESCOND Anais	FRA	0+1	1	21:59.8	+1:16.1
8.	BRORSSON Mona	SWE	0+0	0	21:59.8	+1:16.1
10.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	1+1	2	22:00.1	+1:16.4

SPRINT MEN 10 km

1.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	0+0	0	23:11.1	0.0
2.	BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+0	0	23:51.8	+40.7
3.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	1+1	2	23:56.5	+45.4
4.	LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+0	0	23:59.2	+48.1
5.	LESSER Erik	GER	0+1	1	24:01.4	+50.3
6.	WINDISCH Dominik	ITA	1+0	1	24:05.2	+54.1
7.	WIESTNER Serafin	SUI	1+0	1	24:13.4	+1:02.3
8.	EDER Simon	AUT	0+2	2	24:16.6	+1:05.5
9.	GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0+2	2	24:17.4	+1:06.3
10.	PRYMA Artem	UKR	0+0	0	24:18.8	+1:07.7

Instead, that day was all about his teammate: Julian Eberhard. With the pressure off now that the home World Championships were over, the Austrian biathlete was on fire! One by one, he hit all the targets, leaving the range with a 20-second advantage over Bailey. Something just kept him going, as he continued to aggressively to secure a 40-second advantage for the pursuit.

Fourcade showed that he was human, missing two targets. He still managed to get the last spot on the podium. However, something more important was at stake: with his third place the French star secured his sixth World Cup Total Score title and Big Crystal Globe in a row. "I have not forgot I won something bigger today. That is amazing. I didn't realize it at the finish, I was focusing on what I can do better at Olympics, but the TV team told me this." He said this was very special, "I always remember the first time in Khanty. I thought it was so difficult I can't fight for it again. It means so much for me to be on my idol Bjoerndalen's level to win my sixth Globe." Bailey showed that he was still in top form after World Championships, finishing in second place. He and Fourcade finished the hard day on a funny note, tak-

ing Korean-style photos with press center volunteers.

PURSUIITS: WINNERS TAKE IT ALL

The following day saw the triumph of two most successful athletes on the World Cup in 2017/18 season: Dahlmeier and Fourcade. Seemed like Dahlmeier was in shape of her life, as she crossed the finish line more than one minute ahead of Makarainen to score her fifth consecutive win and her ninth win that season. Again, it was a lady from France on the last podium step, this time Anais Bescond.

Biathlon fans got accustomed to Fourcade's victorious gestures: this season cameras captured the Frenchman's fist clenched fist at the shooting range quite often. Today, it was Dahlmeier's fist up in the air, "Today I had enough time for that. This season was good for me, I have always in the top 10, a 7th place has been

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0+0+0	0	27:58.0
2. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+2+0	2	+1:12.6
3. BESCOND Anais	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	+1:18.9
4. ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	1+2+1+1	5	+1:32.0
5. DUNKLEE Susan	USA	1+1+0+1	3	+1:32.5
6. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+1:42.7
7. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	0+0+1+0	1	+1:56.6
8. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	1+0+1+0	2	+2:00.5
9. OLSBU Marte	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	+2:04.1
10. FIALKOVA Paulina	SVK	2+0+0+0	2	+2:04.6

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	31:24.2
2. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+34.5
3. EBERHARD Julian	AUT	0+2+0+1	3	+36.7
4. EDER Simon	AUT	0+0+0+2	2	+1:03.2
5. GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0+1+1+0	2	+1:09.5
6. DESTHIEUX Simon	FRA	1+1+0+0	2	+1:13.5
7. LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+0+0+2	2	+1:20.3
8. DOLL Benedikt	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+1:20.4
9. BAILEY Lowell	USA	1+0+1+0	2	+1:20.6
10. HOFER Lukas	ITA	0+0+0+2	2	+1:20.6

the worst result for me."

In men's field, Fourcade equalized another Bjoerndalen's record of 12 World Cup wins in one season. The competition had a familiar scenario: Fourcade gave his opponents no chance by securing first place with his clean shooting and the battle continued for the remaining two spots.

Shipulin once again showed that he can do miracles in pursuits, jumping from 23rd place to second. He unveiled his key to success, "Today, the shooting did the trick. I cannot remember last time I shot clean in a competition with four shooting stages. I think our service men did a great job: the skis were going very fast, and I felt like I was in a good shape. I just wish I had the same mood yesterday."

As for Eberhard, he managed to preserve the podium position despite the three misses. The Austrian will for sure remember his brilliant performance when he comes back to Korea next season.

GERMAN WOMEN IN RELAY: FULL DOMINATION

Relays took place on the last day of the event; women's field saw an excit-

Stadium Pyeongchang





Anais Bescond - FRA

ing competition with suspense up until the last shooting. The main battle for the win evolved between France and Germany who were changing positions up until next shooting, when French anchor Aymonier went on two penalty loops. This blew French chance for the podium and secured the win for Germany, who dominated each women's relay competition that season. This time success came despite the absence of Dahlmeier, as camera captured her nervously watching the competition in the stadium. Her spot was taken by an ex-cross-country star Denise Hermann, who just switched to biathlon last season. She commented on her shooting, "In standing, I was a bit nervous when I failed. I hoped I could do it without a penalty loop, but I think I gave too much. I tried to give everything in the last loop."

The fight for the remaining spots on the podium was between Koukalova, Olsbu and Wierer. Marte Olsbu anchored team Norway to second place, but a big surprise came from a young biathlete from Sweden, Anna Magnusson. She had a

tough battle with Koukalova in the last meters of competition, but the photo finish showed that Czech star outsprinted a youngster.

FOURCADE AND CO TAKE RELAY

Whereas French women blew their chances for the podium, triumph was yet to come for French men. Destieux got his team in the lead in the third leg, tagging Fourcade with a 16-second advantage. From that moment on, the outcome of the first place was basically decided. The

Relay Competition Men



German Relay Team

French star used two spares to clean the final stage but managed to preserve the lead. He was happy to be back on the podium, now with his teammates, "I am really happy to finish this week on the podium with the team. It was a good week for the team, such useful information from the Olympic venue..."

Team Austria had an interesting mix of World Cup debutant Lorenz Waeger, veteran Simon Eder, sprint winner from two days ago Julian Eberhard and Dominik Landertinger who anchored the team to the second place. The debutant had a fall on the downhill, later admitting that he was nervous, "I was a bit nervous before the race, I am always nervous before relays no matter if it is Austrian Championships or a World Cup as you are compet-



ing for a team, not individually, I hope this was not the reason for the crash."

Norway was a surprise in third without Svendsen or Boe brothers, three members were coming from B-team. Their anchor Gjermundshaug had a penalty in standing, but Norway still stayed in contention with others also struggling. He

said, "When I came first in the standing, I was so nervous, my legs were shaking. In fact, I am happy it was just one penalty loop."

Hardly was the press conference over, volunteers were taking down BMW IBU World Cup signs, taking apart the podium and removing the sponsor banners. Time flies during biathlon season: the World Cup was over. Biathlon family was packing to go back to Europeto come back to Korea one year later. Whereas some teams will come back in the hope to recreate their memories from last year, for some it will be all about setting the new goals. **I**

RELAY WOMEN 4 x 6 km

1. GERMANY	GER	1+7	1:07:35.6	0.0
HORCHLER Nadine, HAMMERSCH. Maren, HERRMANN Denise, HILDEBR. Franziska				
2. NORWAY	NOR	1+11	1:07:58.4	+22.8
NICOLAISEN Kaia Woeien, FENNE Hilde, ECKHOFF Tiril, OLSBU Marte				
3. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	1+9	1:07:58.5	+22.9
JISLOVA Jessica, PUSKARCIKOVA Eva, CHARVATOVA Lucie, KOUKALOVA Gabriela				
4. SWEDEN	SWE	0+7	1:07:58.6	+23.0
SLOOF Chardine, BRORSSON Mona, NILSSON Emma, MAGNUSSON Anna				
5. ITALY	ITA	0+11	1:08:01.5	+25.9
VITTOZZI Lisa, SANFILIPPO Federica, RUNGGALDIER Alexia, WIERER Dorothea				

RELAY MEN 4 x 7.5 km

1. FRANCE	FRA	0+10	1:12:09.5	0.0
BEATRIX Jean Guillaume, FOURCADE Simon, DESTHIEUX Simon, FOURCADE Martin				
2. AUSTRIA	AUT	0+9	1:12:43.3	+33.8
WAEGER Lorenz, EDER Simon, EBERHARD Julian, LANDERTINGER Dominik				
3. NORWAY	NOR	1+8	1:12:54.9	+45.4
CHRISTIANSEN V. Sjustad, BJOERNDAL O. E., GJERMUNDSHAUG V., L'ABEE-LUND H.				
4. RUSSIA	RUS	0+9	1:13:20.6	+1:11.1
TSVETKOV Maxim, GARANICHEV Evgeniy, BABIKOV Anton, SHIPULIN Anton				
5. UKRAINE	UKR	0+7	1:13:37.5	+1:28.0
PRYMA Artem, SEMENOV Sergey, SEMAKOV Vladimir, PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro				

TEXT Marina Dmukhovskaya

PICTURES Christian Manzoni



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TIME TO PLAY



MOMENT 01
STUNNING SUNSET
IN KONTIOLAHTI

10 MOMENTS OF BMW IBU WORLD CUP IN KONTIOLAHTI

For the 8th stage of 2016/17 season World Cup circus travelled to Kontiolah-
ti, Finland. 10 shots made by IBU Photographer Evgeniy Tumashov unveil the
most exciting moments of these three thrilling competition days in Finland,
where we saw a fight for the Total Score and small Crystal Globes; season vic-
tories record blown away and first podium glory.



MOMENT

02**MEN'S SPRINT "FOURCADE WALK"**

THE USUAL FEATURE OF 2016/17. AS FOURCADE IS CALLED UPON THE TOP OF THE PODIUM, THE ONLY THING FOR OTHERS LEFT TO DO IS TO APPLAUD AND WAIT FOR THEIR TURN



MOMENT 03

WOMEN'S SPRINT TIRIL ECKHOFF, LAURA DAHLMEIER AND DARYA DOMRACHEVA POSE FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS ON TOP OF THE PODIUM





MOMENT **04**

MEN'S PURSUIT COLLISION BETWEEN
EMIL HEGLE SVENDSEN AND **MARTIN**
FOURCADE AT THE SHOOTING RANGE, THAT
LEFT PEIFFER A CHANCE FOR A WIN



MOMENT **05**

WOMEN'S PURSUIT LAURA DAHLMEIER SMILES AS SHE REALIZES SHE SECURED THE BIG CRYSTAL GLOBE WITH HER WIN

MOMENT **06**

WOMEN'S PURSUIT
MAIDEN PODIUM FOR **LISA VITTOZZI**





MOMENT **07**

WOMEN'S PURSUIT
MARIE DORIN HABERT GIVES HER SILVER MEDAL
TO A RUSSIAN GIRL AFTER PURSUIT



MOMENT **08**

SINGLE MIXED RELAY
LISA HAUSER AND SIMON EDER HUG
AT THE FINISH LINE AFTER A WIN



MOMENT **09**

SINGLE MIXED RELAY
LOWELL BAILEY AND SUSAN
DUNKLEE CELEBRATE SECOND
PLACE



**SPRINT MEN 10 km**

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1	1	22:17.0	0.0
2. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0	0	22:17.6	+0.6
3. SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0	0	22:26.4	+9.4
4. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0	0	22:29.1	+12.1
5. PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0	0	22:39.3	+22.3
6. EDER Simon	AUT	0+1	1	22:40.0	+23.0
7. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+1	1	22:42.1	+25.1
8. BJOERNDALEN Ole Einar	NOR	1+0	1	22:47.2	+30.2
9. EBERHARD Julian	AUT	2+0	2	22:59.0	+42.0
10. ROESCH Michael	BEL	0+0	0	22:59.3	+42.3

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	0+0	0	19:18.4	0.0
2. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+1	1	19:36.7	+18.3
3. DOMRACHEVA Darya	BLR	0+0	0	19:38.8	+20.4
4. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+0	0	19:53.2	+34.8
5. DUNKLEE Susan	USA	1+0	1	19:53.3	+34.9
6. VITTOZZI Lisa	ITA	0+0	0	19:55.4	+37.0
7. AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+1	1	19:58.2	+39.8
8. CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+0	0	20:01.1	+42.7
9. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	0+1	1	20:03.7	+45.3
10. MAGNUSSON Anna	SWE	0+0	0	20:04.4	+46.0

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1. PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0+0+0	0	30:35.0
2. EDER Simon	AUT	0+0+1+1	2	+0.3
3. SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+2.3
4. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0+1+1	2	+9.8
5. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1+1+2	4	+25.5
6. HOFER Lukas	ITA	0+0+1+0	1	+27.7
7. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+1+1+1	3	+33.2
8. CHRISTIANSEN Vetle Sjastad	NOR	0+0+0+1	1	+38.4
9. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+0+1+3	4	+38.7
10. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0+0+2	2	+50.9

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+1+0+0	1	29:54.4
2. DORIN HABERT Marie	FRA	1+0+0+1	2	+16.5
3. VITTOZZI Lisa	ITA	0+1+0+0	1	+19.9
4. DOMRACHEVA Darya	BLR	2+1+0+0	3	+21.9
5. FIALKOVA Paulina	SVK	0+0+0+0	0	+23.9
6. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+0+0	0	+27.8
7. VARVYNETS Iryna	UKR	0+0+0+0	0	+32.6
8. AYMONIER Celia	FRA	0+0+1+1	2	+38.1
9. CHEVALIER Anaïs	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	+39.0
10. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+0+2	2	+44.8

MOMENT 10

MIXED RELAY
TRIPLE SHOT AS **QUENTIN FILLON MAILLET** CHARGES HIS RIFLE AT THE LAST SHOOTING BEFORE ANCHORING TEAM FRANCE TO A WIN

SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km

1. AUSTRIA HAUSER Lisa Theresa, EDER Simon	AUT	0+5	31:35.1	0.0
2. USA DUNKLEE Susan, BAILEY Lowell	USA	0+5	32:07.9	+32.8
3. GERMANY DAHLMEIER Laura, REES Roman	GER	0+6	32:08.4	+33.3
4. FRANCE CHEVALIER Anais, BEATRIX Jean Guillaume	FRA	0+8	32:11.6	+36.5
5. KAZAKHSTAN VISHNEVSKAYA Galina, SAVITSKIY Yan	KAZ	0+7	32:22.9	+47.8

MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 x 7.5 km

1. FRANCE DORIN HABERT Marie, BESCOND Anais, DESTHIEUX Simon, FILLON MAILLET Quentin	FRA	0+9	1:11:34.5	0.0
2. GERMANY HORCHLER Nadine, HAMMERSCHMIDT Maren, DOLL Benedikt, PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+10	1:11:45.5	+11.0
3. UKRAINE VARVYNETS Iryna, ABRAMOVA Olga, SEMENOV Sergey, PIDRUCHNYI Dmytro	UKR	0+6	1:12:01.6	+27.1
4. RUSSIA AKIMOVA Tatiana, STARYKH Irina, ELISEEV Matvey, GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0+10	1:12:22.3	+47.8
5. NORWAY OLSBU Marte, ECKHOFF Tiril, BOE Johannes Thingnes, SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	3+8	1:12:49.5	+1:15.0

PICTURES Evgeny Tumashov TEXT Marina Dmukhovskaya



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Finally, a decent view: from Holmenkollen down to the inner reaches of Oslofjord, the fjord stretching 120-km north-south that marks the entrance to the Norwegian capital. Viewed from above, it looks like a glorious, shimmering sheet of ice (and parts of it are indeed ice, as the fjord freezes over most winters due to the relative distance away from the Gulf Stream).



Podium Sprint Men

Oslo is a wonderful place to end the winter: its beauty gives biathletes renewed energy. The venue makes a great change at the end of a long season, like a free gift for all the hard work. Some athletes stand on the edge of the road for minutes, staring into the distance, dreaming and taking photos for posterity. Many in the IBU touring troupe admitted that these mini breaks were pretty much a necessity - their physical reserves were high on depleted by this stage, and the tight competition schedule was additionally exhausting. Many athletes had three competitions in three days - the big final test of endurance.

LAUKKANEN PREMIERE

All the more impressive, then, was the performance by Mari Laukkanen in the opening competition, the women's sprint. The Finnish athlete's tempo was astounding. She spun like a tornado over the course in starter bib 7, putting the other competitors under enormous pressure. Obviously, everyone was wondering what effect her speed would have on her performance at the shooting range, but look here: Mari Laukkanen, who in her career so far had only had one podium placing - at her home venue of Kontiolahti - shot flawlessly. The fact that she managed the

same feat in the standing, given her average 70% hit rate for the season, was virtually miraculous. It must have been her day.

"Today I feel fantastic. Two clean bouts - I should do that more often," Laukkanen laughed. "It's a great feeling."

After ten years in the World Cup, this was the first time she had won a competition, ahead of France's Justine Braisaz, who demonstrated with yet another one of her strong skiing performances that she has everything it takes to become an absolute world-class biathlete. Her teammate, Anaïs Bescond, placed third. Gabriela Koukalova came in fourth, though the result was a personal triumph for the Czech athlete: despite having had seemingly dismal odds against Laura Dahlmeier in the sprint score due to her time behind (28 points), her fourth placing was good enough, since Dahlmeier had her first real whoopsy of the season. Dahlmeier's three penalty loops after the prone left her empty-

handed - a failure she can cope with, since she was all set to take home the World Cup total even before the competition started. So she's not too disappointed.

"I was way ahead, so my competition results didn't have to be perfect - any good result would have been fine," she said. Still, this meant she had lost her chance of being the first female German biathlete to win all the discipline total scores as well as the World Cup total. Koukalova, on the other hand, could hardly believe her luck: "I'm just so tired - I have no idea how I even managed to concentrate," she admitted.

DAHLMEIER COUNTERATTACKS IN THE PURSUIT

The mess-up in the sprint suddenly and unexpectedly put Laura Dahlmeier in a very difficult situation in the pursuit competition which followed. 43 points ahead of Koukalova now seemed a pretty thin buffer (though there was no longer any threat in the discipline World Cup Total stakes from Finland's Mäkäräinen due to her 27th placing in the sprint). The

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 KM

1.	LAUKKANEN Mari	FIN	0+0	0	20:33.5	0.0
2.	BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	0+0	0	20:41.4	+7.9
3.	BESCOND Anaïs	FRA	0+0	0	20:56.6	+23.1
4.	KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+1	1	21:10.9	+37.4
5.	VITKOVA Veronika	CZE	0+1	1	21:14.9	+41.4
6.	OLSBU Marte	NOR	1+0	1	21:24.5	+51.0
7.	DUNKLEE Susan	USA	0+2	2	21:30.2	+56.7
8.	GREGORIN Teja	SLO	1+0	1	21:30.4	+56.9
9.	SANFILIPPO Federica	ITA	1+0	1	21:31.7	+58.2
10.	FROLINA Anna	KOR	0+1	1	21:40.4	+1:06.9

SPRINT MEN 10 KM

1.	BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	0+0	0	24:53.3	0.0
2.	FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+1	1	25:06.9	+13.6
3.	SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0+0	0	25:14.6	+21.3
4.	LANDERTINGER Dominik	AUT	0+1	1	25:14.8	+21.5
5.	SEMOV Sergey	UKR	0+0	0	25:17.7	+24.4
6.	BOE Tarjei	NOR	0+1	1	25:21.7	+28.4
7.	MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0	0	25:22.4	+29.1
8.	GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0+0	0	25:23.5	+30.2
9.	DESTHIEUX Simon	FRA	0+1	1	25:28.2	+34.9
10.	EBERHARD Julian	AUT	0+1	1	25:36.5	+43.2

five-time World Champion started 1:30 minutes behind her Czech opponent, with whom she had been repeatedly dueling the entire season. This time, the duel closed the gap between them, since Koukalova again managed to harness her powerful performances. "I never once thought about what the results might end up being," she said. All she did was concentrate on her skiing and shooting.

Dahlmeier, on the other hand, was under pressure from the start, but her ninth place proved she was able to withstand that pressure. "I had a good starting position and just wanted to have a good competition, which I think I managed to do," Dahlmeier said, pleased with the mini crystal globe. "I'm so thrilled to have accomplished this." The recent new gold medalist, Mari Laukkanen, competed wearing a black ribbon of mourning on her arm in memory of her long-time shooting coach, Asko Nuutinen, who had

passed away just hours before the competition following a brief illness.

"Today, I did everything he taught me.

I was constantly thinking of him, and wish to dedicate this win to him," Laukkanen said, in tears. She and Kaisa Mäkäräinen



Mari Laukkanen - FIN

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Pursuit Competition Women

shared an emotional hug in the finish zone, then both athletes knelt down in the snow for minutes in silent homage. During the subsequent press conference, Laukkanen was scarcely able to control her emotions – for the Finnish athlete, it was a moment of great achievement but also of immense sadness: the spectrum of life and death in one competition.

NORWEGIAN FLAG TO FINISH OFF

It was a nice end to the women's competitions in Oslo: a Norwegian athlete skiing through the stadium holding her national flag. Tiril Eckhoff was celebrating her second win of the season, and that after royally screwing up in the World Championships. "I was well and truly sick of having to ski penalty loops. My shooting was good today, so I felt like I was going to win." At the same venue where she scored the biggest coup of her career so far, the Sprint World Championships title in Oslo in 2016, she delivered a perfect race before a beautiful backdrop. World-class athletes often dream of such experi-

ences, but it is always nice when dreams become reality.

Laura Dahlmeier also had a dream, one which was even realistically achievable: she wanted to win the mass start total score – which she managed, eleven points before a convincing Gabriela Koukalova, who placed second. "It was one of the best winters in my life. I'm so happy that I can share this with so many people from my team," said Koukalova. Laura Dahlmeier, whose ninth place was

not quite enough, did not seem at all concerned. "The season was absolutely amazing – just incredible," she said. Dahlmeier had made it onto the podium in 17 of the competitions she started in, gaining gold ten of those times, winning as many times as Magdalena Neuner in Neuner's final winter season. To finish, Dahlmeier said what everyone was secretly thinking: "I'm now totally worn out, and so enormously happy that there aren't any more competitions left."

HIGH BIB NUMBERS, HIGH HOPES

The Norwegian weather forecast is generally considered to be hugely reliable. Since the Holmenkollen course conditions were not exactly the most stable and a minor ice age arrived in time for the men's sprint in the late afternoon, so the athletes had to put their heads to the drawing board to figure out a strategy. Many considered choosing the last starting groups, but it required courage to actually decide to go through with it. In the end, three top athletes did decide to bet on a late draw group: Julian Eberhard (100), Anton Shipulin (106) and Simon Eder (107). Ultimately, only one of the trio of risk-takers made it onto the podium: Anton Shipulin placed second.

Asked whether they had benefited at all

Podium Pursuit Women



from starting so late, Eder – who placed twelfth – was clear in his views: “No, there was no advantage to it,” although he was quick to add that they hadn’t been disadvantaged, either. It did help the choreography of the competition, although it must have been hard for the subsequent winner, Johannes Tignes Boe, to have to wait so long to finally find out that he had got the gold. “I must have lost at least a couple of seconds in the last round, so the whole time I wasn’t sure whether it would be enough,” said Boe, whose win on home soil also gained him a special honor: he got to chat with King Harald V. It wasn’t the first meeting for the two, however – they met at the Oslo 2016 World Championships, where Boe won the mass start. “It’s wonderful to be able to return here – it’s one of the prettiest World Cup venues,” said Boe. The Norwegian’s flawless shooting had managed to keep Martin Fourcade at bay, with Fourcade unable to make up for his one missed target (the last one in the standing). The high-flying Frenchman arrived relatively late in Oslo (after Kontiolahti he flew home to visit his pregnant wife) and so had only been able to fit in one training session. “I am actually a little annoyed at my own mistake,” had admitted, adding pensively, “But I’m still pretty happy with my second place.”

SHIPULIN VERSUS THE FEARED FOURCADE

In any case, the sprint was a show of strength from start to end, culminating in the top three in the World Cup total standing united on the podium. The pursuit was similarly fascinating. In the final shooting bout, despite the Russian athlete putting on an amazing performance and hitting all the targets, his nerves got the better of him. He readily admitted, “I was worried that Martin was maybe going to pass me in the last few meters.” Fourcade had other things to worry about, however: he had to battle Johannes

Tignes Boe, who had out-tricked the Frenchman at least once on this course (in the mass start at the 2016 Oslo WCH).

On the last uphill, Fourcade powered on ahead. “I knew that Martin was going to come in for the attack there, but I didn’t have the energy left to withstand him,” Boe explained. This secured Fourcade another second place – and once again, not the result he had hoped for. The six-time World Cup total winner admitted insightfully that he had been thinking too much about records recently and thus not focused enough on the actual competitions.

Although there was no hearty hug between the winner, Shipulin, and Fourcade afterward – the happenings in Hochfilzen

were not yet forgotten – they gave each other a sportsmanlike handshake, and the Frenchman was generous in his selfless praise: “It was an exciting competition, but in the end, Anton was simply the better man.” So Martin Fourcade was yet

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 KM

1. LAUKKANEN Mari	FIN	0+0+0+1	1	29:33.3
2. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	+26.5
3. BRAISAZ Justine	FRA	1+1+0+2	4	+1:01.4
4. GREGORIN Teja	SLO	0+1+0+0	1	+1:08.2
5. HAUSER Lisa Theresa	AUT	0+0+0+0	0	+1:12.5
6. OLSBU Marte	NOR	1+0+1+1	3	+1:15.9
7. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+1+1	2	+1:51.2
8. WIERER Dorothea	ITA	1+0+1+0	2	+1:51.2
9. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+1:53.8
10. VITKOVA Veronika	CZE	1+0+1+1	3	+1:55.7

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 KM

1. SHIPULIN Anton	RUS	0 0 1 0	1	32:11.9
2. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	1 0 0 1	2	+5.7
3. BOE Johannes Thingnes	NOR	1 0 0 1	2	+21.6
4. LINDSTROEM Fredrik	SWE	0 0 0 0	0	+44.7
5. HOFER Lukas	ITA	0 0 1 1	2	+55.5
6. EBERHARD Julian	AUT	1 0 1 1	3	+55.6
7. EDER Simon	AUT	1 0 1 1	3	+56.1
8. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	1 0 0 1	2	+57.3
9. GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	0 0 2 1	3	+1:03.7
10. RASTORGUEVS Andrejs	LAT	0 1 1 1	3	+1:19.9



Johannes Thingnes Boe - NOR

again thwarted in his attempt for his fourteenth World Cup win, though he had already won all the discipline total scores. Except for one: in the mass start, it was Simon Schempp who had the most points.

FOURCADE'S DELAYED WIN

Schempp wasn't at the top of his game in Oslo (he had to skip the World Cups in Pyeongchang and Kontiolahti). Hindsight is admittedly always the better advisor, but after his 24th and 11th places in the sprint and pursuit, he probably should have concentrated just on the mass start so that he had two more days to renew his strength.

However, no athlete likes flying to a World Cup finale to just sit around and watch. Three missed targets and 20th place finally robbed Schempp of any chance of winning the small crystal globe, despite having been offered the opportunity on a silver platter when Fourcade forgot to load his magazine. Fourcade lay there on the mat in the first prone, the worry and despair smeared across his face. His coach, Jean Paul Giachino, was the first to react, throwing him a magazine

full of cartridges, which is not permitted and could have resulted in disqualification. "The whole competition was full of mistakes," Martin Fourcade later admitted during the press conference. Nonetheless he managed to remain calm, ultimately proving what a true champion he is, making the rest look like amateurs as he amassed his reserves after the final shooting bout to cross the finish line well ahead of the pack and grab his 14th World Cup victory.

Yet the jury was still out. What would Fourcade's fate be? They concluded that the Frenchman's mistakes had not given him any unfair advantage, ruling that he could keep his win – though he was well aware that the jury's decision could usually have been very different.

MASS START WOMEN 12.5 KM

1. ECKHOFF Tiril	NOR	0+0+1+0	1	34:23.1
2. KOUKALOVA Gabriela	CZE	0+1+0+0	1	+22.6
3. MAKARAINEN Kaisa	FIN	0+0+1+1	2	+34.5
4. VITKOVA Veronika	CZE	0+0+1+1	2	+36.1
5. HILDEBRAND Franziska	GER	0+0+0+1	1	+39.0
6. LAUKKANEN Mari	FIN	1+1+0+0	2	+40.0
7. BESCOND Anaïs	FRA	1+1+0+1	3	+43.4
8. DOMRACHEVA Darya	BLR	1+0+1+0	2	+48.5
9. DAHLMEIER Laura	GER	1+1+0+1	3	+54.2
10. DZHIMA Yuliia	UKR	1+0+0+0	1	+57.9

MASS START MEN 15 KM

1. FOURCADE Martin	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	37:32.2
2. RASTORGUJEVS Andrejs	LAT	0+1+1+0	2	+17.4
3. EDER Simon	AUT	0+0+1+0	1	+32.4
4. SVENDSEN Emil Hegle	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+42.2
5. PEIFFER Arnd	GER	0+0+1+1	2	+42.5
6. SLESINGR Michal	CZE	0+0+0+1	1	+42.9
7. BEATRIX Jean Guillaume	FRA	0+0+0+1	1	+44.3
8. GARANICHEV Evgeniy	RUS	1+0+1+1	3	+45.6
9. KRČMAR Michal	CZE	0+0+1+0	1	+46.7
10. BABIKOV Anton	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	+51.9

"I would like to show my greatest respect to the German team for not contesting the jury's decision. Schempp deserves more than a crystal globe – I take my hat off to his classy, outstanding performance." The long statement indicates that Fourcade truly was aware of the possible consequences of his clumsiness. Latvia could also have contested the ruling, since Andrejs Rastorgujevs had placed second for the first time in his seven-year career, which would have seen him celebrating his first World Cup win if Martin Fourcade had been disqualified. Neither the Germans nor the Latvians were interested in marring the end of the season with protests. Rastorgujevs appeared positive, saying "Hopefully this result will give me a chance of more podium placings next year." Austria's Simon Eder, who placed third, agreed: "Martin Fourcade was clearly the best, this time as well. That's fine." Thus the last competition of the season was one of fairness towards Martin Fourcade. This bodes well for the summer's training sessions in preparation for next winter, the year of the Olympics. |

TEXT Sigi Heinrich

PICTURES Christian Manzoni



Tiril Eckhoff - NOR



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. In doing so, the undisputed number one makes a clear statement in terms of technological supremacy. Not only overall World Cup winner Laura Dahlmeier (GER) swears by Speedmax! The unbeatable package is also available for all sporty and ambitious skiers on their way to victory.

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COMEBACKS

AND PODIUMS FOR VETERANS

FIRST STARTS FOR BOE AND SOLEMDAL AT IBU CUP 6

Last IBU Cups of the season 2016-17 were full of interesting and unexpected moments highlighted by the comeback after illness for Tarjei Boe and Synnøve Solemdal in Osrblie; podiums from the

experienced veterans Ondrej Moravec and Daniel Mesotitsch in Kontiolahti; first competitions after maternity leave for Vita Semerenko and Weronika Nowakowska in Otepää.

After the IBU OECB in Duszyni Zdrój closed, many of the top athletes headed off to prepare for the IBU World Championships after qualifying at the last minute. Others headed south for IBU Cup 6 in snowy Osrblie, Slovakia. Although, the field was not as big as usual; just 28 nations with 91 men and 58 women, there were some athletes worth watching. Norway's Boe and Solemdal stepped on the track for the first time this season. They missed competitions due to health problems, which plagued them the beginning of the season. For Boe, the starts in Osrblie were also very important; they allowed him to jump into the Norwegian WCH team at the last possible moment.

HOME FAVORITE

A small field of 54 in the women's sprint opened the weekend on a cloudy, but windless day. Denise Herrmann of Germany, whose first biathlon win came in her first-ever start at Beitostolen, added one more victory to her new career. She took the lead after shooting clean in the first prone. Despite one standing penalty, Herrmann left the stadium 10 seconds ahead of Russia's Daria Virolaynen, who shot clean, but without her usual great speed on the tracks, finished second. Local favorite Paulina Fialkova brought a lot of joy for many fans that came here to support the home team. The Slovak biathlete was not only accurate at the shooting range, but also fast on the course, taking the last spot on the podium.



Denise Herrmann - GER



Stadium Brezno-Osrbie

Tarjei Bø - NOR

MAIN FOCUS

After the finish, the joyful Herrmann commented, "My main focus was on the shooting and I made just one mistake. I am very happy about this result, especially about the standing shooting!"

CLOSE FINISH

Late start number 76 was an advantage for Alexey Volkov of Russia; he already knew his rival's results. He was accurate in both prone and standing, leaving as the leader after each stage. The gap to the other competitors was very small, but

Volkov maintained it until the finish line. Norway's Fredrik Gjesbakk, with a win in the men's sprint earlier this season, was very fast as usual. He finished first with a solid lead. It seemed that no one would move him from the top spot until Volkov flew over the last lap. Another Russian Dmitry Malyshko missed once in standing, but was fast enough on the penalty loop and the final loop to overcome the penalty.

TIRED

Volkov admitted that after the starts at the OECH in Duszniki Zdrój, he felt a bit tired, but knowing the tracks very well, helped him gain needed seconds. "I know it like a back of my hand, so I knew where I could gain some time."

BETTER THAN EXPECTED

Bø, in his first season start after illness, missed once in prone and standing, but was fast enough to make it into the top 6. After the standing stage, he left in 11th place, but was regaining time with each meter. At the finish he admitted, "It was better than I expected because it was my first race. I thought I had to

do it on the shooting range, instead it was opposite; my skiing was very good, but I made misses at the range. But to be honest, I'm really satisfied."

TOO FAST

The second competition day in Osrbie started with the women's pursuit under the same cloudy, windless and warm conditions. Herrmann started with a 19-second advantage on Virolaynen with bib 2. In the first prone, she missed twice allowing the clean-shooting Russian to take the lead. The fast German closed the gap on Virolaynen. For the second prone they came in together; the Russian hit all the targets again, while Herrmann missed once. She then added two more penalties after the first standing and fell down to sixth place. Despite a penalty in the third and fourth stages, Virolaynen was still leading with no chance for the others to catch her. Czech's Lea Johanidesova and Russia's Uliana Kaisheva were matching each other, cleaning stage-after-stage until it came to the final standing. Johanidesova, who started the competition with bib 9, 1:04 a behind the leader, hit all the targets and left in second, while Kaisheva went for a penalty loop. With that miss, the Russian lost her chance for a podium spot; the clean-shooting Herrmann was just too fast on the last lap, finishing third.

MOVING UP

The men's pursuit was very interesting with the battle for the podium continuing

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km					
1. HERRMANN Denise	GER	0+1	1	19:27.4	0.0
2. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+0	0	19:46.0	+18.6
3. FIALKOVA Paulina	SVK	0+0	0	19:55.0	+27.6
4. KNOLL Annika	GER	0+0	0	20:07.1	+39.7
5. USLUGINA Irina	RUS	0+1	1	20:17.4	+50.0

SPRINT MEN 10 km					
1. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0	0	24:41.8	0.0
2. GJESBAKK Fredrik	NOR	0+0	0	24:46.4	+4.6
3. MALYSHKO Dmitry	RUS	0+1	1	24:48.0	+6.2
4. KRISTEJN Lukas	CZE	0+0	0	25:00.5	+18.7
5. MAKHAMBETOV Timur	RUS	0+0	0	25:03.4	+21.6

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km					
1. VIROLAYNEN Daria	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	30:59.9	
2. JOHANIDESOVA Lea	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	+14.3	
3. HERRMANN Denise	GER	2+1+2+0	5	+21.2	
4. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+35.9	
5. USLUGINA Irina	RUS	1+1+0+0	2	+36.7	

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km					
1. SKJELVIK Kristoffer	NOR	0+0+0+0	0	31:24.2	
2. BØ Tarjei	NOR	0+0+2+0	2	+14.5	
3. MAKHAMBETOV Timur	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+14.6	
4. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+0+1	1	+40.7	
5. GJESBAKK Fredrik	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+1:19.4	

until the final meters. Norway's Kristoffer Skjelvik started the competition seventh, 27 seconds behind the leader. After cleaning the first prone, the Norwegian



Dmitry Malyshko - *RUS*



Podium Pursuit Women

left in fourth behind Volkov, Gjesbakk and Boe. After each stage he continued to move up one position until reaching the top at the finish line. With clean shooting in the first stages plus fast skiing, Boe, who was 26 seconds back at the start, moved up and pulled ahead of his rivals, coming to the first standing with a lead. He missed twice and left the stadium in fourth, following the clean-shooting Skjelvik, Volkov and Russia's Timur Makhambetov in

32.5 seconds. In the final standing Skjelvik hit all the targets, leaving Volkov and Makhambetov on the penalty loop. Unlike his rivals, Boe was accurate and went for the final lap with the two Russians. The Norwegian finished second, outpacing Makhambetov by mere .1 seconds.

DREAMING

Skjelvik, with his first career win, admitted, "I was dreaming of that moment for quite some time, so it's just unbelievable." **I**

#WEARESKIING
SONDRE FOSSLI

A male biathlete in a red and blue racing suit with bib number 16 is shown in a dynamic pose, skiing down a snowy slope. He is wearing a white headband and goggles, and his mouth is open in a shout or exertion. The background is a blurred snowy landscape with some structures.

Two ATOMIC skis are shown standing vertically, one next to the other. They are red and white with black text.

ON THE
REDSTER
WORLD CUP SKATE



The traditional World Cup venue in Kontiolahti, Finland, hosted IBU Cup 7, starting with the last season individual competitions for 30 nations with 96 men and 79 women. Since IBU Cup 7 was the first event after the IBU WCH in Hochfilzen and the IBU YJWCH in Osrblie, there were many changes in the field and accordingly, some new faces atop the podium.

NEW FACES ON THE PODIUM

Moravec took Gold, Silver and Bronze, so no wonder he likes this venue. "It's my favorite place! I won three medals here

OLYMPIC MEDALISTS ON THE PODIUM

Light snow and almost no wind at the shooting range greeted 75 athletes for the first competition, the men's 20K individual. Moravec, recently second in this event at the IBU World Championships was starter number 61. He left the first prone .2 seconds after Russia's Volkov; from that moment, he continued to shoot clean, ski fast and increase his lead, until finishing first. Volkov, leaving the start 15 minutes before Moravec, demonstrated his usual great shooting skills and took



Podium Individual Men

EXPERIENCED VETERANS, SUCCESSFUL JUNIORS

One of the athletes, who decided to skip the Pyeongchang World Cup and compete in Kontiolahti, was Olympic Silver medalist and World Champion Ondrej Moravec of the Czech Republic. At the 2015 IBU WCH in Kontiolahti,

and I love this venue." Beyond the addition of veterans like Moravec, there were several juniors like Germany's Anna Weidel plus the IBU Cup regulars in the field, who were battling for the first seasonal awards.

INDIVIDUAL MEN 20 km

1. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	0+0+0+0	0	49:12.9
2. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+46.7
3. MESOTITSCH Daniel	AUT	0+0+0+0	0	+52.5
4. POVARNITSYN Alexander	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	+3:17.7
5. SKJELVIK Kristoffer	NOR	0+1+1+0	2	+3:19.5

INDIVIDUAL WOMEN 15 km

1. SHUMILOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0+0+2	2	44:57.9
2. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	1+0+1+0	2	+22.2
3. ALIFIRAVETS Olga	SWE	0+0+0+1	1	+39.5
4. LATUILLIERE Enora	FRA	0+0+0+2	2	+55.7
5. SOLEMDAL Synnøve	NOR	0+1+0+0	1	+57.2

SPRINT MEN 10 km

1. POVARNITSYN Alexander	RUS	0+0	0	24:23.3	0.0
2. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+1	1	24:25.7	+2.4
3. TKALENKO Ruslan	UKR	0+0	0	24:29.8	+6.5
4. BOGETVEIT Haavard G.	NOR	1+0	1	24:37.1	+13.8
5. MESOTITSCH Daniel	AUT	0+0	0	24:39.8	+16.5

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km

1. VIROLAINEN Daria	RUS	0+1	1	20:48.4	0.0
2. SHUMILOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0	0	21:07.0	+18.6
3. SLIVKO Victoria	RUS	0+0	0	21:19.1	+30.7
4. WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+1	1	21:36.2	+47.8
5. SKOTTHEIM Johanna	SWE	0+0	0	21:36.9	+48.5

second place, despite a fall on the track. Another athlete, who won a relay medal at the 2017 IBU WCH, Daniel Mesotitsch of Austria, was also accurate on the range, but crossed the finish third, taking the last podium spot.

MY PLAN

Moravec commented on skipping the World Cup in Korea. "Actually, it was my plan. Last spring, when I checked the time schedule for the season, I thought it was too much travelling and time changing, so I decided not to go there."

After the flower ceremony, the small crystal globe for the IBU Cup Individual Score was awarded to Russia's Alexander Loginov.

FIRST PODIUM

By the time 61 women stepped on the track, the snow stopped, but the wind on the shooting range increased, resulting in more penalties and only Ukraine's Yuliya Zhuravok shooting clean in the women's

15K. Ekaterina Shumilova of Russia with late bib 55 cleaned stage after stage, increasing her advantage. In the final standing stage, where penalties abounded, she also missed twice. However, with her great ski speed, the Russian left in the lead, and held it until the finish line. Her teammate Uliana Kaisheva had single penalties in each prone stage and was only fourth after the last standing. Giving every ounce of energy she had on the final loop, Kaisheva reduced the gap to finish second. Swedish Olga Alifiravets left in second on the last lap, but lost it in the final meters, still taking the first podium in her career with one penalty.

By finishing sixth, Karolin Horchler of Germany secured the small Crystal Globe for the IBU Cup individual competitions, winning only by 2 points over Russia's Daria Virolaynen.

DECISIVE LAST LOOP

Typical Finnish weather came back to Kontiolahti stadium for the sprints, bring-



Podium Sprint Men

ing in a chilly -7C, with a hard track and light wind at the shooting range. Clean-shooting Alexander Povarnitsyn of Russia won the men's sprint; after the prone stage, where Loginov was the leader, Povarnitsyn was only fifth. The same accurate shooting in standing moved him into third with 5.6 seconds behind Loginov, who despite one penalty was still leading. Flying over the last loop, Povarnitsyn easily closed the gap, finishing ahead of his rivals. His teammate Loginov, usually very strong on the track, was just a bit slower and finished second. Ukraine's Ruslan Tkachenko was perfect at the both stages and left the final standing only .4 seconds from the first. At the next split, he reduced the gap, becoming the leader by 1.3 seconds. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian crossed the finish line in third, with the second individual podium of his career, matching the previous best result.

FIRST IBU CUP WIN

Povarnitsyn was one happy person after the finish. "I feel excellent! This is my first IBU Cup win! The first part of the season was not very good for me because of the illness, but now I'm really happy."

RUSSIAN PODIUM

In the women's sprint Virolaynen with bib 40, cleaned prone and went for one



Olga Alifiravets - SWE



penalty loop after standing. Still, this penalty did not prevent her from remaining in and increasing her lead until the finish. Second place went to her teammate Shumilova, who shot clean. Another Russian Victoria Slivko left in fifth after prone, but moved up to third after standing, taking the last place on the podium, making it an all-Russian affair.

CONFIDENT LEAD

The last competition day featured the final men's pursuit of the season. From the first prone, where Povarnitsyn had three penalties and fell out of conten-

tion, Ukraine's clean-shooting Tkalenko and Loginov with one penalty were leading the pack. Both cleaned the second prone to stay in the lead, followed by Moravec with one penalty, 25 seconds back. Loginov missed once in the first standing, while Tkalenko went for three penalty loops. The Russian was now being chased by France's Antonin Guigonnat 29.6 seconds back, Norway's Haavard Gutuboe Bogetveit and Russia's Matvey Eliseev at 40 seconds back. Moravec missed twice and dropped to fifth. Loginov had a solid lead before the last standing. Even with a tour to the penalty loop, he was out of the stadium as the others were just hitting the shooting mats. Moravec, Eliseev and Bogetveit all cleaned and left in the same order 4 seconds apart. In the final loop, the Czech and Norwegian were faster than the Russian, leaving him without a podium spot.

After the flower ceremony, Volkov received the small Globe in the IBU Cup Pursuit Score.

PURSUIT MEN 12.5 km

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	1+0+1+1	3	31:45.7
2. MORAVEC Ondrej	CZE	1+0+2+0	3	+9.8
3. BOGETVEIT Haavard G.	NOR	2+0+0+0	2	+12.9
4. ELISEEV Matvey	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	+41.1
5. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	1+1+0+0	2	+50.5

PURSUIT WOMEN 10 km

1. WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+0+2+0	2	31:07.8
2. SLIVKO Victoria	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	+2.8
3. KAISHEVA Uliana	RUS	1+0+0+0	1	+3.7
4. ALIFIRAVETS Olga	SWE	0+0+0+0	0	+18.8
5. ZDOUC Dunja	AUT	0+1+0+0	1	+19.1

SENIOR WIN FOR A JUNIOR

Sprint winner Virolaynen started the competition 19 seconds ahead of the field, enough to negate the first-prone penalty loop and still leave in the lead. While bib 2 Shumilova went for a penalty, Slivko and Germany's Anna Weidel cleaned, moving into second and third places. The second prone did not change much; those four stayed within 7 seconds, with Shumilova leading and Virolaynen dropping to fourth with one more penalty. In the first standing Slivko was the only one of the group to clean, leaving 16.1 seconds ahead of Shumilova. Bib 13 Kaisheva, 9th after the second prone, moved to 4th, while Weidel dropped to 6th with two penalties, and Virolaynen to 8th also with two. For the final standing

Daria Virolaynen - RUS



Alexander Loginov - RUS



Karolin Horchler - GER



Slivko came in first, shot clean, but not fast, allowing her rivals to move closer. Weidel and Kaisheva also cleaned, leaving 6.4 and 10.4 seconds behind, respectively. The young German was very fast on the track; she not only reduced the gap to Slivko, slipping ahead, but managed to keep the advantage over the Russian until the finish line, taking her first IBU Cup win. Slivko finished second, 2.8 seconds back, while Kaisheva followed her .9 seconds behind in third.

NO EXPECTATIONS

Weidel was very happy about her victory, but did not think it was possible. "I didn't expect to win here at the senior level. I just came with no expectations, it was like a good extra that I was allowed to start, and I wanted to make good races."



Podium Pursuit Women

TOTAL SCORE WINNER

With a big lead, Virolaynen was awarded with a small Globe for the women's IBU Cup Pursuit Score. She also received Big Crystal Globe for the IBU Cup Total

Score. Her 8th place in the pursuit gave Russian enough points to confirm her win in the Total Score. No one was in a position to overtake Virolaynen at the final IBU Cup 8, which she would not attend. ■

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FINAL IBU CUP

IN OTEPÄÄ

After a successful 2016 IBU Summer Biathlon World Championships 2016, Otepää, Estonia hosted the final 2016-17 IBU Cup for 31 nations, with 112 men and 95 women.

COMEBACK AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE

Besides the battle for the remaining small Globes, this last IBU Cup was also interesting due to the comeback of two well-known athletes, who need to fulfill the qualification criteria for next season's World Cup. Olympic Champion Ukraine's Vita Semerenko and World Championships' medalist Weronika Nowakowska of Poland, after becoming moms, stepped on the track for the first time after a long break.

STRONG WIND

Four competition days, including rescheduled mixed relays from Arber, started at Tehvandi stadium with the single mixed relay under tough windy conditions for 29 competing teams. Norway with Thekla Brun-Lie and Martin Festeinevik won the competition with just eleven spares, while second place went to Sweden with two penalties and fourteen spare rounds; Germany finished third with 1 penalty and eleven spares.

LOSING THIRD

With the teams staying together in the beginning of the competition and shuffling during the men's leg, at the second



Podium Mixed Relay 1

standing with a strong wind gusts, Brun-Lie became the only women from the top teams, not go to the penalty loop. At the final exchange, Norway and Sweden occupied the first two positions, with 11 seconds separating them.

Despite two spares at the final standing, Festeinevik left the range with a confident lead. Swedish Tobias Arwidson shot clean, leaving Germany and Russia battle for the last podium spot. Dominic Reiter had only one miss, while Alexey Volkov used all three spares, losing third place.

DUEL

Eighteen teams lined up for the mixed relay in the afternoon; wind gusts, which remained the same, brought many troubles for the athletes, causing a lot of missed shots. In the first leg, the teams

SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km 1

1. NORWAY	NOR	0+11	38:53.2	0.0
BRUN-LIE Thekla, FEMSTEINEVIK Martin				
2. SWEDEN	SWE	2+14	39:18.0	+24.8
ANDERSSON Ingela, ARWIDSON Tobias				
3. GERMANY	GER	1+11	39:43.5	+50.3
WEIDEL Anna, REITER Dominic				

MIXED RELAY 2 x 6 km / 2 X 7.5 km 1

1. GERMANY	GER	0+7	1:14:34.6	0.0
HORCHLER Karolin, DEIGENTESCH Marion, DORFER Matthias, ZOBEL David				
2. NORWAY	NOR	1+6	1:14:55.4	+20.8
ERDAL Karoline, NERAASEN Sigrild Bilstad, PETTERSEN Sindre, GJESBAKK Fredrik				
3. UKRAINE	UKR	1+12	1:15:14.5	+39.9
SEMERENKO Vita, BONDAR Iana, DOTSENKO Andriy, TKALENKO Ruslan				

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 1

1. ZAGORUIKO Anastasia	RUS	0+1	1	22:09.7	0.0
2. SCHWAIGER Julia	AUT	0+0	0	22:15.5	+5.8
3. NIKULINA Anna	RUS	0+0	0	22:16.7	+7.0
4. VASNETCOVA Valeriia	RUS	1+0	1	22:21.3	+11.6
5. ERDAL Karoline	NOR	0+0	0	22:26.3	+16.6

SPRINT MEN 10 km 1

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	0+1	1	25:14.0	0.0
2. VOLKOV Alexey	RUS	0+0	0	25:26.4	+12.4
3. L'ABEE-LUND Henrik	NOR	0+1	1	25:41.9	+27.9
4. GUIGONNAT Antonin	FRA	0+0	0	25:43.9	+29.9
5. SKJELVIK Kristoffer	NOR	0+1	1	25:45.0	+31.0

SPRINT WOMEN 7.5 km 2

1. LATUILLIERE Enora	FRA	0+1	1	23:17.4	0.0
2. SIMON Julia	FRA	0+0	0	23:21.7	+4.3
3. NIKULINA Anna	RUS	0+0	0	23:30.8	+13.4
4. WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+0	0	23:35.4	+18.0
5. MOSHKOVA Ekaterina	RUS	0+0	0	23:41.2	+23.8

SPRINT MEN 10 km 2

1. LOGINOV Alexander	RUS	1+1	2	28:00.9	0.0
2. L'ABEE-LUND Henrik	NOR	0+1	1	28:15.2	+14.3
3. JAEGER Martin	SUI	0+2	2	28:22.1	+21.2
4. GJESBAKK Fredrik	NOR	0+0	0	28:28.6	+27.7
5. SHOPIN Yury	RUS	0+0	0	28:30.5	+29.6

stayed close to each other with six athletes coming to the exchange within 15 seconds. Germany was in first with Sweden in second and Russia in third. Ukraine's Semerenko returned on the track with a solid performance; with two spares, she handed over fifth with a 9.5 seconds gap. After the second prone the group stayed

Enora Latuilliere - FRA



together with some changes after standing. Russia left in the lead, followed by Ukraine and Norway. The last shooting became decisive, but only in the battle for the second and third. The young German David Zobel used all spares, but left in first, while Russian and Ukrainian were troubled by wind gusts, taking their time to shoot. This gave an opportunity for Norway's Frederik Gjesbakk to close the 40-second gap he had behind third place. Gjesbakk shot fast and clean, while Kirill Streltsov and Ruslan Tkalenko went for a penalty loop.

The Russian and Ukrainian were dueling until the final meters, with Tkalenko crossing finish line .5 seconds ahead of Streltsov.

FINAL METERS

Beautiful weather with clear skies and light wind gusts started the second com-

Martin Jaeger - SUI and his Team



Anastasia Zagoruiko - RUS

petition day. Anastasia Zagoruiko of Russia took her first podium of the season by winning the women's sprint. In the prone stage Zagoruiko shot clean, but left the stadium only in 10th. With one penalty in standing, the Russian went into the final loop in 8th, 18.3 seconds behind clean-shooting Julia Schwaiger of Austria in first. Zagoruiko reduced the gap with each split, moving up in the standings. At 6.8K she was already in second, just 1.2 seconds back. Flying over the final meters, she finished first, pushing Schwaiger to second and her teammate Anna Nikulina, who was also accurate, to third. Nowakowska, in her first start, finished 28th with two penalties, 1:25.8 back.



FIFTH SEASON WIN

The first prone in men's sprint saw many athletes cleaning, with Russia's Alexander Loginov in the lead, followed by Norway's Henrik L'Abee-Lund 3.7 seconds later and Volkov in fifth, 10.9 seconds back. Unlike his rivals, Volkov also cleaned standing, leaving the stadium in first, but only 1.2 seconds ahead of the teammate, who missed once. Loginov, with the usual great speed, quickly reduced the gap, increasing his advantage on the others. L'Abee-Lund, who also went for a penalty after standing, entered the final lap in fourth, 7 seconds from third. The experienced Norwegian gave it all on the track, taking the last podium spot by 2 seconds.

EARLY START NUMBER

The last sprint day of the season started with the women's competition under the grey skies and light wind at the shooting range. An early start number became an advantage for France's Enora Latuilliere, who became the leader after prone. In standing she missed once and left the stadium in second, 3.7 seconds behind teammate Julia Simon. By the next split she reduced that gap, moving up to first and keeping it until the finish. For the last lap, Russia's Anna Nikulina left in fourth, sharing the place with Germany's Anna Weidel. With a strong final leg, Nikulina overcame young rival, taking third and securing first place in the IBU Cup Sprint

Score. After the flower ceremony she was awarded with the small crystal Globe.

FIRST PODIUM

The final individual competition of the season, men's 10K, featured the same cloudy weather with a light wind at the range. Loginov with bib 3 missed once in prone, leaving after the shooting range only in 12th place. In standing he went for one more penalty loop, but despite that left the stadium in third, 1.9 behind the leader. By the finish line he not only reduced the gap, but increased it over the more accurate rivals. After the standing, where he had a penalty, L'Abee-Lund

was second, just .3 seconds ahead of Loginov, and managed to keep that position until the finish. Ex cross-country skier Martin Jaeger of Switzerland, who started biathlon just three years ago, shot clean in the first prone and left the stadium in the lead. In standing he missed twice and was 8th with a 9.7 second gap from the first. With a fast final lap, Jaeger overcame his rivals, taking the last spot and first career podium.

BIG AND SMALL GLOBES WINNER

After the flower ceremony, the winner of the IBU Cup Total and Sprint Scores



Henrik L'abee-Lund - NOR, Alexey Volkov - RUS

SINGLE MIXED RELAY 6 km / 7.5 km 2

1	RUSSIA	RUS	1+5	35:24.4	0.0
	NIKULINA Anna, SHOPIN Yury				
2	NORWAY	NOR	0+5	35:32.8	+8.4
	BRUN-LIE Thekla, SKJELVIK Kristoffer				
3	SWEDEN	SWE	0+7	35:51.3	+26.9
	ANDERSSON Ingela, ARWIDSON Tobias				

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

1	NORWAY	NOR	0+7	1:24:20.1	0.0
	NERAASEN Sigrid Bilstad, ANDERSEN Rikke, PETTERSEN Sindre, L'ABEE-LUND Henrik				
2	FRANCE	FRA	0+7	1:24:41.5	+21.4
	SIMON Julia, LATUILLIERE Enora, BEGUE Aristide, GUIGONNAT Antonin				
3	UKRAINE	UKR	0+7	1:24:46.5	+26.4
	ZHURAVOK Yuliya, SEMERENKO Vita, TKALENKO Ruslan, DOTSENKO Andriy				

Alexey Volkov of Russia was awarded with the big and small Globes.

CRASH

On a beautiful and sunny last day of the season, 23 teams lined up for Sunday's single mixed relay in Otepää. Russia and Norway, who were battling for the IBU Cup women/men Relay Score, were in the lead from the start. Just before the first shooting some teams crashed on the downhill, losing precious time and falling out of contention. After cleaning both stages, Russia's Yury Shopin and Norway's Kristoffer Skjelvik arrived to the second exchange together, handing

over to the teammates. During third leg, Thekla Brun-Lie followed Nikulina, continuing the battle for the win. Sweden was in third. At the last prone stage Shopin cleaned, while Skjelvik missed twice, falling 21.6 seconds behind the Russian. However, in the final standing stage Shopin collected three

missed shots and one penalty. With just one spare, Skjelvik left the range only 3.3 seconds behind the Russian, but could not catch Shopin, who was faster on the track. After a solid performance by both Ingela Andersson and Tobias Arwidson, Sweden claimed the last spot on the podium.

DRAMATIC LAST STANDING

An exciting last competition of the 2016-17 IBU Cup season, mixed relay, with unexpected winner took place in the afternoon at the Tehvandi stadium. Russian team was at the leading positions during the whole relay and seemed that

nothing could prevent them of taking the second win of the day. When Alexander Povarnitsyn came for the last standing, he had a big lead over the rivals with no used spares during all seven ranges. Everything has changed at the final standing stage, where the Russian missed four times and left for the penalty loop, while experienced L'Abée-Lund shot fast and clean, leaving the stadium with a secure lead.

SMALL GLOBES

Povarnitsyn was second, followed by France's Antonin Guigonnat in 3 seconds and Ukraine's Andrey Dotsenko in 5 more seconds behind. The faith of the win was decided, but the battle for the last two podium spots was still going on the track. Dotsenko closed the gap on the rivals, moving to the third, while Guigonnat overtook Povarnitsyn. They finished in the same order. Still, fourth place did not prevent Russia of taking the IBU Cup women/men Relay Score, plus the Women's and Men's Nation Cup Scores. After the flower ceremony the Russian squad was awarded with the last seasonal Globes. **I**

TEXT Mariya Osolodkina

PICTURES Mariya Osolodkina



French Mixed Relay Team



Anna Nikulina - RUS



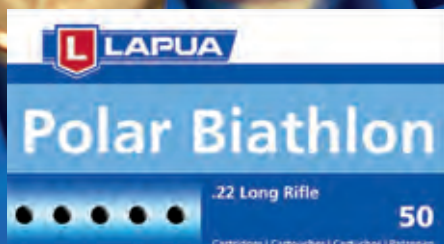
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IBU YOUTH/JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS **RETURN TO OSRBLIE**



MEDALS, SMILES AND FUTURE STARS

The 1994 IBU Junior World Championships were held at a simple venue in the small mountain village of Osrbliie in central Slovakia; this February, 23 years later, the 2017 IBU YJWCH returned to the same site, but a completely different looking venue from those days of yesteryear, with a permanent competition building and tribunes, spacious wax cabins, electronic targets and snow guns to ensure stable snow conditions.



Podium Youth Men Individual

However one thing did not change over that time: these Championships offered a glimpse of the future stars of biathlon. In 1994, a young Raphael Poirée of France won the sprint and individual titles; he moved on to become one of the legends in the sport and the boyhood idol of Martin Fourcade. In a few years, 2017 Champions like Sindre Pettersen of Norway, Igor Malinovskii of Russia, or Italians Irene Lardschneider and Michela Carrara might be World Cup stars in their own right. Only time will tell...

SEVEN WEEKS AND SUCCESS

The relocation of this year's IBU YJWCH from Russia to Osrblije presented a huge task for the organizers with just 7 weeks to accomplish what usually is done over a year or more. Yet, this group which hosted an IBU Cup just weeks earlier pulled off this late season major competition, with aplomb.

Although there had been significant snowfall during the IBU Cup a few weeks earlier, that snow-making equipment had covered the tracks and stadium with a 60+ cm hard snow base plus filled the snow depot; plenty to handle the sometimes spring-like conditions. The

experienced volunteers, IBU TD, and International Referees worked from dawn to dusk handling the seven days of multi-competitions, ensuring a professional operation.

Most importantly, the almost 400 young athletes had fun. A German athlete commented on the closing day, "We had a great time. The Swiss team was in our hotel; we had a bowling party one night, made some great new friends and will always remember these Championships."

NEW FACES

Although the IBU YJWCH was the last of the five-event IBU Junior Cup competitions, many of the competitors especially in the Youth category were new to international competitions. Therefore it was not surprising that the first day of training seemed a bit chaotic, with everyone trying to learn the stadium layout, the challenging tracks, and the sometimes tricky shooting range.



Podium Youth Women Individual

OPENING CEREMONIES; 7 COMPETITIONS DAYS

The Opening Ceremonies that night with the parade of nations, pageantry and fireworks was a good opportunity for all the athletes to relax and smile a bit before the intense competition program started. Two competitions each day for the next week, with Youth and Junior competitions on alternating days, except Sunday

INDIVIDUAL YOUTH WOMEN 10 KM

1.	JEANMONNOT LAURENT Lou FRA	0+1+0+0	1	34:00.9	0.0
2.	EGOROVA Kristina RUS	0+1+0+0	1	34:53.3	+52.4
3.	OEBERG Elvira Karin SWE	0+0+1+1	2	35:17.0	+1:16.1
4.	SANNIKOVA Ekaterina RUS	0+0+0+2	2	35:18.9	+1:18.0
5.	LARDSCHNEIDER Irene ITA	0+1+1+1	3	35:27.5	+1:26.6
6.	IYEROPES Darya BLR	1+0+0+0	1	35:44.7	+1:43.8
7.	COMOLA Samuela ITA	0+1+0+0	1	36:16.3	+2:15.4
8.	VINKLARKOVA Tereza CZE	0+2+0+1	3	36:22.9	+2:22.0
9.	DMYTRENKO Khrystyna UKR	0+1+1+1	3	36:25.3	+2:24.4
10.	TODOROVA Milena BUL	1+1+0+1	3	6:40.2	+2:39.3

INDIVIDUAL YOUTH MEN 12.5 KM

1.	GRANDBOIS Leo CAN	0+0+0+0	0	32:56.6	0.0
2.	KHALILI Said Karimulla RUS	1+0+1+1	3	34:11.5	+1:14.9
3.	RIETHMUELLER Danilo GER	2+1+0+0	3	34:18.1	+1:21.5
4.	CHRISTILLE Cedric ITA	1+0+0+0	1	34:41.1	+1:44.5
5.	TSIURYAN Kiryl BLR	1+1+0+0	2	35:02.6	+2:06.0
6.	LAZOUSKI Dzmitry BLR	0+2+0+0	2	35:37.2	+2:40.6
7.	KROGSAETER Joergen NOR	2+0+1+1	4	35:39.6	+2:43.0
8.	HARJULA Tuomas FIN	0+1+0+1	2	36:00.8	+3:04.2
9.	CISAR Alex SLO	1+0+0+3	4	36:18.2	+3:21.6
10.	STALDER Sebastian SUI	2+1+1+1	5	36:26.8	+3:30.2



hard, while at the same time, there was no wind on the shooting range.

Even on a windless day, the combined men's/women's field of 194 starters produced but a single clean shooter, Canada's Leo Grandbois who claimed the first Gold medal winning the Youth Men's 12.5K individual in 32:56.6. Behind Grandbois, the Silver medal went to Russia's Said Karimulla Khalili, with three penalties, 1:14.9 back. Danilo Riethmüller of Germany won the Bronze medal, also with three penalties, 1:21.5 back.

The 17-year-old Canadian was stunned with both his win and shooting. "I am not sure how to react; it is just sinking in... This was the first time I ever shot clean in a competition, so I am pretty happy...I came here thinking that a top10 would be good."

Silver medalist Khalili from Russia added some history to the day; with Russian

and Afghan parents, he is the first IBU medalist of Afghan descent.

HUMID OPENING FOR INDIVIDUALS

After a cold night with freezing temperatures, light rain and low clouds persisted throughout the first competition day. However the tracks remained quite

Julia Schwaiger - AUT and Anna Weidel - GER



INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR WOMEN 12.5 KM

1.	BANKES Megan	CAN	0+0+0+0	0	37:22.0	0.0
2.	SCHWAIGER Julia	AUT	0+0+0+1	1	38:09.9	+47.9
3.	WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+1+0+0	1	38:42.0	+1:20.0
4.	VOIGT Vanessa	GER	0+1+0+0	1	38:57.7	+1:35.7
5.	LAFFONT Deborah	FRA	0+0+0+0	0	39:07.6	+1:45.6
6.	HETTICH Janina	GER	0+1+0+0	1	39:11.0	+1:49.0
7.	SOLA Hanna	BLR	0+2+0+0	2	39:19.6	+1:57.6
8.	BLASHKO Darya	BLR	1+1+0+0	2	39:38.9	+2:16.9
9.	SIMON Julia	FRA	1+0+0+1	2	39:40.4	+2:18.4
10.	TANDREVOLD Ingrid	NOR	0+1+1+1	3	40:01.0	+2:39.0

INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR MEN 15 KM

1.	PETERSEN Sindre	NOR	0+0+0+2	2	40:17.2	0.0
2.	ZOBEL David	GER	0+2+1+0	3	41:08.4	+51.2
3.	LOBASTOV Nikita	RUS	0+1+0+0	1	41:12.4	+55.2
4.	TRIEB Michael	AUT	0+1+0+0	1	41:19.0	+1:01.8
5.	DEKSNIS Ingus	LAT	0+0+0+0	0	41:27.4	+1:10.2
6.	STRELTSOV Kirill	RUS	0+1+1+1	3	41:29.2	+1:12.0
7.	JAKOB Patrick	AUT	0+0+1+0	1	41:31.1	+1:13.9
8.	SEPPELAE Tero	FIN	0+1+1+2	4	41:55.5	+1:38.3
9.	ZEMLICKA Milan	CZE	0+1+1+1	3	42:03.0	+1:45.8
10.	DUDCHENKO Anton	UKR	0+0+1+2	3	42:08.0	+1:50.8

BE ON THE PODIUM

Although Lou Laurent Jeanmonnot of France could not match Grandbois on the shooting range, she won the Youth Women's 10K individual with one penalty later that day. Russia's Kristina Egorova, with one penalty won the Silver medal, 52.4 seconds back. Sweden's Elvira Karin Öberg, with two penalties, took the Bronze medal. Jeanmonnot had placed 39th in the individual at the IBU JOECH, but won the Gold medal in Osrblie. She commented with a big smile, "I just wanted to be better than that today...and I really wanted to be on the podium!" Bronze medalist Öberg, whose big sister Hanna won two Gold medals at the 2016 Championships admitted jokingly to a family rivalry. "I think I am better than her; this is my first Championships and I have a medal. She did not win any until her last year!"

JUNIOR TITLES TO PETERSEN AND BANKES

Norway's Sindre Pettersen, despite two last-stage penalties, took the lead in the Junior Men's 15K individual after the first prone stage and never relinquished it on



Podium Junior Men Sprint

his way to the Gold medal in 40:17.2. In the afternoon, clean-shooting Megan Bankes of Canada won her nation's second Gold medal taking the Junior Women's 12.5K individual in 37:22. She followed Leo Grandbois' victory in the Youth Men's individual.

The men's Silver medal went to Germany's David Zobel, with three penalties, 51.2 seconds back while Russia's Nikita

Lobastov won the Bronze medal, with one penalty, 55.2 seconds back.

NORDIC COMBINED TO BIATHLON GOLD

Pettersen was elated and surprised with his Gold medal. "This is not my best event; I am better at the sprints...I was really nervous after the two misses, but then I just forgot them and did what I should have done in the first two shots...I

changed from Nordic Combined after a back injury stopped my ski jumping and now I am really happy that I changed to biathlon!"

EXPERIENCE AND BETTER SHOOTING

The previous day's rain kept it warm overnight, so the competitions were delayed by 30 minutes, to allow for extra grooming and preparation. Although the snow was soft in spots, the tracks remained in good condition, with again just a moderate breeze on the shooting range. The juniors showed their experience, especially on the shooting range, with steadier shooting and less penalties than their younger counterparts.

Behind Bankes, the Silver medal went to Julia Schwaiger of Austria, 47.9 seconds back, while Germany's Anna Weidel won the Bronze medal, 1:12 back. Schwaiger and Weidel both had one penalty. Weidel's third place gave her the IBU Junior Cup individual title.

Bankes commented on her shooting. "After the European Juniors a couple of weeks ago when I got second in the pursuit, I knew if I shot and skied well, I could get a medal here. I shot with a lot of confidence today; it came really easy."

SPRINT YOUTH WOMEN 6 KM

1.	LARDSCHNEIDER Irene	ITA	0+1	1	19:48.3	0.0
2.	GANDLER Anna	AUT	0+1	1	20:54.8	+1:06.5
3.	COMOLA Samuela	ITA	0+0	0	21:06.4	+1:18.1
4.	VOZELJ Tais	SLO	0+1	1	21:19.1	+1:30.8
5.	JAKIELA Joanna	POL	0+4	4	21:19.3	+1:31.0
6.	EGOROVA Kristina	RUS	1+1	2	21:22.7	+1:34.4
7.	JOHANSEN Marthe Krakstad	NOR	0+1	1	21:23.0	+1:34.7
8.	TODOROVA Milena	BUL	1+1	2	21:24.4	+1:36.1
9.	NIKKINEN Heidi	FIN	2+1	3	21:25.4	+1:37.1
10.	DMYTRENKO Khrystyna	UKR	1+1	2	21:26.0	+1:37.7

SPRINT YOUTH MEN 7.5 KM

1.	CLAUDE Emilien	FRA	1+1	2	20:18.3	0.0
2.	TELEN Serhiy	UKR	0+1	1	20:43.5	+25.2
3.	BAKKEN Sivert Guttorm	NOR	1+1	2	21:02.9	+44.6
4.	CHRISTILLE Cedric	ITA	0+2	2	21:10.3	+52.0
5.	STOYANOV Kristiyan	BUL	0+1	1	21:19.7	+1:01.4
6.	RIETHMUELLER Danilo	GER	1+1	2	21:33.7	+1:15.4
7.	BRAUNHOFER Patrick	ITA	1+1	2	21:48.1	+1:29.8
8.	TUMLER Peter	ITA	2+2	4	21:50.6	+1:32.3
9.	STVRTECKY Jakub	CZE	1+3	4	21:51.1	+1:32.8
10.	PANCERZ Przemyslaw	POL	2+1	3	21:57.1	+1:38.8



Irene Lardschneider - ITA



Claude Emilien - FRA

SCHWAIGER **"PICKED MYSELF UP"**

Schwaiger had a meltdown in the relay at the IBU WCH in her home stadium a

week earlier. Coming back to win a medal was a challenge. "The individual is my favorite; I do not know why, but it is...I had a hard time last week in Hochfilzen; I was really down on the ground, but I knew I was shooting well, so I picked myself up and told myself I could do this."

WINDBLOWN **YOUTH SPRINTS**

The weather changed for the Youth sprints; clearing skies brought strong winds cutting directly across the shooting range from left to right, making shooting simply a lottery and softening the top of the tracks. The fortunate athletes got a 10-15 second

SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN 7.5 KM

1. CARRARA Michela	ITA	0+0	0	20:57.8	0.0
2. TANDREVOLD Ingrid	NOR	1+0	1	21:13.0	+15.2
3. BEGUE Myrtille	FRA	0+0	0	21:29.3	+31.5
4. KUPFNER Simone	AUT	0+0	0	21:38.6	+40.8
5. ERDAL Karoline	NOR	0+1	1	21:39.3	+41.5
6. MARIKOVA Simona	CZE	0+0	0	21:45.7	+47.9
7. POJE Urska	SLO	0+0	0	21:48.5	+50.7
8. SIMON Julia	FRA	2+0	2	22:06.3	+1:08.5
9. BLASHKO Darya	BLR	1+1	2	22:07.8	+1:10.0
10. SCHWAIGER Julia	AUT	1+1	2	22:11.5	+1:13.7

SPRINT JUNIOR MEN 10 KM

1. MALINOVSKII Igor	RUS	0+0	0	24:32.2	0.0
2. STRELTSOV Kirill	RUS	0+0	0	24:44.4	+12.2
3. YEREMIN Roman	KAZ	2+0	2	24:57.1	+24.9
4. SMOLSKI Anton	BLR	1+0	1	24:57.3	+25.1
5. ZOBEL David	GER	1+0	1	25:10.4	+38.2
6. ZEMLICKA Milan	CZE	0+0	0	25:15.4	+43.2
7. PORSHNEV Nikita	RUS	0+1	1	25:24.2	+52.0
8. PETERSEN Sindre	NOR	0+3	3	25:24.5	+52.3
9. RIVAIL Hugo	FRA	0+1	1	25:32.0	+59.8
10. DUDCHENKO Anton	UKR	0+1	1	25:42.9	+1:10.7

respite from the strong gusts, the others would hold the shots for 10 or 20 seconds, waiting for a break in the wind.

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TECHNOLOGY

PURSUIT JUNIOR WOMEN 10 KM

1.	VASNETCOVA Valeriia	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	31:49.5
2.	CARRARA Michela	ITA	1+1+1+0	3	+10.0 54
3.	TANDREVD Ingrid	NOR	0+0+1+1	2	+10.8 48
4.	WEIDEL Anna	GER	1+0+1+0	2	+14.4 43
5.	SIMON Julia	FRA	0+0+1+1	2	+40.3 40
6.	BEGUE Myrtille	FRA	1+0+0+0	1	+49.4 38
7.	ERDAL Karoline	NOR	0+0+0+3	3	+55.2 36
8.	BLASHKO Darya	BLR	1+0+1+0	2	+55.8 34
9.	SCHNEIDER Sophia	GER	0+1+0+1	2	+1:01.8 32
10.	ZUK Kamila	POL	0+1+1+0	2	+1:15.0

PURSUIT JUNIOR MEN 12.5 KM

1.	MALINOVSKII Igor	RUS	0+1+2+1	4	32:39.8
2.	PETTERSEN Sindre	NOR	2+1+1+1	5	+13.0
3.	SMOLSKI Anton	BLR	0+0+3+2	5	+27.4
4.	STRELTsov Kirill	RUS	0+3+1+1	5	+35.1
5.	ZEMLICKA Milan	CZE	1+0+1+0	2	+35.1
6.	YEREMIN Roman	KAZ	4+2+0+0	6	+39.1
7.	PORSHNEV Nikita	RUS	0+1+2+1	4	+1:16.2
8.	LOBASTOV Nikita	RUS	0+1+1+1	3	+1:27.1
9.	ZOBEL David	GER	2+0+3+1	6	+1:50.3
10.	LAMURE Morgan	FRA	1+0+0+0	1	+1:50.9

PURSUIT YOUTH WOMEN 10 KM

1.	LARDSCHNEIDER Irene	ITA	0+0+2+2	4	26:57.1
2.	JEANMONNOT LAURENT Lou	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	+24.4
3.	COMOLA Samuela	ITA	1+0+1+0	2	+1:08.5
4.	LEVINS Chloe	USA	2+0+0+0	2	+1:55.5
5.	DMYTRENKO Khrystyna	UKR	1+1+1+1	4	+2:02.3
6.	KERAENEN Maija	FIN	0+0+2+0	2	+2:10.4
7.	SANNIKOVA Ekaterina	RUS	1+1+1+1	4	+2:19.7
8.	GOREEVA Anastasiia	RUS	1+4+0+1	6	+2:19.9
9.	JOHANSEN Marthe Krakstad	NOR	0+1+2+3	6	+2:22.5
10.	TODOROVA Milena	BUL	0+0+1+2	3	+2:22.7

PURSUIT YOUTH MEN 10 KM

1.	CLAUDE Emilien	FRA	1+1+0+2	4	29:22.4
2.	CHRISTILLE Cedric	ITA	0+0+1+1	2	+16.0
3.	RIETHMUELLER Danilo	GER	1+0+1+2	4	+30.7
4.	KHALILI Said Karimulla	RUS	0+2+1+1	4	+52.6
5.	HARJULA Tuomas	FIN	0+0+1+2	3	+56.6
6.	BAKKEN Sivert Guttorm	NOR	3+2+1+1	7	+57.0
7.	TELEN Serhiy	UKR	1+0+3+1	5	+1:21.3
8.	SOERUM Vebjoern	NOR	2+1+1+0	4	+1:22.1
9.	KROGSAETER Joergen	NOR	1+2+0+1	4	+1:42.3
10.	NOVOPASHIN Ilia	RUS	1+1+0+1	3	+1:46.4

FAST AND GOLDEN

2016 Youth Olympic Sprint Gold medalist Emilien Claude of France won the wind battle and the Gold medal in the Youth Men's 7.5K sprint with a single penalty in each stage, finished in 20:18.3, 25.2 seconds ahead of Silver medalist Serhiy Telen of Ukraine, with one penalty. The Bronze medal went to Norway's Sivert Guttorm Bakken, also with two penalties, 44.6 seconds back.

Claude commented, "I was really fast on

standing, all I was thinking was fast, fast, fast."

WINNING BY MORE THAN A MINUTE

Italy's Irene Lardschneider, with one penalty literally overwhelmed her rivals in the Youth Women's 6K sprint, winning the Gold medal in 19:48.3, more than minute ahead of the field. Silver medalist Anna Gandler of Austria, with one penalty finished 1:06.5 back. Italy dominated



Michela Carrara - ITA, Igor Malinovskii - RUS

the tracks today. I was a bit lucky on the shooting range; the wind was not really bad when I shot standing. When I left the shooting range after

the podium with Lardschneider's clean-shooting roommate Samuela Comola in the Bronze spot, 1:18.1 back.

Lardschneider commented, "This is my first Championships and winning a medal is amazing...I really like these soft snow conditions and I had amazing skis."

CLEAN SHOOTING SPRINTERS

2016 IBU Youth Sprint World Champion Igor Malinovskii of Russia shot clean on a clear, but breezy morning to become the 2017 IBU Junior Sprint Gold medalist, covering the 10K course in 24:22, 12.2 seconds ahead of teammate Silver medalist Kirill Streltsov, also shooting clean. The lightening fast tracks meant a fast shooting range approach. Individual

Gold medalist Sindre Pettersen cleaned prone quickly while all four Russian men matched. Numbers 51 Streltsov and 60 Malinovskii made standing look easy with fast clean stages, ending the battle for the top two spots. It was a matter of who would be faster on the last loop. The faster last loop gave Malinovskii his second IBU YJWCH sprint Gold medal. "The Junior competition is much harder than the Youth. I worked all year for this moment... The coaches kept telling me that I was battling for the podium but never told me it was Kirill until just before the finish."

OVERWHELMED, BUT FOCUSED CARRARA WINS GOLD

Clean-shooting Michela Carrara of Italy won the afternoon Junior Women's Sprint Gold medal in 20:57.8, giving Italy its second sprint Gold. Lardschneider won the Youth title the previous day. World Cup veteran Ingrid Landmark Tandrevold of



Podium Junior Men Pursuit





Podium Sprint Junior Women

Norway, with one penalty won the Silver medal, 15.2 seconds back. The Bronze medal went to Myrtille Begue of France, also shooting clean, 31.5 seconds back.

Carrara was overwhelmed, "I never expected to win a Gold medal so I am very happy. I missed six in the individual and today I shot clean." Her coach Michela Ponza added, "In the individual, she was not very focused and reacted to the wind flags in the wrong way. Today was different; the focus was very good."

PURSUIT SUNDAY: BIATHLON RUSH HOUR

Pursuit Sunday at these Championships is always a challenge, for the coaches, technicians, organizers and especially the athletes. Wind, rain, soft snow, four competitions and 240 starters in one day made it look like biathlon rush hour, with everything happening in just over four hours.

CLAUDE, LARDSCHNEIDER: WIRE-TO-WIRE, DOUBLE GOLD

Wire-to-wire wins for France's Emilien Claude and Italy's Irene Lardschneider opened the day. Claude, despite four

penalties won his second Gold medal in the Youth Men's pursuit in 29:22.4. Italy's Irene Lardschneider, with four penalties, matched Claude with an equally impressive victory in the Youth Women's 7.5K pursuit and her second Gold medal in 26:57.1.

Silver medalist Cedric Christille of Italy, with two penalties finished 16.1 seconds behind Claude, while the Bronze medal went to Danilo Riethmueller of Germany, with four penalties, 30.7 seconds back. Claude was never challenged, but at one point Christille got within 14 seconds. Beyond that, the budding French star dominated the day. At the finish, all he could say was, "I am very happy; this is a big accomplishment for me." The Italian Christille adding another medal for his team, with a big smile said, "I tried to catch him, but the shooting was very hard. Still, I am very happy to win the Silver medal."

NEW EXPERIENCE FOR LARDSCHNEIDER

Behind Lardschneider's second Gold medal, Jeanmonnot, the Youth Women's individual Gold medalist, with one penalty, won the Silver medal, 24.4 seconds back. Comola of Italy, with two penalties, won her second Bronze medal, 1:08.5 back.



Valeriia Vasnetcova - RUS

Lardschneider started with a 1:07 lead; she was almost on the shooting range as the last of the 60 starters left the stadium. The young Italian was within 50 meters of lapping the last starters by the time she cleaned the second prone stage and went on to victory.

She admitted her win was harder than it looked. "I never led an international race like this before...I was really nervous at

Sivert Bakken - NOR



**Anna Gandler - AUT**

the last standing. Being alone, I had all of that time to think; if I cleaned I would win, if I missed...But I only had two penalties and it was okay...I never expected to win two Gold medals."

RUSSIAN JUNIOR DOUBLE

Russia dominated the Junior Pursuits as Igor Malinovskii and Vanessa Vasnetcova won the Gold medals. Malinovskii, with four penalties won his second Gold

medal in 32:39.8. In the afternoon Junior Women's pursuit, Valeria Vasnetcova shot clean, moving up from 24th at the start to surprise the field with a Gold medal performance in 31:49.5.

Malinovskii finished 13 seconds ahead of Silver medalist Sindre Pettersen of Norway, with five penalties. The Bronze medal went to Anton Smolski of Belarus, also with five penalties, 27.4 seconds back. This was a see-saw battle among the top three plus Kirill Streltsov. All of the medals were decided in the final standing stage. Malinovskii and Smolski came in together; the Russian shot faster and missed a shot, while his rival had two penalties. Pettersen added a single penalty but left in second and the top medals were decided. The ever-smiling Malinovskii got some extra motivation on the tracks. "On the big uphill, my coach tapped me several times with a ski pole. That was all I needed; last year, he told me to smile. This was something different and it worked!"

VASNETCOVA'S THRILLING WIN

The Junior Women's pursuit was one of the most exciting competitions of the week. Behind the surprise winner, Sprint Gold medalist Michela Carrara of Italy won the Silver medal in finish-line bat-

tle over Norway's Ingrid Landmark Tandrevold. The Italian had three penalties, while Tandrevold had two; they finished .8 seconds apart.

SILVER SPRINT

Cararra led the first loop, but missed a prone shot while Tandrevold cleaned. They went out together and shot together in the second prone. By the last standing, it seemed like Tandrevold and teammate Caroline Erdal would battle for the Gold medal. Over the fourth loop, Vasnetcova, moving up from 24th at the start moved into contention, with her continued clean shooting. The two left-handed Norwegian teammates shot together; Erdal faltered with three penalties, while Tandrevold had one. The Russian cleaned again, leaving with a 5 second lead over Tandrevold. Carrara cleaned again to go out in third, 12.5 seconds back. Vasnetcova continued to pull away for the Gold medal, with Carrara battling for the Silver with the Norwegian. They sprinted the last 100 meters almost side-by-side, with Carrara claiming the Silver spot and Tandrevold Bronze.

A DREAM

The surprise winner was beyond excited, crossing the finish line with her hands high and a broad smile. "I never had any

Russian Relay Junior Men Team



idea before the start that I could win...In the last standing when I saw the others missing, then I realized I could possibly win...This is all like a dream that I don't want to wake up from."



Norway Relay Youth Men Team



Podium Relay Youth Women

YOUTH RELAYS: NORWEGIAN MEN AND RUSSIAN WOMEN

Sivert Guttorm Bakken of Norway secured the Gold medal for Norway in the Youth Men's 3 X 7.5K relay with a final 5-for-5 standing stage. He and teammates Joergen Brendengen Krogsaeter and Vebjoern Soerum had just 6 spares in their 55:05.4 victory.

Russia claimed the Silver medal, with Belarus winning the Bronze.

The Youth relays were treated to brilliant sunshine, very comfortable +8C temperature and a barely noticeable breeze. This competition turned out to be a two-team battle between Norway and Russia. In the final standing stage, Bakken was next to his Russian rival Khalili; five final shots for the Gold medal. Bakken cleaned in five, while the young Russian had two penalties; game over, Norway had the Gold medal.

BEST FRIENDS, GOLD MEDALISTS

The Norwegian Gold medalists were more than teammates at the IBU YJWCH. Krogsaeter commented, "We go to the same sports school in Lillehammer, train together and are best friends. It is pretty special to win a Gold medal together!"

TWO TEAMS AND PENALTIES

The Russian team of Ekaterina Sannikova, Anastasia Goreeva and Kristina Egorova, despite a penalty and seven spare rounds won the afternoon Youth Women's 3 X 6K relay in 57:50.7. Behind Russia, Norway won the Silver medal, with just four spares, while Italy claimed the Bronze medal.

Twenty-two teams on the start, but two teams moved quickly to the front. In the first leg, both Norway and Italy went 10-for-10 to move to the front of the pack. At the first exchange, the Norway held a 1.3 second lead at the exchange over Lardschneider. By the final leg, Russia was in the mix. These three teams were in control of the medal spots. Norway and Russia battled on the last loop for Gold, but Egorova proved to be the stronger than Norway's Mari Wetterhus, bringing Russia the Gold. Egorova was confident in the last loop. "After the last shooting,

RELAY YOUTH WOMEN 3 x 6 KM					
1.	RUSSIA	RUS	1+7	59:43.2	0.0
SANNIKOVA Ekaterina, GOREEVA Anastasiia, EGOROVA Kristina					
2.	NORWAY	NOR	0+4	1:00:01.5	+18.3
JOHANSEN Marthe Krakstad, SKOGAN Marit Ishol, WETTERHUS Mari					
3.	ITALY	ITA	1+4	1:00:48.0	+1:04.8
COMOLA Samuela, LARDSCHNEIDER Irene, VIGNA Martina					
4.	FINLAND	FIN	1+5	1:01:23.9	+1:40.7
KERANEN Jenni, KERAENEN Maija, NIKKINEN Heidi					
5.	UKRAINE	UKR	0+5	1:01:56.5	+2:13.3
KYPACHENKOVA Liubov, KOVALENKO Oksana, DMYTRENKO Khrystyna					
RELAY YOUTH MEN 3 x 7.5 KM					
1.	NORWAY	NOR	0+6	55:05.4	0.0
KROGSAETER Joergen Brendengen, SOERUM Vebjoern, BAKKEN Sivert Guttorm					
2.	RUSSIA	RUS	2+9	55:59.6	+54.2
MIKONKII Aleksandr, NOVOPASHIN Iliia, KHALILI Said Karimulla					
3.	BELARUS	BLR	0+8	56:47.0	+1:41.6
TSIURYN Kiryl, AUSEYENKA Ilya, LAZOUSKI Dmytry					
4.	ITALY	ITA	1+5	57:14.7	+2:09.3
BRAUNHOFER Patrick, TUMLER Peter, CHRISTILLE Cedric					
5.	SWITZERLAND	SUI	0+9	57:29.9	+2:24.5
FAVRE Robin, HARTWEG Niklas, STALDER Sebastian					

I knew I had some power left for the last loop."

JUNIOR RELAYS: FINAL GOLD MEDALS TO RUSSIAN MEN, NORWEGIAN WOMEN

The Russian team of Nikita Lobastov, Igor Malinovskii, Nikita Porshnev and Kirill Streltsov won the Junior Men's 4 X 7.5K relay in style, leading and unchallenged after the first leg, with just seven spares in 1:17:27.8. Norway took the Silver medal and Germany won the Bronze medal.

FIRST LEG TO KAZAKHSTAN; THEN RUSSIA PULLS AWAY

Typical of many relays, the first leg saw unheralded Kazakhstan in the lead at the first exchange; Russia lagged 44 seconds back. However, with Sprint Gold medalist Malinovskii on the second leg, everything changed. He powered through the field, used a single spare and tagged Porshnev with a 38 second gap on the field. Porsh-



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RELAY JUNIOR WOMEN 3 x 6 KM

1. NORWAY	NOR	0+8	56:18.4	0.0
EIDE Hilde, ERDAL Karoline, TANDREVOLD Ingrid Landmark				
2. GERMANY	GER	1+9	56:34.9	+16.5
VOIGT Vanessa, SCHNEIDER Sophia, WEIDEL Anna				
3. RUSSIA	RUS	1+8	56:44.5	+26.1
REZTSOVA Kristina, MOSHKOVA Ekaterina, VASNETCOVA Valeriia				
4. AUSTRIA	AUT	0+7	57:07.2	+48.8
STEINER Tamara, SCHWAIGER Julia, KUPFNER Simone				
5. FRANCE	FRA	3+11	57:36.9	+1:18.5
BEGUE Myrtille, COLOMBO Caroline, SIMON Julia				

RELAY JUNIOR MEN 4 x 7.5 KM

1. RUSSIA	RUS	0+7	1:17:27.8	0.0
LOBASTOV Nikita, MALINOVSKII Igor, PORSHNEV Nikita, STRELTSOV Kirill				
2. NORWAY	NOR	1+12	1:18:21.7	+53.9
BJOERNDAL Dag Sander, DALE Johannes, ANDERSEN Aleksander Fjeld, PETERSEN Sindrein				
3. GERMANY	GER	1+16	1:19:07.1	+1:39.3
STELTOW Justus, RIETHMUELLER Danilo, SCHMUCK Dominic, ZOBEL David				
4. CZECH REPUBLIC	CZE	3+12	1:19:22.2	+1:54.4
SANTORA Ondrej, PROCHAZKA Jakub, STVRTECKY Jakub, ZEMLICKA Milan				
5. FINLAND	FIN	0+7	1:19:22.3	+1:54.5
RANTA Jaakko Olavi, SORMUNEN Vili, INVENIUS Tuukka, SEPPAELAE Tero				



Norway Relay Junior Women Team

nev tagged Junior Cup Total Score winner Streltsov with a 1:17 lead over Norway, and the Russian team ran away with the victory. Malinovskii, with his third Gold medal commented, "My job was to get as big a lead as possible to make it easier for the other guys."

NORWEGIAN WOMEN "BETTER THAN THE BOYS"

Norway with Hilde Eide, Caroline Erdal and Ingrid Landmark Tandrevold

won Gold medal in the afternoon Junior Women's relay, with eight spares in 56:18.4, topping their male counterparts who won the Silver medal earlier that day. Germany finished behind Norway for the Silver medal while Russia, won the Bronze medal.

WIND AND SPARES

The wind picked up for the last competition and the standing shooting showed the result of that; almost every athlete

needed spare rounds in standing. Three teams went 5-for-5 in the first prone stage, led by Czech Republic. Ten teams were on the range together for the first standing; no one left unscathed, with 11 of the 17 teams taking at least one penalty. At the first exchange, Poland led Belarus by the length of a ski, with France and Norway 35 and 36 seconds back.

Second leg Erdal tagged double medalist Tandrevold with an 18 second lead over Austria with Germany and Russia another 9 and 14 seconds back. In the last standing, both Norway and Germany needed spare rounds, but the experienced Tandrevold had a 13 second lead and held on for the Gold medal. She commented, "We were all nervous this morning; Caroline and I kept worrying that we were getting sick, but this is worth it with a medal around our neck...I knew Anna Weidel was a good shooter and was worried in that last standing stage. The long drive tonight will not be a problem after this...Getting this Gold is perfect; we always want to be better than the boys!"

SMILES AND MEDALS

The three smiling, laughing Norwegian women with Gold medals and their Silver medal winning teammates symbolize the IBU YJWCH. They love to win, but they al-



Junior Total Score Champions: Kirill Streltsov - RUS and Myrtille Beguel - FRA



Junior Pursuit Score Champion: Milan Zemlicka - CZE

so love to have fun and most of all, they are all friends. Next year, many of these medalists will move on...to the IBU Cup, World Cup, or Olympic Winter Games and possibly biathlon stardom. Others will be back in Otepää for the 2018 IBU YJWCH and their turn, to flash a smile and hug a teammate with a medal around their neck. **I**

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

PICTURES Rene Miko



Prone Shooting



Martin Fourcade (FRA)

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NO PLACE LIKE HOME FOR CZECH TEAM



Podium Junior Men Individual

It is always special to compete at home and even better when an athlete wins medals in front of family and friends; just ask the Czech team. Over three competitions days at the IBU Junior Open European Championships at the Vysočina Arena in Nové Město na Moravě, they won three Gold medals, one Silver medal and one Bronze medal. Only the Russian team with two Gold, two Silver and a Bronze challenged the home team.



Anna Weidel - GER

The IBU JOECH was stop number four in the five-stage IBU Junior Cup and the final tune-up before the 2017 IBU YJWCH in Osler two weeks later. Many of the teams came directly from the Julian Alps of Pokljuka to the rolling hills of Moravia in the middle of the Czech Republic, arriving late on Monday evening. They were road weary and tired after mixed relays and sprints at Pokljuka and an 8-hour drive.

However at the same time, everyone was eager to compete in the cavernous stadium, now well-known on the World Cup circuit.

RELAXED ATMOSPHERE, TOP ATHLETES

Although the competitions themselves were important, the IBU JOECH was also about more learning opportunities and

new experiences for this new generation.

The atmosphere throughout the competitions was laid back and relaxed; reminiscent of biathlon 20 years ago. Unlike at the World Cup, moving around the gigantic Vysočina Arena was easy; just enough control to keep everyone safe, but easy enough for coaches to cross the fence from the shooting range to check on an athlete testing skis on the other

side of the stadium. Athletes listened intently when the coaches comment on the last shooting bout; another lesson in the learning process for the roughly 280 athletes from 35 nations on hand.

With all the big nations, including Germany, Norway, Russia, Ukraine and the home team, Czech Republic plus big talents like Russia's Kirill Streltsov of Russia, Myrtille Begue of France, and Germany's David Zobel on hand the competition for the medals was going to be stiff.

INDIVIDUALS: CLEAN SHOOTING NETS GOLD

The first competition day was dominated by the fog that enveloped the Vysočina Arena with a dampness that made the minus 5C temperature feel much colder. Germany's Anna Weidel won the first

did not take the lead until the final standing, slowly moving up after each clean stage, from 5th to 4th to 2nd; then to the top. She commented on her career-best day. "It feels really, really good. I never before hit all 20 targets... After the last one went down, I thought: "now you have to give everything."

1-2 FOR RUSSIA

By mid-afternoon, with the fog waning, Russia's Igor Malinovskii, like Weidel shot clean for the first time in his career, winning the Men's 15K individual Gold medal in 39:56.3. Malinovskii's teammate, IBU

INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR WOMEN 12.5 KM

1. WEIDEL Anna	GER	0+0+0+0	0	42:00.3	0.0
2. BEGUE Myrtille	FRA	0+0+1+0	1	42:11.0	+10.7
3. DAVIDOVA Marketa	CZE	1+2+0+0	3	42:38.3	+38.0
4. KAPLINA Elizaveta	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	42:50.4	+50.1
5. MARIKOVA Simona	CZE	0+1+0+0	1	42:55.3	+55.0

INDIVIDUAL JUNIOR MEN 15 KM

1. MALINOVSKII Igor	RUS	0+0+0+0	0	39:56.3	0.0
2. STRELTSOV Kirill	RUS	0+0+1+1	2	41:42.9	+1:46.6
3. SMOLSKI Anton	BLR	0+1+0+0	1	42:01.9	+2:05.6
4. VEIT Marinus	GER	0+0+0+0	0	42:11.1	+2:14.8
5. ZEMLICKA Milan C	CZE	0+0+1+0	1	42:21.1	+2:24.8

the second prone, and then sitting in second until he dropped the 15th target. Another clean stage, plus some impressive skiing put well ahead of Veit, the only other man to shoot clean. Malinovskii, with a smile wide enough to light up the foggy afternoon, was elated with his shooting. "This is my first time; I knew it was important to shoot clean in this competition."



Igor Malinovskii - **RUS**



Simona Marikova and Marketa Davidova - **CZE**

Gold medal, shooting clean for the first time in her career, in the Junior Women's 12.5K individual in 42:00.3. Behind Weidel, Begue won the Silver medal, with one penalty, 10.7 seconds back, while local star Marketa Davidova of Czech Republic won the Bronze medal, with three penalties, 38 seconds back. Clean shooting was at a premium, with only Weidel managing 20-for-20. The young German

Junior Cup Total Score leader Kirill Streltsov took the Silver medal with two penalties, 1:46.6 back. The Bronze medal went to starter number 111 Anton Smolski of Belarus, with one penalty, 2:05.6 back.

Just as in the women's competition, clean shooting was hard to come by with just two of the 112 starters dropping all twenty targets. Like Weidel, Malinovskii moved up slowly, not taking charge until

WINDLESS SPRINTS: GOLD FOR DAVIDOVA AND PORSHNEV

After a mostly sunny training day on Friday, the clouds returned for the sprints; the positive side of this was absolutely no wind on the shooting range. Yet, only a handful of the competitors ended the day with a zero by their name.

Clouds or not, it was all sunshine for the



Foggy Start

home team when Davidova of the Czech Republic, with a single penalty thrilled her local fans with her 22:24.2 women's sprint Gold medal to start the day. The Silver medal went to Valerie Vasnetcova of Russia, also with one penalty, 17.8 seconds back, while Poland's Kamila Zuk, with one penalty claimed the Bronze medal, 25.7 seconds back.

QUICK VICTORY

This competition was decided rather quickly. Vasnetcova led early, with a clean prone stage; Davidova shooting slowly. The Russian shot first and took an 8.6 second lead. Davidova also picked up a penalty, leaving the 1,000-strong crowd very quiet. As she excited the penalty loop, they screamed with joy. The speedy Davidova was atop the leader board, by 13.3 seconds over Vasnetcova. That was

it; no one else challenged: the local hero won. After the Flower Ceremony, she was as elated as the fans. "It's amazing; amazing people here in the stadium. It was very good to win!"

ONE PENALTY, BUT GOLD FOR PORSHNEV

In the afternoon's men's sprint, Nikita Porshnev of Russia, with one penalty won in 27:26.8, narrowly topping Sebastian Trixl of Austria, by 1.4 seconds. The Bronze medal went to Anton Dudchenko of Ukraine, who also shot clean, 7.5 seconds back.

Porshnev's win was more of a battle than Davidova's. Ondrej Santora of Czech Republic was the first leader, but he missed four standing shots and eventual fourth place Zobel took over with a single penalty. The German held the

top spot until Porshnev, also with a penalty took a 16-second lead. Dudchenko then shot clean to go ahead of both Zobel and Porshnev. The last 3.3K loop was Dudchenko's undoing; he lost 11.6 seconds and the victory. Late starter Trixl decided to have a say in the results, shoot-

ing clean; up to third after standing, 6.4 seconds back. Despite a fast last loop, he fell 1.4 seconds short of the Gold medal.

"UP TO ME"

Porshnev admitted it was a tough battle. "I had to fight for every meter and every second. My shooting was average; I usually have one penalty... My skiing is good enough that I can always have one penalty and still win." Looking toward the next day's pursuit, he added, "I always try to win... I know I will have good skis and good coaching. The rest is up to me!"

CZECHS SWEEP PURSUIT; DAVIDOVA DOUBLE

The Czech fans again arrived early for Sunday's pursuits, hoping for another medal or two. They were not disappointed. Their next generation of biathlon heroes won both pursuit competitions and added a Silver medal for good measure.

THE PRINCESS PREVAILS

If Gabriela Koukalová is the Queen of Czech Biathlon, Davidova claimed the title of Princess after winning her second IBU JOECH Gold medal and third medal of the week, despite six penalties but very quick skiing



Podium Sprint Junior Men

SPRINT JUNIOR WOMEN 7.5 KM

1. DAVIDOVA Marketa	CZE	0+1	1	22:24.2	0.0
2. VASNETCOVA Valeriia	RUS	0+1	1	22:42.0	+17.8
3. ZUK Kamila	POL	0+1	1	22:49.9	+25.7
4. ZHUZHGOVA Ksenia	RUS	0+0	0	22:50.5	+26.3
5. COLOMBO Caroline	FRA	0+1	1	22:52.6	+28.4

SPRINT JUNIOR MEN 10 KM

1. PORSHNEV Nikita	RUS	0+1	1	27:26.8	0.0
2. TRIXL Sebastian	AUT	0+1	1	27:28.2	+1.4
3. DUDCHENKO Anton	UKR	0+0	0	27:34.3	+7.5
4. ZOBEL David	GER	0+1	1	27:37.3	+10.5
5. ZEMLICKA Milan	CZE	0+1	1	27:53.6	+26.8



in the pursuit. Two seconds behind Davidova's 33: 40.7, Canadian Megan Bankes, with two penalties won the Silver medal. Bankes led several times in the competition but succumbed to Davidova's ski speed in the last loop. The Bronze medal went to Russia's Ksenia Zhuzhgorova, with one penalty, 7.7 seconds back.

PENALTIES, COMEBACKS AND GOLD

Davidova started and finished first, but there was plenty of intrigue over the 33-minute competition. The first prone looked easy for the sprint winner, cleaning easily, as she stretched her lead to 28 seconds over the also clean Bankes. From that point, Davidova would go the penalty loop while Bankes would take the lead, then reined in the by Davidova's speedy skis. In the last standing she left two more targets open, while Bankes had a penalty. While they were on the loop, Zhuzhgorova cleaned and went out on Bankes' shoulder, with Bib number 1, now 17 seconds back. Davidova stormed around the last loop. With 900 meters to go, she was 9.3 seconds back. On the final climb before the stadium she buried her rivals cruising past her adoring fans for win number two. Beaming from ear-to-ear, as the fans cheered loudly and called her name, she said, "I am very happy with the win. It was very hard today... Those fans are so good; they are remarkable!"

Podium Sprint Junior Women



**OLE EINAR
BJØRNDALEN**

Team Madshus
Biathlon

TEAM MADSHUS

PURSUIT JUNIOR WOMEN 10 KM

1. DAVIDOVA Marketa	CZE	0+2+2+2	6	33:40.7
2. BANKES Megan	CAN	0+0+1+1	2	+2.0
3. ZHUZHGOVA Ksenia	RUS	1+0+0+0	1	+7.7
4. COLOMBO Caroline	FRA	2+2+0+0	4	+49.5
5. USHKINA Natalia	RUS	1+0+0+2	3	+58.6

PURSUIT JUNIOR MEN 12.5 KM

1. ZEMLICKA Milan	CZE	0+0+1+1	2	36:06.6
2. SANTORA Ondrej	CZE	0+0+0+2	2	+15.6
3. DUDCHENKO Anton	UKR	0+1+0+0	1	+24.2
4. TOMSHIN Vasilii	RUS	0+0+1+0	1	+35.2
5. RIVAIL Hugo	FRA	0+1+1+0	2	+1:01.3

and held it through the first standing, going 15-for-15. Teammate Zemlicka was matching until a first standing penalty dropped him back, but not out of contention. Dudchenko cleaned the first standing to move into second, but was

fans cheered while the athletes high-fived, hugged, and smiled broadly.

Santora commented, "It is great to compete here at home and get two medals. The crowd was great." Regarding the Davidova's three medals, he added, "We will tell her tonight that she is not the only one on our team who can win medals!"

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

PICTURES Rene Miko



Milan Zemlicka and Ondrej Santora - CZE

1-2 FOR ZEMLICKA AND SANTORA

The afternoon men's pursuit gave the fans more to cheer about as Davidova's teammate Milan Zemlicka gave the Czech Republic a pursuit sweep with his two-penalty 36:06.6 win and teammate Ondrej Santora, with two penalties, won the Silver medal 15.6 seconds back. The Bronze went to Ukraine's Anton Dudchenko, with one penalty, 24.2 seconds back.

SOLID SHOOTING

The Czech men claimed their medals with solid shooting when others were touring the penalty loop. Sprint winner Porshnev fell out of contention with two first-prone misses. Santora took the lead

slower on the tracks than the Czech duo. Santora immediately missed two shots in the last standing, while his teammate missed one but left in the lead. Dudchenko cleaned and went ahead of Santora. Yet with 1200 meters to go, Zemlicka and Santora were safely 1-2.

STORYBOOK ENDING

This storybook ending proved that there is no place like home. The hosts dominated the last day. The



Marketa Davidova - CZE



EXPLORE THE EDGES



MARTIN FOURCADE



LOWELL BAILEY

TWO LIVES ONE TARGET

Whenever Lowell Bailey takes one of those rare quiet moments to sit back and strum away at his guitar, those dulcet tones maybe bring back the magic of his sensational recent success.



Perhaps it was his bluegrass driving him on as he mustered all his reserves at Hochfilzen- that accelerando rhythm, unstoppable and intoxicating, up-beat and harmonious, punctuated perhaps with a staccato of sorts, finished off with euphoric exhaustion - to become the world champion. Excitement about having accomplished a masterpiece. Breathlessness. Disbelief and astonishment. Those guitar strings turn into hushed silence, before a wave of deafening cheers and clapping gushes forth from all sides.

When he plays, Lowell Bailey is reminded of the biggest day in his sporting career so far. Music transports him to a place far away. He is thankful to his parents for this gift: "I grew up with a house full of music," Bailey explains, where singing and guitar playing abounded. At Hochfilzen, Bailey had his own rhythm section to accompa-

ny him: the shots from his small-bore rifle and the cheers of encouragement from the side-line.

CHORUS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"Go, Lowell go," they called out in a string of different languages: there were German coaches urging him on, Norwegian team staff yelling encouragement, and even some enthusiastic 'davái' - Russian for 'come on' - punctuating the mix of voices. Bailey was right up ahead with Volkov, with no other Russian up front to stop him, nor any Norwegian or German. Describing the scene, Bailey says, "I could feel it on the course." It was incredibly emotional. "Just thinking about it makes me so happy, I could cry." Now, Lowell Bailey was the man to watch, making the impossible possible, proving that those

well-worn phrases about international solidarity among athletes are more than just words. He was far ahead of the competition, Lowell Bailey from the USA. "Go Lowell, go!"

Then all of a sudden, he lost his entire ten-second lead in the last shooting bout. Now, only 0.10 seconds ahead of Czech athlete Ondrej Moravec, he entered the home stretch from the depths of the final tunnel. Would all that hard work be in vain? He had placed fourth in the sprint, but this time he could hear his beloved bluegrass, louder and more insistent. The commentators shouted "Go, Lowell, go" in myriad languages, so loud and excited their vocal chords threatened to break. The boy from the USA held everyone enthralled: now he was the athlete from anywhere who looked set to achieve something unique, and everyone was truly thrilled for him.



The 20-km individual is torture for body and mind alike – a fight against the clock and against total exhaustion: a relentless challenge, harder with every meter. The ‘penalty’ for missed targets should more appropriately be called ‘punishment’: a full minute is added to athletes’ competition time for every miss. It is truly like torture. But Bailey’s zero extra minutes came to his aid, and in the end, there was another number: 3.3 seconds ahead. This made Bailey the world champion – the first American biathlete to ever win the top accolade in the history of the sport, and in its longest, most demanding, discipline.

NO WIN, BUT THRILLED

The strings of the guitar were still reverberating as Bernd Eisenbichler, the heart and soul of the US biathlon team and a man with unshakable faith in his mission to bring biathlon to the USA, bear-hugged his champion as if to shake another couple of extra notes out of him. The tears flowed. Even the journalists’ eyes were wet. There was magic in the Tyrolean

WHAT IS YOUR TARGET? MINE IS VICTORY.



Ole Einar Bjørndal

EXEL

INNOVATION IN MOTION.

air, and a chorus of thousands joined in the cheering. Lowell Bailey had won their hearts.

Ondrej Moravec from the Czech Republic said something astounding for someone who placed second: "I'm so happy he won gold. He truly deserves it. He's a great guy." Martin Fourcade, who won the bronze, thought the same: "To be honest, I do not think I can feel happier about anyone winning a gold medal

spect and recognition. He was the perfect diplomat, noting down ideas and calmly but unambiguously relaying them from one group to another.

ON THE US TEAM SINCE 2001

Despite becoming world champion, the recognition from his homeland was not overwhelming. "That's normal," says

when you love something, you have to be consistent – be true to your feelings. Biathlon has become Bailey's ideal sport, his love, a passion cemented when he flew for seven months to Utah with the US biathlon team in 2001 to prepare for the Olympics in Salt Lake City. At the time, he was the youngest by far on the US team, missing selection for the Games by just a hair's breadth. One less missed target and he would have been on the Olym-



than how I feel now for Lowell." The two athletes know each other well: they had joined forces on behalf of their fellow biathletes to propose a list of appropriate measures to the Executive Board of the International Biathlon Union (IBU) in response to the McLaren Report findings. Both athletes are always clear in their objectives, and are also prepared to hear the other side's point of view. The amount of time and effort Lowell Bailey devoted to the cause have earned him further re-

Bailey, ever the pragmatist. He is aware that his sport is not well-known in the USA, to put it mildly – and that Donald Trump has other things to worry about, though Bailey himself is more a fan of Bernie Sanders, the political establishment outsider who lost the Democratic nomination to Hillary Clinton. In a year without any Olympics, even an accomplishment of this massive caliber gets very little press, but Bailey is not upset. You do not choose what you love in life, it's a calling: and

pic team. Yet Bailey is not discouraged by setbacks: "Maybe I just wasn't ready for it yet," he muses. On the home front, parents Elizabeth and George followed their son's sporting ambitions with mixed feelings. You can imagine the scenes at home: "Son, you have to get an education, or how will you ever make a living? Biathlon isn't something you can keep up forever." They were never accusatory, just concerned – because his other long-held dream, of become a professional musi-



cian, also seemed hard. In his day, Bailey's own father had to sacrifice his musical career in favor of a 'real' job once Lowell was born. The realities of life had stifled his dreams. Lowell never forgot this lesson: he dutifully attended college in Vermont, graduating with a degree in political studies. But biathlon was always waiting in the wings, and Lowell even trained during his three years at university, occasionally, as

a 'part-time biathlete'. Once he had finished, Lowell made biathlon his full-time career, but this time with the backing of his family.

RESTART AFTER COLLEGE

Graduation marked the real beginning of Lowell Bailey's career, with a clear mission statement: "In life, you need to see

fulfilment in every step of the way. As soon as you start only looking for validation in the ranking results, you'll only get disappointed." At the Vancouver Olympics, Bailey had progressed enough to be able to say to himself: I'm ready for this. Despite flawless shooting in the sprint, he still only ended up in 36th place, facing the challenges of biathlon as an outdoor winter sport, when weather conditions could not be equal for everyone.

His tenacity paid off four years later: he placed 8th in the 20-km individual in Sochi. His mom, Elizabeth, had flown over from Lake Placid to cheer him on from the side-line. For Lowell, this was tantamount to winning a medal - one of the greatest and most moving moments in his life. "When I caught sight of her from the course, I realized that there was no way I could have made it there without her." His dad, who had to stay home to teach his sixth grade class, was allowed to keep a TV switched on in the background so that



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they could watch Lowell competing, fighting his way up the ranks.

Biathlon enormously influenced Bailey's outlook on life: "You can be down the bottom one day, and right up top the next." He adds: "It's a damn hard sport."

CHANGE IN LONG-TERM PLANS

For Lowell Bailey, now 35, the Olympics are obligatory. If you're the world champion, you simply have to compete in the Games. He's actually looking forward to the Olympics, because he knows that he can compete one last time, then retire. Originally he had intended to retire two years ago, if it hadn't been for a beautiful change in his long-term planning: his wife Erika gave birth to their daughter Ophelia, named after a character in a 1966 Bob Dylan and The Band song.

As previously mentioned, music is an omnipresent part of Lowell Bailey's life. "I wanted to have consistency then, as well," he explains. His life after biathlon was already planned in detail: no more lengthy trips, no more training camps far away from his family. His wife's parents run a bison farm, and he wanted to join them - retire from biathlon and breed bison, pre-

serving the unique native North American cattle species that was slaughtered to the verge of extinction by Old World settlers. At one time, only a few thousand bison were left, but now the number has grown to 400,000. "That would have been a really great job", says Bailey, but things came differently: he and his family decided that he should continue as an active biathlete.

PHONE CALL FROM MONTANA

Then, as if fate was trying to intervene in Lowell Bailey's meticulous life planning, he received an unexpected phone call from Montana. Would he - please - consider becoming the director of a new biathlon center in Bozeman, the fourth-largest city in sparsely populated Montana, with a population of 38,000. Alongside the Olympic venue Soldier Hollow and the existing facility at Lake Placid, the center has the ambition of becoming the third sports venue in the US specializing in biathlon. The new venue will be called the Crosscut Mountain Sports Center.

Bailey is quick to emphasize that, when the call came, he hadn't won the World Championship yet. "So it was an amazing opportunity," he says. This will allow him to

continue pursuing his dream career, but just in a different area. He can share his wealth of experience, realize his ideas - almost as if he were writing a new song.

Thankfully, Erika went to college in Montana, so she knows people in the state and is convinced that the three of them will be able to make a future for themselves there. "We can build a new life for ourselves," Bailey explains, although he admits being scared about the future too, since he knows he will have to give up everything he has worked so hard for over all these years. Active biathlon has become his whole world, his home. He almost seems sad right now, gazing up at Holmenkollen ("this is what our center will look like one day") as this extraordinary season draws to a close. For a moment, melancholy surrounds him like a slow ballad in a minor key. That cheerful bluegrass seems far away. It all seems to be drawing to a close too early. "I will miss this, I know I will," he admits, his voice tinged with emotion. He relates how he started training with his mate, Tim Burke, at the early age of 10; talks of the long, intense discussions with coaches and team staff from around the world who have worked hard to build up the US team, and whom Bailey has tirelessly been thanking for helping him to win the gold medal.





The day after the flower ceremony, the exhaustion is still clearly visible in those unshaven faces far away from home – exhausted, but ecstatically happy. In the days following Hochfilzen, after the frantic chases on the course and similarly wild partying afterward, Lowell Bailey has realized that he has gained more than a gold medal: without even meaning to, he has become an international hero.

LOVE AND ADMIRATION

People don't just admire Lowell Bailey – they love him. He has broken down barriers: he possesses that rare gift, that hallmark of true sportsmanship, that unites people regardless of their origin.

And, like uniting people, Bailey loves making music with others. In Montana there's sure to be a band that he can jam with. Music is his "Yin and yang", keeps him balanced. He knows how important that is: "Athletes who have managed to find that work-life balance," he explains, "are the ones who stay active the longest. They're the most passionate about their sport, too." This goes for him as well, of course.

Now his main focus is preparing for the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, consistently – as always. However, he won't be making use of that wildcard for the World Championships in Östersund afterward: Montana awaits, and he'll be taking his guitar with him. Bluegrass forever. We will miss you, Lowell. **I**

TEXT Sigi Heinrich

PICTURES P. Slavik, E. Tumashov, R. Miko, C. Manzoni

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In many families, sports have become a tradition passed down from one generation to the next. In some cases, one family alone plays a crucial role in carrying the torch of biathlon in its home country.

MIKE & SCOTT DIXON

A FAMILY AFFAIR

MEET: THE DIXONS

One of the most prominent families to make biathlon a lynchpin of their lives is the Dixons. Mike, a five-time Olympian, has multiple Top 20 results from the Games in Calgary, Albertville and Lillehammer to his name and competed in a total of 14 World Championships.

Scott also picked up the rifle and skis, and at age 22 aims to compete in his first Olympics next year in Pyeongchang. While many retired biathletes join the ranks of coaching staffs and national federations, Mike has taken a path that makes the Dixons' dynamic somewhat more uncommon.

COMMENTATOR AND DAD

Since retiring from his professional biathlon career, Mike Dixon has become one of the voices of biathlon, commenting regularly for British Eurosport. In the 2013/2014 season, his son Scott competed in his first Junior World Championships and made his World Cup debut.

These days, Mike Dixon more often than not finds himself in the commentator's booth when Scott heads out onto the tracks.

HOCHFILZEN 2017: A RARE OPPORTUNITY

With both father and son on site, this year's World Championships in Hochfilzen provided a great opportunity for the two to catch up after the competition in

person instead of by text message. While Scott was busy picking the right skis and zeroing in on his rifle, Mike also spent a significant amount of time preparing for the competition ahead - but most of his preparation occurs indoors. The 54-year-old compiles his start lists with meticulous colour coordination to make sure he's got an eye on everything that's going on. Decades of biathlon wisdom and in-

sider knowledge round off his time in the booth. When the first competitor starts, it is touch and go not only for the athletes but also for the people in the commentary booth and those behind the scenes. However, when your own son is taking part in a 20km Individual event, it's only natural that he's on your mind as much as the rest of the competition, as Mike admits: "When your son is in the race, you can't



Father Mike Dixon in the commentary cabin at Hochfilzen WCH



Son Scott Dixon on the tracks at Hochfilzen WCH

but think about it - you want to watch him, you want to help him, but you have got to be professional and watch the race. I find it quite difficult at times."

Since the stadium in Hochfilzen allows a great view of the action from all areas, whether it's the media centre, the mixed zone or the commentary booth, Mike had a good chance of getting a glimpse of Scott's performances at the shooting range simply by leaping up a little from his commentator's chair.

"Often I don't try it, because then it's a distraction to the commentary, but here you can see exactly what's going on - so yes, I will stand and have a look at what's happening."

With the 2016/2017 season over, both Dixons are gathering steam for a big year ahead. Scott will aim for his first Olympics next year in Pyeongchang while Mike continues to enrich coverage with his analyses. Nevertheless, Hochfilzen 2017 is sure to remain a memorable event for the father and son from Great Britain - not least because it's where the Dixon biathlon legacy began: at Mike Dixon's first competition, the Hochfilzen Sprint in 1986. **I**

TEXT Rene Denfeld

PICTURES Christian Manzoni

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THE NEW WAVE HAS SWEDISH COLOURS:

OEBERG AND SAMUELSSON WIN **ROOKIE** **OF THE YEAR**

Hannah Oeberg and Sebastian Samuelsson found strong results at their very first competitions among the world's best and continued to impress throughout the World Cup stages, so much that both ended up winning the most prestigious trophy for newcomers: the Rookie of the Year award.

"It's amazing - I think for me it's the proof of a really good season," said a thrilled Samuelsson with the prize still in his hands: *"You can only win this trophy once, and I am really happy to have got this."*

Similar feelings were showed by his teammate, Oeberg: *"It's really incredible."*

When the BMW IBU World Cup made its start under the floodlights of Oestersund, the Swedish crowds immediately noticed a breath of fresh air coming from their team: a squad of young faces made its debut on home soil and the first taste, for many, was already a delectable one.

I didn't expect this before the season, and I am really happy to hold this trophy. Receiving this kind of award is a great motivation to keep on working hard and keep improving. It is a very big trophy and I think it is very special to receive it, for a youngster."

For both the Swedes, the award is not their ultimate destination, but an important milestone on their path to what they hope will be a successful career.

"I am looking forward to getting better and better, and hopefully I can be taking part in the competition for the globes later in my career," said Samuelsson after posing for a picture with Martin Fourcade and his sixth consecutive big globe in Oslo. *"I will surely train a lot, especially on shooting, to improve my speed and precision. But I am really looking forward to the training because I am a junior for one more year, so there's plenty time ahead."*

Higher peaks and some lower valleys: that's how Oeberg described her first sea-



WCH Hochfilzen 2017: Hannah Oeberg - SWE





son in the World Cup, which is why she is aiming to work on her consistency: "I have had some really great races, mixed with some really bad ones. The great races have been incredible: I would have never expected to get in the top six in World Cup in my first year! Now I have to work to get more stable results of a high level... so I have some hard to work to do next!"

So what were the best moments of this successful season for the two young guns?

"I think the première in Oestersund was really cool," said Samuelsson who placed

19th in the sprint at the Swedish venue. "I shot clean, and I don't do that so often! To do it on my home course it was really fun. Then the competitions in Nove Mesto were something amazing, with great atmosphere... for me those were good days!"

"Of course my competitions in Ruhpolding with the seventh place in the sprint and the fifth in the pursuit were the best," said Oeberg without hesitating, "But finishing eighth at home, in Oestersund, was also much fun... it was my first competition and on home ground it was very special too!"

With two Swedes winning the Rookie of



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the year and many other youngsters finding their way, the Scandinavian country holds great hopes for the future.

"It's amazing that Hanna won it as well," commented Samuelsson: "It came as a surprise for both, but it is a great result for

everyone: waxing staff, coaches, trainers and even the other ones in the team. It shows that Sweden is now on its way back to the top in biathlon."

"That's how I feel too," explained his teammate. "We have a really good team now and many of us are very young, so we are coming to get to the top."

And with the season once again starting in Oestersund this November, the 20- and 21-year olds will have the chance to open their seasons on a strong note, motivated by this great award. **I**



BWC Antholz 2017: Sebastian Samuelsson - SWE



Martin and Sebastian in Oslo 2017

TEXT Giulio Gasparin

PICTURES Christian Manzoni

CONSISTENCY EARNS **KIRILL** **STRELTSOV** IBU JUNIOR CUP TOTAL SCORE

Destiny and Kirill Streltsov came together this season; when it ended, the 21-year-old Russian was holding three IBU Junior Cup Crystal Globes: Total Score, Sprint and Individual. After finishing second in the Total Score in the previous season to Dominik Reiter, Streltsov was in the wings ready and waiting to take the top spot in the 12-competition series.

CONSISTENCY: TEN TIMES TOP SIX

Although he only won once in the season, he was by far the most consistent man in the IBU Junior Cup. In twelve competitions, he finished in the top six on ten occasions and on the podium five times, racking up 483 points. None of his rivals, like second place Anton Dudchenko (392 points) with just five times in the top six, could match this consistency.

POKLJUKA SPRINT PERFECTION

Streltsov's finest day of the season was unquestionably the first sprint at IBU Junior Cup 3 at Pokljuka. His only victory of the season was a two-penalty, nine-second win over Ondrej Santora with just a single missed target. Streltsov, always been known for his ski speed and sometimes less-than-perfect shooting felt confident that his shooting was getting better this season. Yet on the tough tracks

at Pokljuka, his skiing won the day. Penalties in both standing were obliterated by his lightening fast skis. He commented that day. "Conditions were good for shooting clean today, but I was unable to manage that task...My skis were great and I felt brilliant out there."

SIXTH, BUT ONE GLOBE

Ironically, the man who was chasing the podium all season long did not dominate at the IBU YJWCH in Osrblie. His three penalties doomed him to sixth in the individual. Still it solidified his top spot in the Total Score and gave him the small globe for the Individual. He said, "I am not concerned about the Total Score now; I just have to do my job in the next races."



CLEAN SHOOTING; SPRINT GLOBE

After those penalties in the individual, he shot cautiously, actually slowly in the sprint. The result was that elusive 10-for-10, but the slow range times found him 12.2 seconds behind his clean shooting teammate Igor Malinovskii at the finish. Yet it did net a Silver medal, "I was very cautious on the shooting range today. I waited for a long time before I fired the last shot. I did not wait long enough last year, and missed. I did not want to make that mistake again today." His consolation prize was another small globe in the Sprint.

"CHOCOLATE" MEDAL; BIG CRYSTAL

Shooting knocked him from the podium and into fourth place in the YJWCH pursuit. It was not the five total penalties, but the three in the second prone that found the speedy Russian battling in a photo-finish with Milan Zemlicka for the "chocolate" medal. Yet this was his big day. The Total Score title and the big Crystal Globe was his.

With the pressure of the globes off, Streltsov was relaxed and dominating in his final junior competition, the men's relay. His teammate Nikita Porshnev tagged Streltsov with a lead of more than a minute. The top junior cleaned prone quickly, matched in prone to come home waving the Russian flag and claiming the Gold medal for a storybook ending to his junior career.

NEXT STEP HARDER

Looking back on his season, Streltsov admitted it was all due to "hard work." As for the future, he said, "The next step is much harder. I have to work on my shooting. I hope that next season; I can compete in the IBU Cup and do well. That is my next goal." **I**

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

PICTURES Rene Miko

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NEXT GENERATION IN ITALY

MEDALS GALORE

FOR MICHELA, IRENE AND SAMUELA

The Italian team came to the IBU Youth/Junior World Championships in Osrblie as a question mark; young talent with good training brought together by an experienced staff of coaches, but could they battle with the always strong Russian, German and Norwegian teams. On February 28, as the Championships closed, the answer was in. The Italian team left Osrblie with a record eight medals (three Gold, two Silver and three Bronze), not far behind Russia's 11 and Norway's 8.

BREAKTHROUGH FOR THREE FRIENDS

It was a breakthrough performance; the next generation of the Italian women's

team had arrived. Irene Lardschneider (Youth Sprint/Pursuit Gold, Relay Bronze), Michela Carrara (Junior Sprint Gold, Pursuit Silver), and Samuela Comola (Youth Sprint/Pursuit/relay Bronze) accounted for seven of those medals, with Martine Vigna (Youth Relay Bronze) and Cedric Christille (Youth Pursuit Silver) getting in on the fun. Coach Michela Ponza commented, "We knew they could do some good races before we came here, but we never expected so many medals. The girls did everything we asked all summer, with no questions...The nice thing about this group is that they are more than just teammates; they are great friends." Lardschneider confirmed this. "The three of us get along together very well, during the

summer training, we have great fun together. It made all of the hard work easier when we were doing it together." This friendship was obvious as the three bright smiling young ladies, Lardschneider, Carrara and Comola, all holding their medals, laughed their way through an interview about their newfound success.

PINK AND WHITE SKIS

All three began their sports careers casually: Lardschneider at age four was skiing with her mom on yellow and red skis, while Carrara has seen a lot of photos of herself at age three "on my pink and white skis." By the time they were around 12, biathlon called at their local ski club. None of them had been a fan or watched

biathlon on television before they started the sport. Carrara the clean-shooting Junior Sprint Gold medalist said, "I started biathlon with a race at my local club. In my first race, I missed seven out of ten. I really was not very good at shooting then, but I am better now!"

GOLD, 1:06 AHEAD OF FIELD

The Youth Women's Sprint this year opened the medal floodgate, but the earlier Youth Women's Individual hinted

title came as a surprise, especially to her. Until Osrblie, her Junior Cup sprint results for the season were 13th, 41st and 32nd. However, with the help of light winds, she shot clean and once the last target fell, no one in the field would challenge her. "This was a very big surprise to me... "I never expected to win a Gold medal. I missed six in the individual, but today my shape is very good and I shot well." Ponza added, "In the individual, she was not very focused and reacted to the wind flags in

PRESSURE OFF

Taking the junior pursuit would be a bigger challenge for Carrara; her 15 second margin at the start did not allow for many mistakes. A penalty in each of the first three stages put her in a bad spot, but she cleaned the last standing and was battling for a medal.

A sprint finish gave her the Silver medal "I actually enjoyed the pursuit; the pressure was off since I had my Gold medal. I moved from fifth with my clean last



at what was to come. The fastest ski time came from 5th place Lardschneider while Comola hit 19-of-20 shots. In the sprint, the eventual Gold medalist took the lead before the prone stage that she cleaned on a windy day. Then, despite a single standing penalty, she stretched her lead to a dominating 1:06 over the field by the finish. Comola shot clean in the tough condition to take a Bronze medal. "Lardschneider commented, "I dreamed of winning medals and hoped for it. We had trained hard for this, but I did not expect it... This was my first Championships; winning a medal was amazing."

SURPRISE GOLD FOR FOCUSED CARRARA

After this start, Carrara's Junior Sprint

the wrong way. The sprint was different; the focus was very good."

SCARY POSITION

The two sprint Gold medalists were then in that scary position of leading the pursuit, while everyone tried to catch them. Lardschneider admitted that was a tough spot for her. "I never led an international race like this before." Still, even with four penalties in the standing stages, she went wire-to-wire, never really challenged. Once again, her roommate Comola picked up the Bronze medal. Looking back a few hours after her win, she said, "I never expected to win two Gold medals and be on the podium with my roommate for a second time; now I am finally realizing what I did."

stage...Two medals were more than I ever expected."

SHOOTING SOMETIMES GOOD; SOMETIMES NOT

The Youth women's relay produced one final medal, Bronze for Lardschneider, Comola and teammate Vigna. The double Gold medalist skied well again, but had a standing penalty, almost removing her team from podium contention. She admitted, "The relay medal was special... Sometimes the shooting goes well and sometimes not; I did not want to give up after that penalty. My teammates shot well today and that was important for us... I am just happy to get a medal."

The team had achieved a milestone: most medals ever at the IBU YJWCH for



their country while equalling the three Gold medals of Lukas Hofer and Dorothea Wierer in 2009 and Wierer in 2011.

ROLE MODELS

Although the best of friends, they do not agree on everything; one of the trio has a different role model. The girl who did not want to give up in the relay said, "Alexia Runggaldier; she is a fighter. She had some bad years and now has a World Championships medal...We are from the same town and train together sometimes." Carrara admitted to favoring, "Laura Dahlmeier; she is young, a strong person, good at shooting and on the tracks. She is the perfect biathlete." Comola seconded that with, "Laura, for all of the same reasons."

CARING COACHES

However, the athletes know the key to their success, besides talent is the coaches. According to Lardschneider, who trains full-time under Ponza, "They are a good team and they understand us. These medals

showed that all of the hard work paid off...After the first medals, they were really happy, but told us to remain focused on our work in the other races." Carrara added, "Alex (Indert) prepares us well and looks after us. He can tell when we are tired and need to rest. Michela pays attention to every detail at the shooting range. We can thank her for our improvements...They told me after my medal that it was the big payoff."

FUTURE GOALS

Although this group had great success, they still have some time before the next

big challenge, senior competition. All three will be in the junior category although Carrara, hopes "to compete in some IBU Cups to get experience, but the big dream is the World Cup." Lardschneider and Comola, now in their last year of high school have a few more years, but the

Michaela Ponza - ITA



dreams remain big. The sprint/ pursuit winner said, "Getting to the World Cup and Olympics, to be one of the strongest biathletes is the goal. But now I need to continue to make small steps and get better and better."

Wierer, Runggaldier and the World Cup team need to keep an eye on this trio; they are coming on fast. In a couple of years...the next generation might be right on their shoulder trying to get that spot on the World Cup squad. **I**

TEXT Jerry Kokesh

**PICTURES Rene Miko,
Christan Manzoni**





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MY FIRST SKIS

THE FOURCADES: FIRST SKIS FOR CHRISTMAS

When asked about his first skis, the six-time World Cup Total Score winner said that in fact the first skis he was skiing on were actually bought for his elder brother Simon!

"I remember how my parents bought me the first pair of skis. It was in 1988 or maybe earlier. It was Christmas time and we were going on holiday to Quebec, Canada. Just before we left to the airport, my father left three pairs of skis in front of the fireplace: one for Simon, one for me and one for my little brother Brice. He went back to the car as we were to catch the flight. I pretended to having to go to the bathroom and my father said no, but I insisted. That brought me into the house and I managed to see what my gift was before leaving for holi-



"On a day like this, you just thank your parents for buying you a pair of your first skis", said French star Martin Fourcade after winning one of his titles at World Championships in Hochfilzen. Indeed, a pair of first skis, most likely bought during the early childhood, would be decisive in the destiny of a professional athlete. Maybe that is why so many biathlon stars cherish the memories of their first skis up until today.

days. It was Rossignol. During the holidays I was very excited as I knew I would get my own skis when I get back."

LOLLY POP RACE COMPETITOR BAILEY

Just like Fourcade's, USA Lowell Bailey's first "serious" pair of skis was Rossignol. "My first real pair of race skis was Rossignol. I think they were called cobras, I had them I was 11 or 12 years old. Before this I had Jarvinen skis from Finland, not sure if they make them any more. I got them from an old Finnish guy who lived in my town in New York, he sold them to my dad. It is fun to look back and think about all the different skis I have had over the years."

Bailey still re-

members his first ski race. "I didn't know anything about skiing cause I was actually born in North Carolina, where there is no snow or anything. Then my family moved to the mountains of New York state with a lot of snow. In the first winter my parents were looking for things for 5-year old to do. One of them was the Lolly Pop race, where the small kids do a loop, and no matter what if you finish the race you get this lolly pop. When they entered me in the race, I have been on the skis only one or two times before this. I had no idea what I was doing. I stumbled around and crawled and did everything I could to get to the finish line. But then when I got there, I was dead last place, but they handed you this lolly pop. I thought, "hey this is not a bad deal, maybe I should keep doing this."



DOMRACHEVA CRASHES INTO A FENCE

Belarus star Darya Domracheva crashed into a fence first time she was skiing, but said she still enjoyed it. "My first skis were very cute; they were green wooden ones with snow men on them. Unfortunately, their life did not turn out to be a happy one, as they broke literally the first time I skied on them as I crushed into a fence going downhill. It was not the best first ski experience, but I had a strong character, that got me here today. I liked the feeling of going downhill very fast."



SVENDSEN AND MORAVEC: SKIING FROM THE FIRST STEPS

Both Norway's Emil Hegle Svendsen and Czech Republic's Ondrej Moravec started skiing very early, "I don't remember my first skis, but I remember starting to ski when I was very young, one or two years old. My parents taught me how to ski. Just as soon as I was able to walk, we were already on the skis. This was my whole childhood; there was not even snow on the ground, and I was already skiing on the grass frost." Moravec commented, "I had my first when I was three or four years old. I think I could have got my first skis as a present for Christmas, as it was winter. My mom or my dad taught me how to ski."



PEIFFER: LATER STARTER

Arnd Peiffer is one of the few biathletes who started skiing late: his skied for the first time when he was 10 years old.

Having "second-hand" skis as their first skis was a something that happened to most biathletes who had older siblings, "My first pair of skis was not a big brand; it was Harju. It was the skis of my older sister. I learned to ski in a local club in my home town in Zellerfeld."



DAHLMEIER ON MILKA SKIS

Laura Dahlmeier's story showed that her resilient character, even from her childhood times. "My first skis were alpine skis from chocolate Milka, they were plastic ones, the same color as Milka. I was just two years old. It was a present for my parents from some race."

"We were skiing downhill,

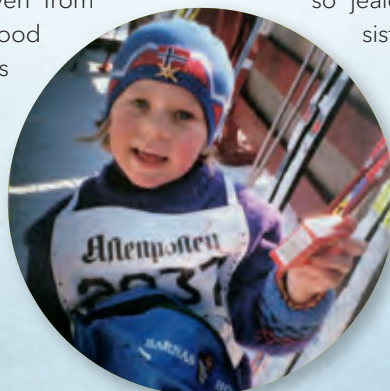


and I was loving it so much.

My parents had to hold me, as it was too steep. It was a bit hard for them, and they wanted to take a break, but I started screaming really loud, "I want to go, go, go", and everybody thought, "Oh, that poor child, she does not want to ski", but in fact I was crying because I wanted to continue."

STUBBORN ECKHOFF

Just like Dahlmeier, Norway's Tiril Eckhoff was very stubborn and determined to ski ever since she was a kid. "I already had skis when I was two or three years old. I was so jealous of my older sister because she could ski, so I always asked my mom and dad to let me ski, but my parents were like, "it would be so slow",



but I had a pink or red pair of skis. I don't remember this, but later my parents told me that I was a very stubborn as a child, they wanted me to ride in the sledge, but I wanted to ski. I was a bad kid, but a very happy one whenever I was skiing,"

MAKARAINEN: SKIING ON THE LAKE

Finnish star Kaisa Mäkäräinen feels nostalgic about skiing on the Finnish lake during her childhood. "I just learned how to walk when I got my first skis, maybe I was just 2 years old. They were like normal winter boots. My parents taught me how to ski. We lived in the country side with a long winter season, there was nothing else to do. When I was little, we would ski on the lakes in spring time when the snow was really hard. This is something I really miss." |



TEXT Marina Dmukhovskaya

PICTURES Private archives, athletes social media accounts, Utz Helling (Peiffer photo)

MORE CULINARY HITS IN THE SECOND EDITION OF "RECIPIES FROM THE CHAMPIONS"

The way to a person's heart is through the stomach and even though there are more and more "dieticians" populating the sports world today, the biathletes again showed their love for good food in the second edition of Sigi Heinrich's cookbook "Recipes from the champions".

The Eurosport commentator has renewed and updated the first edition, also introducing new athletes, true to the old adage: "A look into

your cooking pot is also a look into your soul". Five Hochfilzen world champions are in the book with their recipes and Heinrich has again put great emphasis on authenticity. "All of the athletes I invited to take part were given every freedom in the choice of their recipe." World Cup Total Score winner and five-time Hochfilzen World Champion Laura Dahlmeier has stuck with her "Mountaineer's Kornspitz". The bread roll is easy to make, practical and tasty, and fits perfectly into her backpack for her short

tours across her beloved mountains. Lowell Bailey has also stuck with his "Bison Burger", even though he is now planning to set up a new biathlon center in Montana, rather than join his parents-in-law's bison farm. Bailey swears by the native North American bovine: "It's much lower in fat, it's highly nutritious and it tastes really good – perfect for athletes." A good workout is definitely

recommended before enjoying Gabriela Koukalova's "Carrot Cake with Cottage Cheese", as it is quite nourishing. Laura Dahlmeier's greatest rival even went so far as to get a little professional help for her recipe; after all, one of her sponsors is a kitchen manufacturer. Benedikt Doll, on the other hand, is more a hands on type of chef and loves to cook, preferably with his father Charly, who was not only an outstanding runner in his day, but also a great chef in his own right. The secrets of the Doll kitchen can be found on their website www.dollskueche.de. Many of the biathletes made use of the cookbook to "advertise" local specialties from their homes. The South Tyroleans impressed with Lukas Hofer's "Brittle Bread Tagliatelle", Dorothea Wierer's "Pizzas" and



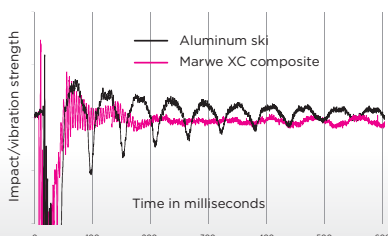
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World Championship bronze medalist Alexia Runggaldier's "Fried Cheese Dimplings". Swiss biathlete Benjamin Weger introduced us to "Gommer Cholera", a specialty from the Valais canton – and it definitely tastes a lot better than it sounds. Others, like Ole Einar Bjørndalen, are more practical; it has to be quick, taste good and have a little something special – just like his "Spaghetti with Olive Oil and Garlic". The Austrians nearly all went for the desserts with Julian Eberhard's "Shredded Austrian Pancakes", Lisa-Theresa Hauser's "Cranberry Quenelles" and Dominik Landertinger's "Shredded Blueberry Pie". "It was really just a coincidence," recounts Heinrich.

Even though the new edition meant a lot of work ("Biathletes are very busy and often on the road"), it was again well worth it. The book is more than just a collection of recipes; it has become a small encyclopedia of the world's best biathletes, combined with a brief portrait of their sporting careers. After having cooked every recipe in the book, the dedicated hobby chef naturally also has a favorite: "I love Serafin Wiestner's "Graubünden Nut Pastry," reveals Heinrich. **I**

TEXT Sigi Heinrich

PICTURES Sigi Heinrich



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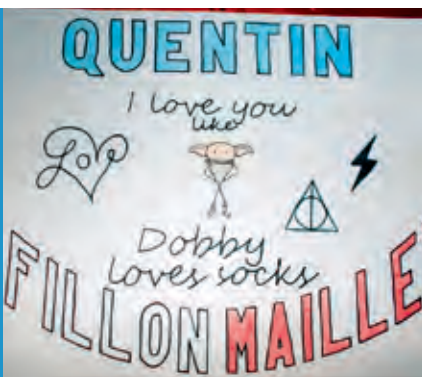
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Valentine's Day on February 14 saw biathletes compete at the IBU World Championships Biathlon in Hochfilzen, Austria. Tens thousands of fans were watching competitions live and on TV; each of them cheering for their favorite biathlete. In the meantime, IBU Social Media Team announced a contest, asking the fans to share

#BEMYBIATHLETE CONTEST FOR BIATHLON FANS

10TH PLACE J.K. ROWLING AND BIATHLON MIX

Brave fan from Czech Republic performed a super cool split in her backyard with snow still lying on the ground, calling for Fourcade to be her valentine. With so many posts dedicated to French star, she will face tough competition!



9TH PLACE PUPPY LOVES THOMAS BARMOLINI

An Instagram account @biathlonnorway engaged a cute little puppy to express his/her love to Italian biathlete. The post features a puppy with a Valentine card on his collar and a photo of the athlete with a rose next to it.



7TH PLACE A VIDEO FROM LAHTI

7th place is a video filmed at what looks like a Finnish high school. It is a love confession to Norway's Emil Hegle Svendsen. Multiple people are holding up the signs, where parts of confession are written out.
<https://instagram.com/p/BQbR6mBj490/>



8TH PLACE BIATHLON FAN 3 YEARS OLD

8th place went to @teahilla1014. The post features Martin Fourcade's fan who is just three years old! Of course, it is her mom who entered the competition and received the prizes; but the girl is such a passionate fan of Martin Fourcade that she started skiing at the age of two. Her mom says she is in trouble if she fails to record all competitions while her daughter is in the daycare and cannot watch.

6TH PLACE SPLIT UNDER THE SNOW

Brave fan from Czech Republic performed a super cool split in her backyard with snow still lying on the ground, calling for Fourcade to be her valentine. With so many posts dedicated to French star, she will face tough competition!



posts expressing their love and passion to their favorites with a hashtag #BeMyBiathlete to win exclusive prizes from the IBU. Fans struck IBU with their creativity, imagination and passion to the sport: it was a hard task to pick 10 winners among more than 100 posts. **TEXT** Marina Dmukhovskaya **PICTURES** social media



5TH PLACE TARJEI BOE FACE SWAP

"Tarjei, will you be my Valentine?", asks the fan. "Yeah, I am your valentine", - answers Tarjei Boe. Well, not exactly the elder Boe brother: it is a guy, who put his photo on his face. This support came in timely, as the Norwegian star was ill during World Championships.



2ND PLACE HEARTS OF GOLDEN LOCKS FROM BIATHLETE

Finnish biathlete Annika Tunturi conquered the second place, as she dedicated her post to Johannes Thingnes Boe. Her golden locks in the shape of heart and a shirt with Norwegian flag are simply irresistible. Watch out, Johannes!

4TH PLACE VALENTINE FROM THE SWIMMING POOL

This post is also dedicated to the elder Boe brother, who seems to be even more popular with female fans than Fourcade! It comes from a stunning blonde, a swimmer from Czech Republic who invites him to be her valentine right in the middle of her training.



3RD PLACE PICTURESQUE SWEDISH SUNSET

The most scenic post dedicated to Ole Einar Bjoerndalen was made by @lindsin with a background of what could be a Nordic sunrise or sunset, saying that she has been fan of the King since she can remember.



1ST PLACE DINOSAUR AT THE SHOOTING RANGE

The first place literally leaves you speechless: it is a young biathlete holding up a bullet case in "proposal" pose right on the shooting range, saying "I'd ski all your penalty laps to spend one day with you. Maren Hammerschmidt, will you be my biathlete?" Behind him, there is a real dinosaur holding up American flag and a poster for Maren. Hammerschmidt signed a bib for the fan in Korea, saying "I hope you could really run all of my penalty loops!"

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF BIATHLON WORLD MAGAZINE:

HOT TOPIC

- **SUMMER TRAINING
FOR OLYMPIC SEASON**

EVENTS

- **IBU SUMMER BIATHLON
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017**
CHAYKOVSKIY - RUS

RULES, MATERIAL AND TRAINING

- **BIB NUMBER: THE RIGHT CHOICE**

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