



**saalbach**

Issue 01

**FIS ALPINE  
WORLD  
SKI**

**CHAMPIONSHIPS  
2025  
Magazine**

**Jubilant stars**

How to celebrate  
with the winners

**Ski away!**

Enjoy the  
Skicircus pistes  
to the full

**A golden peak**

One mountain for  
all races

**#skiverrückt**

Wonderfully unique!

How skiing star Lucas Pinheiro Braathen  
became the happiest man  
in the world





Fans celebrate their heroes at the World Cup Finals in Saalbach in March 2024.

**C**hampion skier Marcel Hirscher is looking forward to a 'festival for all' as he believes there's nothing like the magic of World Championships. This 'Special' captures this magic and the memorable moments of a world bathed in white: in an interview with eccentric Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, a WhatsApp chat with Stephanie Venier and the question of what it means to be crazy about skiing (#skiverrückt). Welcome to the Skicircus Saalbach Hintertglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn; welcome to the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships SAALBACH 2025!



Scan the QR code for the latest information about the World Ski Championships!

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# The golden girl

Mikaela Shiffrin is the most successful female skier of all time. We present a few facts on her impressive career.

## 6

The number of World Championships that Mikaela Shiffrin has competed in – and she's won at least one gold medal every single time, most recently in giant slalom in 2023 in Courchevel/Méribel (FRA). Her fifth World Championship gold already set a new world record.

## 97

The number of World Cup races that Mikaela Shiffrin has won so far – more than any other skier. In comparison, the most successful male athlete, Ingemar Stenmark (SWE) celebrated 86 wins.

## 1:53.22

Mikaela Shiffrin's winning time in the slalom at the World Cup Finals in Saalbach in March 2024.

## 5,960,157

Swiss francs (6.34 million euros): the amount of official prize money that Mikaela Shiffrin has received to date according to the FIS – more than any other female skier (or any other male racer!).

## 2

The number of musical instruments that Mikaela Shiffrin plays to relax: guitar and piano.

## 17

The number of World Championship races that Mikaela Shiffrin has competed in to date. She has won seven and achieved silver or bronze podium positions in seven others.

## 347,663

The number of hearts that Mikaela Shiffrin and Aleksander Kilde received for their Instagram post in April 2024 announcing their engagement. 

## 6

The number of World Cup disciplines that Mikaela Shiffrin has competed in to date (slalom, giant slalom, downhill, super-G, combination and parallel) – and she's the only person to have ever won at least one race in all six disciplines.

## 16,597

The number of Ski World Cup points that Mikaela Shiffrin has racked up to date – making her five-time overall World Cup winner. She has also received eight small crystal globes for victory in the Slalom World Cup, two in giant slalom and one in super-G.

## 55.5

The percentage of Mikaela Shiffrin's World Cup races that have ended with her in first, second or third position on the podium (in numbers: 152 out of 272).

\*ABFTTB stands for 'Always Be Faster Than The Boys', a 'code' that Mikaela Shiffrin adopted from the US skier Heidi Voelker at just six years of age. Information correct as at the end of the 2023/2024 season.





**HAPPY LUCAS**

A man who says what he thinks - and won't let himself be trapped.



# “My definition of success is happiness”

An eccentric, completely mad about skiing and a superstar in the making: Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, 24, will represent his mother’s home country of Brazil at the World Ski Championships in Saalbach. In an interview, he talks about heartache, fear and his own special way of achieving happiness.

Words **Christoph Gertsch**  
 Photography **Mark Clinton**

**Lucas Pinheiro Braathen, a year ago you announced your retirement. Six months later, you revealed that you’ll be representing your mother’s country of Brazil from now on. If you had to describe the last twelve months in just three words, what would they be?**

That’s the hardest question you could ask me. And the best. How on earth am I meant to sum up this last year in just three words? (Deliberates.) Okay, I’ll try... Nerve-racking. Transformative. Exciting.

**In what way was it nerve-racking?**

I found it nerve-racking to express my ambitions out loud to the world as they’re so high. It’s nerve-racking to put all your eggs in one basket. And it’s nerve-racking to both fulfil the expectations of my supporters and belie the perceptions of those who don’t like me due to my controversial decisions.

**What do you mean?**

I’m very aware that I’m someone who people either like or don’t like. But that’s a difficult position to be in as I really want to do justice to those who admire me for my

courage. At the same time, I want to show everyone else what I think life is about: believing in your vision. I want to prove that it’s good to be different.

**Your second word was ‘transformative’. Why?**

When I retired a year ago, I was the reigning Slalom World Cup winner. Despite that, I left everything behind me to pursue my goal – but in my own way. I was unhappy back then; today, I feel like the happiest person in the world as it’s a privilege for me to do what I love the most while also having maintained my integrity. I’m free to say anything I like, and people can think what they want about it because no-one with power over me is working against me now. Does that make sense?

**You’re free?**

Exactly! I’m now free enough to say that, for me, the definition of success is happiness. The road to this needs you to listen to yourself and find out what’s best for you. And not what the community around you expects of you, such as how you should live or behave or what methods you should choose.

**How did people in Norway react to you representing Brazil now?**

If you go your own way, you have to be prepared to receive more hate than love. To inspire, you have to challenge. Looking at it that way, I was deeply touched by the amount of encouragement I received.

**Is there anything you'd like to clarify?**

No, I'd simply like to tell a different story as a skier than the one told by the sports industry. When people ask me about my goals, they usually expect me to list medals and podium places.

**What are your goals if not medals and podium places?**

I've got three. One has to do with results. The second is to give something back to the sport. After all, it's allowed me to enjoy this life that I love so much.

**And what's your third goal?**

That's probably my most important goal. I want to change this sport by being myself. I don't want to have to rein in my personality just because the system expects me to do so. Or the public. Or the Norwegian press. I don't want others to dictate how I should behave as a skier. And I hope that my approach will inspire others. A boy who wants to paint his nails could finally dare to do so, just like me. A boy who likes to dress in feminine clothes may finally dare to do so. Or perhaps he represents a certain political opinion even though it's not shared by those around him. The sports world is often very conservative, strict and constraining. I'm not strong enough to free us all from these shackles on my own, but if I can act as an inspiration to make the sport a little more tolerant, colourful and diverse, that would make me far happier than any sporting victory.

**It's hard to acknowledge that you're unhappy and need to change something. How did you manage to do that last year?**

I was like anyone else in that kind of situation. I was in pain but ran away from it. You feel pain in your heart, so you're not just turning away from the pain but also from your heart, your senses, your feelings. You run from the pain in the hope that you won't have to deal with it. And you



continue to do so until you can no longer escape it. Until you're forced to live in constant pain. At this point, I felt petrified because I knew that the changes I had to make to be happy again were huge.

**You're talking about your retirement.**

I was in a very dark place in my life. I had to ask myself whether to continue suppressing the pain just to remain part of the system that the community thinks is best or whether to follow my heart. I was petrified of retiring but as soon I did so, I experienced the greatest sense of relief that I'd ever felt in my life.

**Did you really not know whether you'd return to the sport?**

I naturally knew that I was crazy enough about it to return if I wanted to. But at the time, I really doubted that I ever would. Then, the opportunity to represent Brazil arose. I saw that I could come back freely and connect the two worlds that are most important to me: sport and creativity. Now, I can throw myself 100% into life as an athlete one day and the next day work on a design project, plan a fashion show or have some creative fun. I've created a

**“I want to change this sport by being myself.”**

space that lets me combine everything – in the hope of offering people a new perspective on the sport.

**When you announced that you'd be representing Brazil in future, you described it as the start of the biggest project of your life. What role do next February's World Ski Championships in Saalbach play?**

Since I properly started skiing when I was eleven, my father has recorded everything I've wanted to achieve in an Excel spreadsheet. Saalbach is an important moment on that spreadsheet. I'll be competing on behalf of Brazil at a World Championships for the first time and, in doing so, representing 200 million people in a sport that people just don't do in Brazil. In a World Cup, you compete for yourself. In a World Championships, you compete for your country.

**One of the biggest questions in sport is whether you have to be dissatisfied in order to torment yourself or whether, on the contrary, you have to be at peace with yourself to achieve major goals?**

I love this question and have really been racking my brain as to the answer!

**And have you come up with one?**

I actually think it's an impossible either-or question because I believe that you need both for success: frustration and a deep sense of satisfaction. I solved the conundrum for myself as follows: you have to be satisfied with the goal that you set yourself and the path you're going to take to get there. But you must never be satisfied with the level that you've reached. You must never accept where you are. Once you've achieved something, you have to want more. It sounds brutal, but that's top-level sport.

**“To inspire, you have to challenge.”**

# Tell me: are you... #skiverrückt?

Hypnosis, hard work in summer and a precise plan – how three skiing stars prepare for their success.



**FEDERICA BRIGNONE**

...can't get enough of a rush. But in addition to her love of adrenaline, Italy's most successful ski racer also believes in the power of meditation.

Following a training camp in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego, Federica Brignone enjoys a few rays of sunshine in Sardinia at the start of October. The 34-year-old Italian is preparing for the World Championships season with an active holiday: "I wasn't even three years old when I discovered my love of skiing and speed." But even away from the snow, the reigning Combined World Champion still goes in search of action: "Whether downhill mountain biking, whitewater canoeing or surfing – the more extreme, the more I enjoy it."

But for Federica – the most successful Italian in Ski World Cup history with 27 wins – it's about more than just the adrenaline kick: "With every challenge I master, I increase my confidence for skiing." Since 2019, Federica has also practised meditation and hypnosis: "I often put too much pressure on myself. Since working on my mental health, I've been far more able to enjoy my amazing life."



**MARCO ODERMATT**

...starts every race with a smile. The Swiss World Cup dominator regularly lays the foundations for his success in summer.

Marco Odermatt relaxes in a hotel lobby in Hintertglemm, warming himself by the roaring fire. The 27-year-old from Switzerland has just defended his World Cup overall title at the 2024 season finale in Saalbach. In 2025, the two-time World Champion will return to Saalbach as defending downhill and giant slalom champion. He takes his role as the favourite calmly: "There's less pressure on me now. I naturally want to repeat my success but no one can take away my feeling of triumph."

After a dream season in 2023/24 with 13 race wins and victory in not only the overall World Cup but also the downhill, super G and giant slalom World Cups, the Swiss athlete of the year is heading into this winter's World Championships feeling "far more relaxed". But by no means less ambitious: "I know that hard work over summer pays off as it gives me the strength I need in my legs for the last 15 seconds of the race."



**CONNY HÜTTER**

...took victory in the downhill World Cup in the final race of last season in Saalbach. She experienced her triumph in March 2024 as if in a trance.

A warm spring leaves people sweating in the stands, many dance on the benches in T-shirts while high above on the Zwölferkogel, a strong wind blows. It's the last downhill race of the World Cup season and the winner of the crystal globe hasn't yet been decided.

"I always start my races with a plan, a structure – everything plays in my mind's eye like a film", says Conny Hütter. The 31-year-old sits at home in Kumberg, Styria, in the shade of a vine arbour and smiles as she recalls that day.

As she crossed the finish in a time of 1:45:08 minutes, she initially didn't realise that she suddenly had a chance of taking overall downhill victory: "I was in a trance and perhaps had an about 20% idea of what was going on around me until the point when I held the globe in my hands." Do you regard yourself as a favourite at the World Championships? "We all know it's going to be a spectacular event. I hope that I'm able to play a part in that."

# Sharks, pizza and the first snow

## A year with Austrian star Stephanie Vernier. We accompany her from the World Cup Finals to the World Championships via WhatsApp.

Mon 6 May

what's up, steffi? had a good summer? 18:43

Tue 7 May

hi hannes 😊  
holiday was amazing, really enjoyed it. saw everything you could want to see (sharks, dolphins, rays, turtles & squid) - nicely refreshed now 😊 08:57

went to the maldives... bit scary at first but then loved it. not many during the day but they all came out at dusk - not just a few, loads every time 😊 08:57



08:59



08:59



### Stephanie Vernier

From the Home of Lässig and back again: the Red Bulletin accompanies the Austrian star around the globe.

At the World Cup Finals in February 2024, Stephanie Vernier and our author Hannes Kropik met up in the finish area for a casual chat, basked in Saalbach's sunshine and agreed upon a unique interview: short and sweet via WhatsApp, without any stress or any regard to proper grammar. The result: a whimsical chat that spanned the globe. Even without reading the messages, the pictures alone tell the story of laid-back preparations for the 2024/25 season highlight: Steffi with sharks in the Maldives, holding a home-made pizza on a balcony and back on her skis in Chile. Roll on the World Championships in Saalbach 2025!

Mon 3 June

what's up, steffi? already started training for next winter? feeling motivated? 17:35



Tue 4 June

training well under way. 😊 really tough sometimes but then I think about the winter and know it's all completely worth it. 09:52



Mon 29 July

heat out there already making you look forward to winter? 17:52

Thanks, all good so far, still enjoying the summer to the full but won't be long till winter. Enjoying my time at home with friends and pizza evenings. 22:47



08:59



Tue 10 Sept.

Now in la parva, chile! 😊



08:59



How was getting back out in the snow? love of skiing instantly rekindled? and how much are you looking forward to your first race (and the world champs in saalbach of course)? 22:47

yes, instantly loved it & got used to winter again quicker than expected 22:47



22:47

1



Fabio Wibmer  
**YouTube star**

Showering with a bike – that’s true cycling love! The man pictured is Fabio Wibmer, otherwise known for speeding down the Skircus slopes: his ‘Fabulous Escape 2’ has already received 172 million clicks!



State theatre  
**Skiing tunes**

Forget the ‘Sound of Music’, it’s all about the ‘Sound of Skiing’. We Austrians are so #skiverrückt (crazy about skiing) that we even sing about our love – in a musical written for the Championships.

3



4

Schifoan is des Leiwaundste, wos ma si nur vurstelln kann.

Wolfgang Ambros

**A declaration of love**

In 1976, Austrian songwriter Wolfgang Ambros released the song ‘Schifoan’, meaning ‘Skiing’. It has long since been regarded as the unofficial national anthem, with its lyrics translating as ‘Skiing is the greatest thing you could possibly imagine.’

# FUN SLOPES

‘Schifoan’ is Austria’s unofficial national anthem. Plus four other fascinating facts.

5



3 days of jazz

**String tunes**

Listening to Asja Valcic and Raphael Preuschl is sure to warm your heart – even in the depths of winter. You can hear the duo on cello and bass ukulele at ‘3 days of jazz’ in January in Saalfelden Leogang. [jazzsaalfelden.com](http://jazzsaalfelden.com)



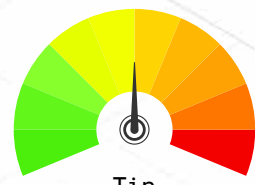
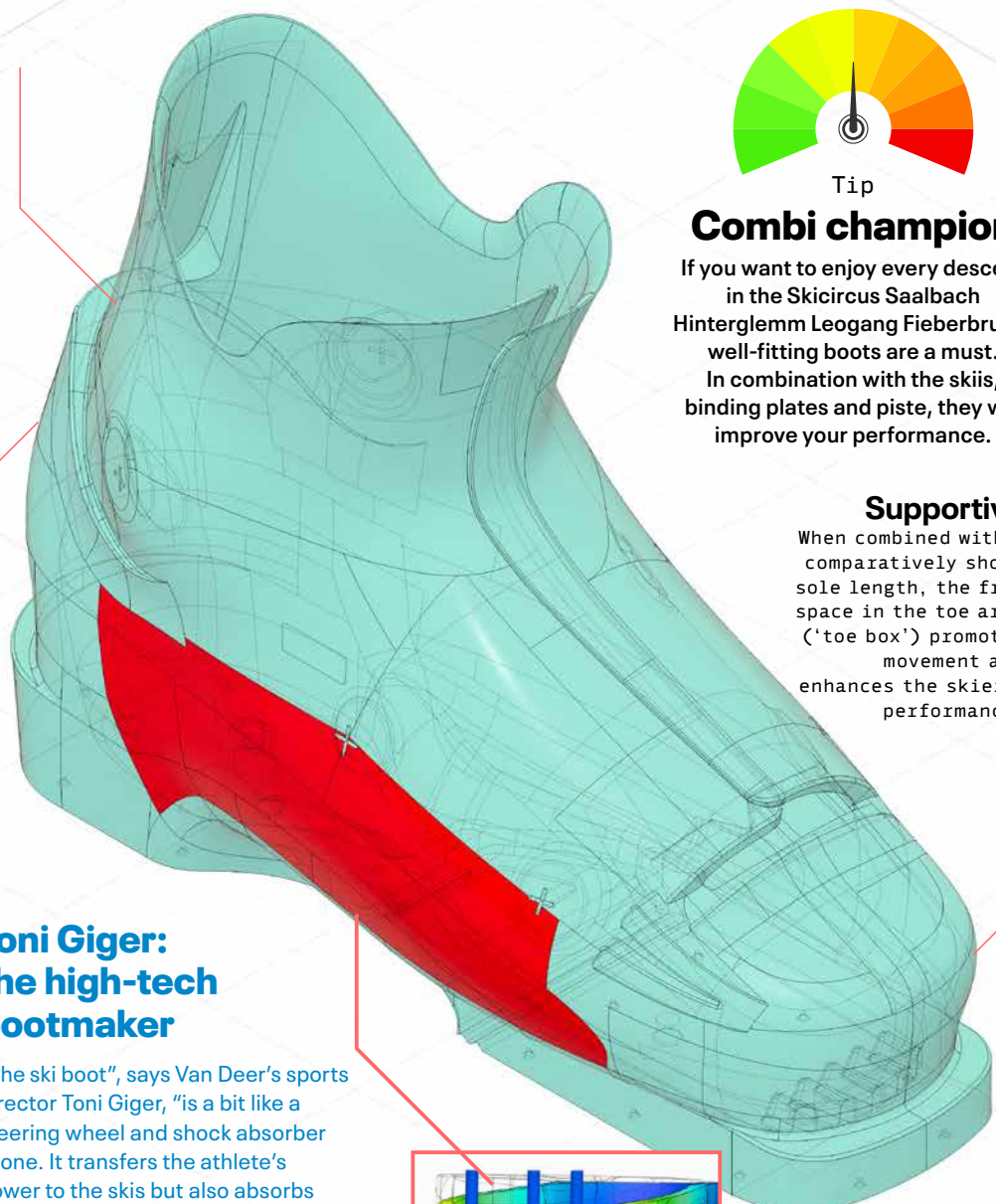
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Freeride World Tour  
**Extreme skiing**

This somersault is intentional as although we’ve left the Zwölferkogel, we’re still in the Skircus. In March, the FIS Freeride World Tour stops at the Wildseeloder in Fieberbrunn – with slope gradients of up to 70 percent! [fwt-fieberbrunn.com](http://fwt-fieberbrunn.com)

# Ski hard!

**Power, control and comfort – what the perfect boot needs to make racers and skis a strong unit.**



**Combi champion**  
 If you want to enjoy every descent in the Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn, well-fitting boots are a must. In combination with the skis, binding plates and piste, they will improve your performance.

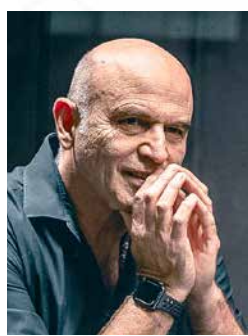
**Supportive**  
 When combined with a comparatively short sole length, the free space in the toe area ('toe box') promotes movement and enhances the skier's performance.

**Speedy**  
 Dimensional and temperature stability enable the rapid transfer of forces to the skis and dynamic forward thrust.

**Secure**  
 The liner plays a key role in functionality with regard to control, speed and a secure fit.

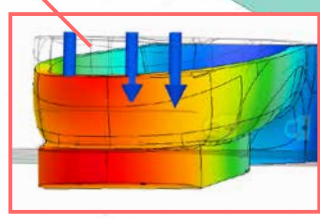
**Supple**  
 The canting (angle of inclination between the boot's shell and leg part) and flex (stiffness of the material) help to fine-tune the riding style.

## Toni Giger: the high-tech bootmaker



Toni Giger, 61, is a mathematician and sports director at Van Deer Red Bull Sports.

"The ski boot", says Van Deer's sports director Toni Giger, "is a bit like a steering wheel and shock absorber in one. It transfers the athlete's power to the skis but also absorbs the forces that arise due to things like uneven ground." The better the forces can be controlled, the better the performance and the lower the risk of injury: "We conduct our research using innovative technologies but everything always starts with the input from our athletes, especially Marcel Hirscher."



The ski boot transfers its wearer's power to the ski.



Richard Mayr  
**At the cutting edge**

For snow groomer drivers like Richard Mayr, the fine blade is key: "I can push the snow to exactly where you want it with centimetre precision."



Daniel Ausweger  
**On the hunt**

The drone pilot captures the racers with his camera. The work may look relaxed, but actually requires the utmost concentration. The aim: "To deliver the best shots without distracting the stars".



Fritz Steger  
**A firm grasp**

His father Herbert prepared the slopes at the 'Sunny' World Championships 1991 and Fritz has long been considered a true master of his profession too. Key to this success: "You've got to love snow."

# The snowmen

## A quintet with a genuine feel for perfection on the piste.

"We're a tight-knit team", comments Markus Schlosser, operations manager on the Zwölferkogel. We are sitting in a gondola on our way to the summit. Whether a snow groomer driver, the Chief of Course or even the operations manager, "we're a community in which everyone helps each other. Our aim is to get the best out of everyone." And even if drone pilots and service technicians aren't directly part of the team, they too are indispensable when it comes to making World Championships a unique experience. Richard, Daniel, Fritz, Markus and Philipp - five men with a special feel for snow.



Markus Schlosser  
**Up with the stars**

The operations manager for the 12-seater Kogel gondola lift takes the stars up to the summit: "Some want to be left in peace, others don't mind in the slightest if you join them in the gondola."



Philipp Geiger  
**Feeling the edges**

Like a piano player, Philipp Geiger, service technician for the Austrian stars Conny Hütter and Steffi Venier, dances his fingers along the skis: "I use the outside of my finger to feel if the edges are sharp enough."



### Complete control: the Home of Lässig app

The perfect choice for anyone wanting to retain a clear picture of things in the Skircircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn. One particularly handy feature is the ability to view your exact location.

**MARCEL HIRSCHER**

The seven-time World Champion on the home World Championships in Saalbach

## “There’s something very special about the location!”

“World Championships or home World Championships, that makes a difference. When Stephan Eberharter became the no-name double World Champion at the last home World Championships in Saalbach in 1991, I wasn’t even two years old. And even though I wasn’t directly party to this skiing highlight, his two gold medals still inspired me in later years. That’s the magic of World Championships in your own country: the great moments become collective memories for generations. I experienced the phenomenon in Schladming in 2013: winning the slalom title at the home World Championships is still my most vivid memory! From an athlete’s perspective, World Championships in your own country are milestones in both success and failure that are as important as the Olympic Games. And this will be the case in Saalbach Hinterglemm in 2025 too: there’s something very special about the location and the right people are working on making these World Ski Championships an event that everyone can celebrate! There’s one thing that I already know for sure: no matter in what role, I’ll definitely be there – and I simply can’t wait!”

# Look closely!

12 World Championship experiences not be missed.

**1****Pure pleasure**

Even during the World Championships, the Skicircus offers 100% fun on the pistes – including on the Zwölferkogel, right next to the World Championship courses.

**2****Ski to the World Ski Championships**

The Zwölferkogel in Hinterglemm is perfectly accessible from Saalbach, Leogang and Fieberbrunn on skis or a snowboard.

**3****Take a look at the municipal coat of arms**

You’ll quickly see that Saalbach is crazy about skiing! The coat of arms depicts a snowflake and a pair of crossed golden skis – as a reminder that winter sport in Salzburg has been celebrated here since 1898. Incidentally, the Skicircus logo shows a ski-jumping clown.

**4****Take your time**

Explore the Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn at your own pace. Even during the races, 270 kilometres of pistes are guaranteed to offer you plenty of variety.

**5****Pack your sun cream**

Ideally with sun protection factor 30 as a minimum! Even the World Championships 1991 became known as the ‘Sunny World Championships’. We’re expecting blue skies in February 2025 too.

**6****Keep your eyes open**

Ski companies will descend on the finish area with their own trucks, offering merchandising, goodie bags and perhaps even the chance to meet your favourite star.

**7****Attend the start number draw**

Head to the plaza to see all the top stars on the stage the evening before their respective races – and with the bit of luck maybe even get a selfie with them.

**8****Celebrate with the stars**

4,000 fans celebrate their heroes on the medal plaza, located on the fan mile.

**9****Relaxed skiing heroes**

Keep an eye out for the regular, last-minute autograph sessions and ‘meet & greets’ with the stars. In 2024, superstar Marco Odermatt took an hour out for his youngest fans. And don’t be surprised if you find yourself walking past Mikaela Shiffrin & co. Even the athletes usually walk between their hotels and the Zwölferkogel.

**10****Get up early**

With a little luck, you’ll find yourself sitting in the first gondola next to one of the stars on their way to view the pistes.

**11****Head for the stands!**

There’s nowhere better to enjoy the atmosphere than by joining the fan clubs for Manuel Feller & co. on the stands!

**12****Enjoy your breakfast on the mountain**

A ‘first line’ experience can be enjoyed in Fieberbrunn – with a magical morning atmosphere and hearty breakfast included.



# Truly valuable!

It's not always (just) medals that shine brightly – here, four Austrian stars impress with important decisions.



Stephan Eberharter

## Golden sound

At the age of 21, Stephan Eberharter made his major breakthrough: he won two gold medals at the 1991 'Sunny' World Championships in Saalbach. As to how he motivated himself before the decisive races: "I sat myself down in a corner and played my accordion."



Alexandra Meissnitzer

## Golden mindset

"It's important to set your sights high", says Alexandra Meissnitzer, "I've always dreamed of becoming World Champion." Today, she calls this the golden mindset and describes it as "something you need to go the extra mile". It clearly worked for her: she's won two World Championship titles.



Bartl Gensbichler

## Golden idea

The man taking off in the photo is Bartl Gensbichler in his time as an active racer. Today, he is President of the Salzburg Ski Association and is considered the father of the World Championships 2025: "I had the idea on my way home from Salzburg and the application went out the next day."



Petra Kronberger

## Golden advice

She took gold in the downhill in 1991 and became the first woman to win in all disciplines. Petra Kronberger's most important advice: "You have to have the courage to say no sometimes."



**START DESCRIPTION**  
A rapid start: a steep gradient of 73% followed by a sharp left turn for the finest high-speed action.

**Mountain station 12-seater Kogel gondola lift**

**DH start women**

**DH start men**

**SG start men**

**SCHNEEKRISTALL JUMP**  
The men jump 55 metres at speeds of 140 kilometres per hour. And it's no wonder with a 73% gradient.

**SG start women**

**GS start men**

**Middle station 12-seater Kogel gondola lift**

**GS start women**

**OCHSENTRITT**  
A compression followed by a jump - the combination of pressure and demanding elements is particularly challenging.

**PANORAMIC JUMP**  
A key point on the women's course that demands outstanding technical ability and great courage.

**SL start women & men**

**TP Start**

**FINISH**

**Valley station 12-seater Kogel gondola lift**

**Key**

- DH Downhill
- SG Super-G
- GS Giant Slalom
- SL Slalom
- TP Team Parallel

**Where the medals can be won:**

**Ulli Maier race course**

Five races will take place on the Ulli Maier course: the women's downhill (start at 1,835 metres above sea level), the women's Super-G (1,600 metres), the men's slalom (1,280 metres), the women's slalom (1,260 metres) and the women's team combination.

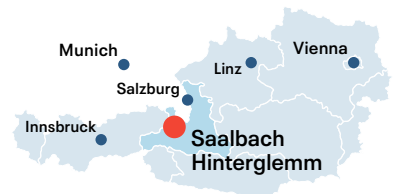
**Schneekristall race course**

Six events will be held on this course: the men's downhill (start at 1,974 metres above sea level), the men's Super-G (1,780 metres), the men's giant slalom (1,520 metres), the women's giant slalom (1,460 metres) and the men's team combination. The team parallel race, which will open the World Championships on 4 February, starts at 1,220 metres, i.e. an impressive 160 altitude metres above the finish line.

**All races on one mountain**

The Zwölferkogel is the centre of the World Ski Championships.

The heart of these World Championships is easy to get to. For a particular relaxed and environmentally friendly journey, why not take the train? Simply hop on the regional express train to Maishofen-Saalbach from Salzburg or Innsbruck then take the direct bus (line 680) or a taxi to Saalbach Hinterglemm. The nearest airports are Salzburg, Innsbruck and Munich, from where the Saalbach Airport Shuttle will take you straight to your accommodation. The transfer can be booked online. If travelling by car, simply use Google Maps.



**Welcome to the Skicircus!**

The Skicircus Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn is less than a 90-minute drive from the city of Salzburg. It's also easy to get to by train and bus. [saalbach.com](http://saalbach.com)



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