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PRESS RELEASE - Preview for BMW IBSF World Cup in Innsbruck 13 December 2017

Innsbruck to open second half of the Olympic season

Innsbruck (RWH): The second half of the Olympic season in the 2017/2018 BMW IBSF World Cup is set to open on the Olympic ice track in Igls near Innsbruck (AUT). The World Cup bobsleigh and skeleton athletes have already completed four races this season, with another four now on the horizon. Three of the upcoming races – Innsbruck, Altenberg (GER) and St. Moritz (SUI) in January 2018 – will also count as qualification races for the 2018 Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang.

The fields in all five World Cup disciplines are very tight this season, though some athletes and nations are still managing to come out on top time and again. “It’s going to be the toughest bobsleigh race the Olympics have ever seen,” predicted Germany’s head bobsleigh coach Rene Spies in a report by the sports news service SID in the run-up to the season. “There have never been so many athletes at such a high standard as there are this winter.” “There are ten athletes in contention for an Olympic medal; that’s a real first for me,” added Nico Walther (GER), winner of the 2-man bobsleigh at the opening World Cup in Lake Placid. The results of the first four races of the season highlight his point: in the four 2-man bobsleigh races so far, there have been four different winners from three different countries. In the 4-man bobsleigh, nine athletes from five countries have finished on the World Cup podium.

As has been the case in the last couple of years, the women’s bobsleigh season began with the anticipated battle between US and Canadian athletes. However, the German team have also celebrated three podium finishes with Stephanie Schneider taking third place in Lake Placid and the gold medal in Winterberg and defending European Champion Mariama Jamanka finishing third in Winterberg.

The women’s skeleton event has so far seen seven athletes from five different countries secure a place on the podium. In the men’s skeleton, however, Sungbin Yun is currently the athlete to beat. The runner-up in the overall World Cup in 2016 and 2017 celebrated his third win in succession in Winterberg. ©RWH2017

The World Cup and European Championship schedule for Innsbruck

Date/Time CET		Race
Friday, 15 December	10 am	Men's Skeleton, run 1
	11.45 am	Men's Skeleton, run 2
Friday, 15 December	2 pm	Women's Skeleton, run 1
	3.30 pm	Women's Skeleton, run 2
Saturday, 16 December	9.30 am	Women's Bobsleigh, run 1
	11.00 am	Women's Bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 16 December	1.30 pm	2-Man Bob, run 1
	3 pm	2-Man Bob, run 2
Sunday, 17 December	2 pm	4-Man Bob, run 1
	3.30 pm	4- Man Bob, run 2





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World Cup in Innsbruck set to count as European Championships

Innsbruck (RWH): As well as racing to score essential points in the overall World Cup and qualify for the Olympics, the BMW IBSF World Cup races in Innsbruck will also decide the first title of the winter season: For all European athletes, the races on the Igls Olympic ice track will also count as the European Championships.

When it comes to bobsleigh, the German team have rarely missed out on a title in the European Championships: 23 titles in the 4-man bobsleigh (since 1967) and 22 in the 2-man (since 1929) speak for themselves. And in the women's bobsleigh, the Germans have won every title awarded since 2004 – apart from 2014, when the Swiss pairing of Fabienne Meier/Tanja Mayer secured the title in Königssee.

In the early years of the skeleton European Championships (the first men's championships took place in Igls in 1981), the event was dominated by Austrian athletes, who took three titles, seven silvers and three bronzes.

No skeleton European Championships were held between 1988 and 2003. Since the title returned in 2004, eight of the 15 titles have gone to Martins Dukurs (LAT). In 2016, he shared European Championship gold with his brother Tomass. Latvia, represented by the Dukurs brothers, has thus advanced to the top of the rankings for most successful nation in the men's skeleton European Championships.

Janine Flock from the host country is a favourite to take the title of women's skeleton European Champion in Innsbruck. Should she secure a medal in Igls, Janine Flock will climb to second place in the list of most successful athletes in the European Championships. This would put her at least on equal standing with the UK's Shelley Rudman (who won two golds, two silvers, and two bronzes). The unrivalled champion of European Champions is Anja Huber, who won four titles plus one silver and one bronze during her career. ©RWH2017

Winners and 2017 European Championship medallists in Winterberg

	GOLD		SILVER / SILBER		BRONZE	
Women's Skeleton Frauen-Skeleton	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	FLOCK, Janine	AUT	HERMANN, Tina	GER
Men's Skeleton Männer-Skeleton	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	DUKURS, Tomass	LAT	TRETIAKOV, Alexander	RUS
Women's Bobsleigh Frauen-Zweierbob	JAMANKA, Mariama DRAZEK, Annika	GER	SERGEEVA, Nadezhda KOCHERZHOVA, Ansastasia	RUS	HENGSTER, Christina ONASANYA, Jennifer	AUT
2-Man Bobsleigh Männer-Zweierbob	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	LOCHNER, Johannes BLUHM, Joshua	GER	KIBERMANIS, Oskars MIKNIS, Matiss	LAT
4-Man Bobsleigh Viererbob	LOCHNER, Johannes MROWKA, Sebastian BLUHM, Joshua RASP, Christian	GER	WALTHER, Nico KUSKE, Kevin KORONA, Kevin FRANKE, Eric	GER	MAIER, Benjamin LAUSSEGGGER, Stefan SAMMER, Markus MOLDOVAN, Danut Ion	AUT





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Janine Flock confident ahead of home European Championships despite knee injury

Innsbruck (RWH): Despite a knee injury, Janine Flock is feeling confident ahead of her home World Cup and home European Championships. She dislocated her kneecap during a warm-up session for the BMW IBSF World Cup in Winterberg. “Although I couldn’t really put any pressure on my left knee for the start, I still managed to do really well with the ninth best start time and the seventh best time on the second heat,” said the Austrian athlete – who is currently eleventh in the overall World Cup standings – in a report by the Austrian Olympic Committee ÖOö after the World Cup race in Winterberg. “Consistency on your runs is really important. I’m very happy with my performance. I am slowly but surely making my way into the top 10, which is my goal for the season.”

Janine Flock is Austria’s most successful female skeleton pilot of all time. She won a silver medal in the 2016 World Championships on her home track and also won the overall World Cup in 2015. The 28-year-old athlete is definitely a contender for the European Championships: She has finished on the podium at every European title event since 2013 (when she won bronze in St. Moritz) and also secured the title in 2014 and 2016.

Austria’s male skeleton athletes received their last European Championship medal ten years ago when Markus Penz won silver in Königssee in 2007. Representing the home crowds at the European Championships in Innsbruck is Matthias Guggenberger, who is currently tenth overall in the BMW IBSF World Cup. The 33-year-old has only ever secured one podium finish, when he came third in Königssee in the World Cup winter of 2011/2012. ©RWH2017

Last year’s winners at the BMW IBSF World Cup in Innsbruck

	1.		2.		3.	
Women's Skeleton Frauen-Skeleton	HERMANN, Tina	GER	RAHNEVA, Mirela	CAN	FLOCK, Janine	AUT
Men's Skeleton Männer-Skeleton	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	TRETIAKOV, Alexander	RUS	YUN, Sungbin	KOR
Women's Bobsleigh Frauen-Zweierbob	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Lolo	USA	HUMPHRIES, Kailie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja	USA
2-Man Bobsleigh Männer-Zweierbob	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	MELBARDIS, Oskars STRENGA, Janis	LAT	MAIER, Benjamin SAMMER, Markus	AUT
4-Man Bobsleigh Viererbob	MELBARDIS, Oskars DREISKENS, Daumants VILKASTE, Arvis STRENGA, Janis	LAT	PETER, Rico FRIEDLI, Simon BAUMANN, Alex AMRHEIN, Thomas	SUI	HOLCOMB, Steven VALDES, Carlo REED, James McGUFFIE, Samuel	USA





Beierl, Hengster and Maier in contention for medals at home European Championships

Innsbruck (RWH): With female bobsleigh pilots Katrin Beierl and Christina Hengster plus Benjamin Maier behind the steering ropes in the 2-man and 4-man bobsleigh, the hosts of this year's European Championships, Austria, have not one but three promising candidates for medals in the bobsleigh.

One athlete who is on a real roll this season is Katrin Beierl, who has won four out of five races in the European Cup. Making her season début at the BMW IBSF World Cup in Winterberg, the 24-year-old and her brakewoman Jennifer Onasanya achieved her best ever World Cup result in fifth. This result put her just five hundredths of a second behind Olympic Champion Kaillie Humphries and one tenth of a second ahead of defending World Cup holder Jamie Greubel Poser.

Last season, her team mate Christina Hengster became Austria's first female bobsleigh pilot to win a medal in the European Championships when she secured bronze in Winterberg. After crashing at the opening World Cup race in Lake Placid (USA), the 31-year-old athlete has so far finished tenth (Park City, USA), eighth (Whistler, CAN) and 14th (Winterberg, GER) this season.

In the 2-man and 4-man bobsleigh, fans at the track will look forward to watching pilot Benjamin Maier and his teams. Winning a European Championship medal in the 2-man bobsleigh would be a sensation for Austria, as its last top-three finish in the event was almost 45 years ago when Werner Delle Karth/Fritz Sperling finished third in Cervinia (ITA) in 1973.

The situation in the 4-man bobsleigh is a little different: Pilot Benjamin Maier and his squad won silver in St. Moritz (SUI) in 2016 and bronze in Winterberg (GER) in 2017. ©RWH2017

26 Countries from four continents registered to compete at the World Cup in Innsbruck

Innsbruck (RWH): Athletes from 26 countries and four continents will be on the starting line at the BMW IBSF World Cup in Innsbruck. Bobsleigh and skeleton athletes from 18 European countries will be competing for the title of European Champion. ©RWH2017

On the sidelines

Elana Meyers Taylor (USA) had to deal with a lack of sled and equipment ahead of the BMW IBSF World Cup in Winterberg. The container with all the equipment failed to arrive in Germany in time for training following the North American Cup event in Park City. Help came in a somewhat unbureaucratic form from other countries: "Thanks to Team Romania and Team Japan, we were able to borrow sleds today to qualify for the race" wrote World Champion Elana Meyers Taylor on Twitter. "And thanks to Switzerland, Romania, Belgium, Germany, Canada, Austria and the UK for providing us gear." ©RWH2017





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Jazmine Fenlator Victorian's (JAM) participation in the BMW IBSF World Cup in Winterberg (GER) meant that a Caribbean women's team competed in the bobsleigh World Cup. The 32-year-old, whose family originates from Jamaica, previously raced for the USA and finished in eleventh place in the women's bobsleigh at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi and third in the overall World Cup in 2015. Jazmine Fenlator-Victorian has been racing for Jamaica in IBSF events since 2016 and has also received IOC approval to compete for Jamaica at the Olympics should she qualify. In Winterberg, Fenlator-Victorian and her brakewoman Carrie Russel enjoyed a very successful World Cup début in seventh place.

Jamaica has a long history in the bobsleigh: The country's 4-man bobsleigh team hit the headlines in Calgary in 1988 when they became the first Jamaican team to compete in the Olympics. Their story inspired a Hollywood studio to create the film Cool Runnings (1993), which generated over \$150 million in the cinema alone. ©RWH2017

Heather Moyse (CAN) has returned to Canada's bobsleigh team. The 39-year-old officially ended her career after the Sochi Winter Games in 2014 when she won her second Olympic gold with pilot Kaillie Humphries. However, up-and-coming pilot Alysia Rissling persuaded her to attempt a comeback over the summer. "I'm not motivated to go back and just try and win another Olympic medal but I am motivated by the idea of helping someone else win their first" said Heather Moyse in a report on nationalpost.com.

After some intensive training over the past few weeks, the two-time Olympic champion faced her first test to become a brakewoman between the World Cup races in Whistler (CAN) and Winterberg (GER). "My body is not quite where it needs to be," Heather Moyse wrote on her Facebook page after the test and before setting off for Germany to join the World Cup team. "But ... I pushed only one-hundredth of a second off of my personal best time in the IceHouse EVER!" Racing for the first time since the 2014 Winter Olympics, Heather Moyse made her comeback as a brakewoman for the Canadian team at the World Cup in Winterberg, where she finished 16th with Alysia Rissling. ©RWH2017

BMW IBSF World Cup 2017/2018 Women's Skeleton/ Frauen-Skeleton							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	FLOCK, Janine	AUT	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN	YARNOLD, Lizzy	GBR
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS	HERMANN, Tina	GER	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	CHANNELL, Jane	CAN	HERMANN, Tina	GER
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017						
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018						
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018						
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018						
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup	2017/2018	LÖLLING, Jacqueline (GER)	810	VATHJE, Elisabeth (CAN)	756	HERMANN, Tina (GER)	738





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BMW IBSF World Cup 2017/2018 Men's Skeleton / Männer-Skeleton							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TRETIKOV, Alexander	RUS
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	JUNGK, Axel	GER
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TREGUBOV, Nikita	RUS	DUKURS, Tomass	LAT
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	GRESZCZYSZYN, Dave	CAN
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017						
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018						
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018						
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018						
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ 2017/2018 Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup		YUN, Sungbin (KOR) 885		DUKURS, Martins (LAT) 821		DUKURS, Tomass (LAT) 752	

BMW IBSF World Cup 2017/2018 Women's Bobsleigh / Frauen-Zweierbob							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana GIBBS, Lauren	USA	SCHNEIDER, Stephanie BUCKWITZ, Lisa Marie	GER
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie GIBBS, Lauren	USA	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Lolo	USA
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja	USA	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Kehri	USA
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	SCHNEIDER, Stephanie BUCKWITZ, Lisa Marie	GER	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana GIBBS, Lauren	USA	JAMANKA, Mariama DRAZEK, Annika	GER
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017						
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018						
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018						
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018						
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ 2017/2018 Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup		HUMPHRIES, Kaillie (CAN) 852		MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana (USA) 820		GREUBEL POSER, Jamie (USA) 803	



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BMW IBSF World Cup 2017/2018 2-man Bobsleigh / Männer-Zweierbob								
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.		
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	WALTHER, Nico POSER, Christian	GER	CUNNINGHAM, Nick BAILEY, Ryan	USA	BASCUE, Codie VALDES, Carlo	USA	
		BASCUE, Codie Mc GUFFIE, Sam	USA	KRIPPS, Justin KOPACZ, Alexander	CAN	OLSEN, Justin WEINSTOCK, Evan	USA	
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	- no 2-man race - - kein Zweierbob-Rennen -		- no 2-man race - - kein Zweierbob-Rennen -		- no 2-man race - - kein Zweierbob-Rennen -		
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	SPRING, Chris WRIGHT, Neville	CAN	KRIPPS, Justin KOPACZ, Alexander	CAN	MELBARDIS, Oskars DREISKENS, Daumants	LAT	
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	BRACHER, Clemens KUONEN, Michael	SUI	SPRING, Chris WRIGHT, Neville	CAN	-	-	
				FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER			
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017							
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018							
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018							
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018							
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup		2017/2018	KRIPPS, Justin (CAN)	804	SPRING, Chris (CAN)	787	WALTHER, Nico (GER)	697

BMW IBSF World Cup 2017/2018 4-man Bobsleigh / Viererbob								
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.		
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	- no 4-man race - - kein Viererbob-Rennen -		- no 4-man race - - kein Viererbob-Rennen -		- no 4-man race - - kein Viererbob-Rennen -		
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	WALTHER, Nico KUSKE, Kevin POSER, Christian FRANKE, Eric	GER	KRIPPS, Justin BROWN, Lascelles COAKWELL, Ben WRIGHT, Neville	CAN	SPRING, Chris LUMSDEN, Jesse KOPACZ, Alexander SMITH, Oluseyi	CAN	
		LOCHNER, Johannes RADEMACHER, Marc WEBER, Christopher RASP, Christian	GER	BASCUE, Codie WEBER, Nathan VALDES, Carlo McGUFFIE, Samuel	USA	HALL, Bradley TASKER, Bruce FEARON, Joel CACKETT, Gregory	GBR	
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	KASJANOV, Alexander KHUZIN, Ilvir KONDRATENKO, Vasiliy PUSHKAREV, Alexei	RUS	DEEN, Lamin SIMONS, Ben OLUBI, Toby MATTHEWS, Andrew	GBR	WALTHER, Nico KUSKE, Kevin KORONA, Kevin FRANKE, Eric	GER	
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	LOCHNER, Johannes BLUHM, Joshua WEBER, Christopher RASP, Christian	GER	WALTHER, Nico HÜBENBECKER, Marco KORONA, Kevin FRANKE, Eric	GER	FRIEDRICH, Francesco BÄCKER, Jannis GROTHKOPP, Martin MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017							
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018							
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018							
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018							
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup		2017/2018	LOCHNER, Johannes (GER)	826	WALTHER, Nico (GER)	787	KRIPPS, Justin (CAN)	754



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