



PRESS RELEASE – Preview for BMW IBSF World Cup in Altenberg/GER 2 Jan. 2019

IBSF athletes to start 2019 in Altenberg, host of the 2020 World Championships

Altenberg (RWH): The 2019 World Cup year will get underway with bobsleigh and skeleton athletes taking to the sliding sports track in Altenberg (GER). The venue will host the third stop on the 2018/2019 BMW IBSF World Cup tour between 4 and 6 January. The challenging track is located in the German state of Saxony, around 40 kilometres south of Dresden and not far from the Czech border. In 2020, the track will host the BMW IBSF World Championships.

Officially opened 31 years ago, the Altenberg track is the youngest of the four German ice tracks. In November 1987 – when the track still belonged to the GDR – 2-man and 4-man Bobsleigh teams from 17 nations competed in the AERO Cup for the first time – in front of a record crowd of 20,000 spectators.

The finishing line and outrun area of the 1,413-metre ice track were renovated in 2007. The track's 17 curves wind their way through the Saxon Ore Mountains, dropping a total of 122 metres from start to finish. The sliding sports track has played host to several IBSF World and European Championships over the past three decades. Altenberg also hosts BMW IBSF World Cup races on a regular basis.

Male athletes competed for World Championship medals in the 2-man and 4-man Bobsleigh in Altenberg in 1991 and 2000, while skeleton athletes battled it out in the World Championships in 1994 and 1999. In 2008, six titles (Women's Skeleton, Men's Skeleton, 2-woman Bobsleigh, 2-man Bobsleigh, 4-man Bobsleigh and Team) were awarded at the joint World Championships. Back then, the titles were awarded to Anja Huber (GER, Women's Skeleton), Kristan Bromley (GBR, Men's Skeleton), Sandra Kiriasis (GER, 2-woman Bobsleigh), André Lange (GER, 2-man and 4-man Bobsleigh) and the German team with Sebastian Haupt, Sandra Kiriasis/Berit Wiacker, Anja Huber and Matthias Höpfner/Alexander Mann.

A total of 45 skeleton athletes from 17 countries are registered to compete in the third BMW IBSF World Cup race of the 2018/2019 season. Overall, 55 teams from 14 countries are expected to compete in the three bobsleigh events. ©RWH2019

Tina Hermann and Axel Jungk win German Championship titles in Altenberg

Altenberg (RWH): The German skeleton athletes Tina Hermann and Axel Jungk completed a successful trial run for the BMW IBSF World Cup race in Altenberg by winning the German Championships at the track on 22 December.

In the women's event, Tina Hermann defended her title from last year, finishing ahead of the Olympic silver medallist Jacqueline Lölling. Third place went to Sophia Griebel.

Following his victories in 2016 and 2017, the World Championship silver medallist Axel Jungk won his third German Championship title in the men's event. Christopher Grotheer finished second, while Kilian von Schleinitz came in third. ©RWH2019





Altenberg: home of historic start and track records in the 4-man bobsleigh

Altenberg (RWH): The 4-man Bobsleigh records set at the Altenberg skeleton and bobsleigh track are particularly impressive.

The track record dates back to the last World Championships held at the track in February 2008. In the third of their four runs, André Lange/René Hoppe/Kevin Kuske/Martin Putze (GER) completed the 1,400-metre track in 53.17 seconds, before going on to secure the World Championship title on their final run.

The benchmark for the fastest starting time is even older. On 12 January 1996, Christoph Langen/Sven Rühr/Markus Zimmermann/Olaf Hampel (GER) took just 5.04 seconds to complete the starting distance – a time that no other 4-man team has managed to beat in the subsequent 23 years.

Meanwhile, some of the other records for Altenberg are not even a year old: At the BMW IBSF World Cup race in January 2018, Elana Meyers Taylor/Briauna Jones (USA, starting record of 5.54 seconds) and Kaillie Humphries/Phylicia George (CAN, track record of 56.22 seconds) set the new times to beat in the 2-woman bobsleigh. Before going on to secure the Olympic title, Justin Kripps/Alexander Kopacz of Canada set the starting record here in the 2-man bobsleigh with a time of 5.11 seconds. ©RWH2019

Latvian bobsleigh and skeleton athletes named athletes of the year

Altenberg/Riga (RWH): The Olympic bronze medallists Oskars Melbardis/Janis Strenga, record-breaking World Champion and overall World Cup winner Martins Dukurs, up-and-coming star Kristis Netlaus and coach Sandis Prusis have been awarded the titles of athletes of the year in Latvia.

Oskars Melbardis/Janis Strenga – who won Olympic bronze in the 2-man Bobsleigh at the 2018 Winter Games in PyeongChang (KOR) – were presented with the award for the team category. The national bobsleigh coach Sandis Prusis was elected coach of the year.

The overall winner of last season's IBSF European Cup, skeleton athlete Kristis Netlaus also won the Junior European Championships and secured silver in the Junior World Championships. The 19-year-old athlete was voted as up-and-coming star of the year in Latvia's nationwide contest.

Martins Dukurs was the happy recipient of the TV audience choice award. With five World Championship titles, 50 World Cup race wins, eight overall wins in the World Cup rankings, and two Olympic medals (silver in 2010 and 2014), the 34-year-old is the most successful skeleton athlete of all time. ©RWH2019





Elana Meyers Taylor becomes new President of the Women's Sports Foundation

New York (RWH): Bobsleigh pilot Elana Meyers Taylor of the USA will be arriving at the BMW IBSF World Cup race in Altenberg with a brand new role. The Women's Sports Foundation in New York has elected the silver medallist from the 2014 Sochi Olympics and the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics as their new president. The 2015 and 2017 World Champion will begin her year in office in January 2019, taking over from freestyle skier Grete Eliassen (USA).

"I am honoured to join the WSF Board of Trustees whose depth of leadership and experience will make an incredible impact in the success of this incredible nonprofit," said Elana Meyers Taylor in a post on Facebook this summer. "I look forward to this important role in helping to unlock girls' potential through the power of sport." ©RWH2019

Coach Dirk Matschenz announces changes on the German skeleton team

Altenberg (RWH): In the run-up to the BMW IBSF World Cup race in Altenberg, the German skeleton coach Dirk Matschenz has announced a few changes to the German World Cup team. Christopher Grotheer – who was forced to take a break earlier on in the season due to injury – will be returning to the World Cup team. Joined by Kilian von Schleinitz, both athletes will have the chance to test their mettle against the world's best skeleton athletes for the next four World Cup races. The team also includes Axel Jungk, who achieved the German team's best result at the last World Cup race in Winterberg, where he finished in second. Alexander Gassner and Felix Keisinger (who finished in fifth place on his World Cup debut in Sigulda) will instead battle it out in the IBSF Intercontinental Cup races in Park City and Lake Placid (USA).

"Based on their performances to date, all five athletes deserve a place on the World Cup team," said head coach Dirk Matschenz in a press release issued by the German Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Federation (BSD). "However, because we are only just at the beginning of a new Olympic cycle, I would like to give everyone a fair and equal chance."

Jacqueline Lölling, Tina Hermann and Sophia Griebel will continue to represent Germany in the World Cup. The national coach has once again distanced himself from plans to rotate the team, which would have seen Susanne Kreher make her World Cup début in Altenberg and Königssee. The 20-year-old athlete will compete in the Intercontinental Cup instead. "Susanne Kreher is a young athlete. We are taking great care with her development and want to make sure she reaches the top of the game. However, she has been suffering from some minor health issues recently, so her performance has not been up to scratch." ©RWH2019





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The last World Cup winners in Altenberg in January 2018

	1.		2.		3.	
Women's Skeleton Frauen-Skeleton	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	HERMANN, Tina	GER	FERNSTÄDT, Anna	GER
Men's Skeleton Männer-Skeleton	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TRETIAKOV, Alexander	RUS	GROTHER, Christopher	GER
2-woman Bobsleigh Frauen-Zweierbob	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie GEORGE, Phylcia	CAN	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja	USA	KÖHLER, Anna DRAZEK, Annika	GER
2-man Bobsleigh Männer-Zweierbob	KRIPPS, Justin KOPACZ, Alexander	CAN	FRIEDRICH, Francesco GROTHKOPP, Martin	GER	KIBERMANIS, Oskars MIKNIS, Matiss	LAT
4-man Bobsleigh Viererbob	WALTHER, Nico KUSKE, Kevin POSER, Christian FRANKE, Eric	GER	FRIEDRICH, Francesco BAUER, Candy GROTHKOPP, Martin MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	KIBERMANIS, Oskars JANSONS, Janis MIKNIS, Matiss DAMBIS, Intars	LAT

World Cup schedule for Altenberg

Date/Time CET		Race
Friday, 4 January	10 am	Women's Skeleton, run 1
	11.30 am	Women's Skeleton, run 2
Friday, 4 January	2 pm	Men's Skeleton, run 1
	3.45 pm	Men's Skeleton, run 2
Saturday, 5 January	1.15 pm	2-woman Bobsleigh, run 1
	2.45 pm	2-woman Bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 5 January	4.30 pm	2-Man Bob, run 1
	6 pm	2-Man Bob, run 2
Sunday, 6 January	11.30 am	4-Man Bob, run 1
	1 pm	4- Man Bob, run 2

On the sidelines

Tom de la Hunty (GBR) was named as the new coach for the Belgian bobsleigh team in an announcement on the Belgian association's Facebook page during the run-up to the season. Tom De La Hunty competed as a bobsleigh pilot for Great Britain and took part in two Winter Olympic Games. He finished 12th in the 2-man Bobsleigh in Calgary 1988. Now 62, the athlete began his coaching career in 1991, working as the bobsleigh coach for Team GB until 2000. He attended the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Winter Olympic Games as an assistant coach. He then took over as head coach for the 2006 Games. The 1998 Olympic Games saw Great Britain's 4-man bobsleigh team take home a bronze medal. The British coach worked for the Dutch bobsleigh team between 2000 and 2002, returning in 2006 until 2010. He supported the team during its appearances at the 2002 and 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Tom De La Hunty then moved to Canada where he was head bobsleigh coach between 2010 and 2016. This period saw Kaillie Humphries win her second Olympic gold in Sochi in 2014, two World Championship titles (2012 and 2013), and three overall wins in the World Cup (2013, 2014 and 2016). In the 2-man Bobsleigh, pilot Lyndon Rush won the overall World Cup title in 2013 and a World Championship title in 2012. ©RWH2019





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2018/2019 season winners – Skeleton

Track / Bahn	Women's Skeleton Frauen-Skeleton	Men's Skeleton Männer-Skeleton
1. Sigulda (LAT) December 7-9, 2018	Elena Nikitina (RUS)	Nikita Tregubov (RUS)
2. Winterberg (GER) December 14-16, 2018	Jacqueline Lölling (GER)	Alexander Tretiakov (RUS)
3. Altenberg (GER) January 4-6, 2019		
4. Königssee (GER) + ECh/EM January 11-13, 2019		
5. Innsbruck (AUT) January 18-20, 2019		
6. St. Moritz (SUI) January 25-27, 2019		
7. Lake Placid (USA) February 15-16, 2019		
8. Calgary (CAN) February 23-24, 2019		
Overall Leaders World Cup/ Führende Gesamt-Weltcup	Elena Nikitina (RUS) 417 Points / Punkte	Alexander Tretiakov (RUS) 417 Points / Punkte





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2018/2019 season winners – Bobsleigh

Track / Bahn	2-woman Bobsleigh Frauen-Zweierbob	2-man Bobsleigh Männer-Zweierbob	4-man Bobsleigh Viererbob
1. Sigulda (LAT) December 7-9, 2018	Mariama Jamanka (GER) Annika Drazek	Francesco Friedrich (GER) Alexander Schüller Francesco Friedrich (GER) Martin Grothkopp	- no 4-man race - - kein Viererbob-Rennen -
2. Winterberg (GER) December 14-16, 2018	Stephanie Schneider (GER) Ann-Christin Strack	- no 2-man race - - kein Zweierbob-Rennen -	Nico Walther (GER) Paul Krenz Alexander Rödiger Eric Franke Francesco Friedrich (GER) Thorsten Margis Candy Bauer Martin Grothkopp
3. Altenberg (GER) January 4-6, 2019			
4. Königssee (GER) + Ech/EM January 11-13, 2019			
5. Innsbruck (AUT) January 18-20, 2019			
6. St. Moritz (SUI) January 25-27, 2019			
7. Lake Placid (USA) February 15-16, 2019			
8. Calgary (CAN) February 23-24, 2019			
Overall Leaders World Cup/ Führende Gesamt-Weltcup	Mariama Jamanka (GER) 435 Points / Punkte	Francesco Friedrich (GER) 450 points/Punkte	Francesco Friedrich (GER) 435 points/Punkte

