



**PRESS RELEASE – Preview 1 BMW IBSF World Championships Altenberg 2021** 3 February 2021

## **First weekend of racing in the BMW IBSF World Championships 2021 in Altenberg Titles set to be awarded in the 2-man and 2-woman bobsleigh**

Altenberg (RWH): Just like back in 2020, the 2021 BMW IBSF Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships will once again be taking place in Altenberg (GER). However, the only thing that will be “just like 2020” will be the sporting action on the track – the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed all other aspects of the event.

Whereas thousands of sports fans would normally be making their way up and down the paths at Altenberg sliding track to get a good view of the spectacular turns and straights or stake their place at the final grandstand, the venue will be completely empty this year. The athletes along with the coaches, support staff and officials required for the event will be the only people in attendance. Nevertheless, fans can still cheer along and follow each and every trip down Altenberg sliding track thanks to the live stream from the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF), many hours of TV broadcasting or separate streams from partner broadcasters in a number of countries. The schedule for the first World Championship weekend in Altenberg features the 2-man and 2-woman bobsleigh events, each made up of four runs on two consecutive days.

In the **2-woman bobsleigh**, Katrin Beierl will be arriving in Altenberg as the first ever overall World Cup winner from Austria – a feat that has also put her among the favourites for the World Championship title. However, the 27-year-old has only taken part in a few races in Altenberg in her career to date. Her most recent appearances at the track saw Katrin Beierl finish ninth at both the 2019 BMW IBSF World Cup race and the 2020 BMW IBSF World Championships. Arriving in Altenberg as the defending World Champion is Kaillie Humphries (USA). She won her third title here last year with her brakewoman Lauren Gibbs. The other medal winners from 2020 will also be in attendance: last year, the bronze medal went to pilot Christine de Bruin of Canada, while Kim Kalicki (GER), the then-reigning Junior World Champion, surprised the field to secure World Championship silver. The 2021 Junior World Champion, Laura Nolte (GER), still has a score to settle with the track in Altenberg: at the 2020 World Championships, she crashed on her second run and did not compete on the final date. Another athlete worth watching at the BMW IBSF World Championships in Altenberg is Elana Meyers Taylor (USA), who, after taking time off for maternity leave, celebrated her World Cup comeback with three podium finishes from four races.

In the **2-man bobsleigh**, the clear favourite is Francesco Friedrich (GER). The Olympic, World and European Champion will be arriving at the World Championships with 52 BMW IBSF World Cup wins under his belt, eleven of which came from the 2020/2021 2-man bobsleigh World Cup alone. This year’s event in Altenberg will see Friedrich aiming to win his seventh successive 2-man bobsleigh title: the 30-year-old has remained unbeaten in the 2-man bobsleigh World Championships since 2013. As clear as the favourite for World Championship gold seems to be, a large number of athletes are in contention for a medal based on their results from the 2020/2021 season so far: leading the pack is Johannes Lochner (GER), who joined Friedrich on the podium at ten out of the twelve World Cup races and even managed to beat him on one occasion. Justin Kripps of Canada is another contender – a long way down the rankings after just three starts in the 2-man bobsleigh, he performed well in all of his appearances, finishing in fifth, third and fourth. At PyeongChang 2018, Kripps drew with Friedrich to share the title of Olympic Champion in the 2-man bobsleigh. This winter also saw Oskars Kibermanis (LAT), the 2020 European Champion,



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achieve six podium finishes out of ten World Cup starts. Two young Swiss pilots have also got people talking: Michael Vogt finished on the podium three times and was not far behind in his other three appearances. His team-mate Simon Friedli added another podium finish to the country's sheet in Sigulda (LAT). For the first time ever, Dominik Dvorak (CZE) finished the 2-man bobsleigh World Cup in third place overall. Whether anyone will be able to challenge "Friedrich the Great" for 2-man bobsleigh gold will become clear over the four heats in Altenberg. ©RWH2021

### Traditional local woodcraft for the World Champions in Altenberg

Altenberg (RWH): The athletes who finish on the podium at the 2021 BMW IBSF World Championships will receive gifts with a unique local link to Altenberg. Wagner woodturning workshop from Riechberg, a town between Chemnitz and Dresden, is producing exclusive wooden figurines as gifts for the most successful athletes at the World Championships. Woodturning is a traditional, world-renowned craft from the Ore Mountain region of eastern Germany. According to a report on freiepresse.de, a total of 59 figurines bearing the official World Championship logo will be produced – and available exclusively to participants in the World Championships. ©RWH2021

### BFR for Bobsleigh Federation of Russia at BMW IBSF World Championships

Altenberg (RWH) The athletes of the "Bobsleigh Federation of Russia" will compete under the nation code "BFR" during the BMW IBSF Bobsleigh & Skeleton World Championships. The IBSF is thus implementing the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ruling of 14 January 2021, which, among other things, regulates the country code, the clothing and the use of the flag and anthem. ©RWH2021

### The first World Championship weekend in Altenberg

Date/time Altenberg (CET)		Race
Friday, 5 February	10.30 a.m.	2-woman bobsleigh, run 1
	12 noon	2-woman bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 6 February	10.00 a.m.	2-man bobsleigh, run 1
	11.30 a.m.	2-man bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 6 February	2.30 p.m.	2-woman bobsleigh, run 3
	4.00 p.m.	<b>2-woman bobsleigh, FINALE</b>
Sunday, 7 February	2.30 p.m.	2-man bobsleigh, run 3
	4.00 p.m.	<b>2-man bobsleigh, FINALE</b>

Subject to changes – Up-to-date times are available on the [IBSF website](https://www.ibsf.org). ©RWH2021

### On the sidelines

**Madison Stringer (FRA)** was lucky enough to celebrate a sporting win on her debut appearance as a bobsleigh brakewoman. The 22-year-old's first ever race was the IBSF Junior World Championships in St. Moritz (SUI) – where she enjoyed a great deal of success: she and pilot Margot Boch became U23 World Champions in the 2-woman bobsleigh. Madison Stringer is not the only bobsleigh athlete in her family: her mother Lesa Mayes-Stringer was a bobsleigh pilot herself until 2009, initially racing for Canada and later for France. In 2005, the now-52-year-old finished 11<sup>th</sup> at the World Championships in Calgary (CAN). She finished on the podium at multiple Europe Cup races and also achieved several top-ten finishes in the World Cup. Lesa Mayes-Stringer's last race was in Park City in November 2009, where she piloted France into 19<sup>th</sup> place. ©RWH2021





**Sandie Clair (FRA) and Victoria Williamson (GBR)** made their debut appearances as bobsleigh brakewomen in January – after many years of success in track cycling. Racing with pilot Margot Boch, the 32-year-old Sandi Clair finished tenth at the BMW IBSF World Cup race in Winterberg (GER), putting them in sixth place in the race’s standings for the European Championships. As a member of France’s national track cycling team, Sandie Clair competed in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and also won countless medals at international championships, including the 2006 Junior World Championship title and 2010 European Championship title in the 500-metre time trial. Victoria Williamson (27) won bronze in the 2013 team sprint world championships and also won a number of other medals at national and international events. After a nasty fall that resulted in back injuries in 2016, she initially returned to track cycling and qualified for the World Championships in spring 2019. In December of the same year, Victoria Williamson announced that she would be switching to bobsleigh. She made her BMW IBSF World Cup debut with pilot Mica McNeill in Königssee (GER), where the pair finished in 14<sup>th</sup>. ©RWH2021

**Bruce Tasker (GBR)** stepped in at the last minute to act as a replacement brakeman for pilot Brad Hall at the BMW IBSF World Cup race in Königssee. The Olympic bronze medallist from Sochi 2014 actually retired from bobsleigh after a minor stroke in spring 2017. However, after Brad Hall’s team was short of brakemen following several injuries, causing them to already miss two 4-man bobsleigh races, Bruce Tasker made a last-minute journey to Königssee. And his mission had a happy ending: Brad Hall and his team of Taylor Lawrence, Bruce Tasker, and Greg Cackett finished in seventh place, the pilot’s second-best result as a pilot in the 4-man event. ©RWH2021

**Dominik Dvorak (CZE)** celebrated a first at the finale to the 2020/2021 BMW IBSF World Cup in Innsbruck (AUT). While he missed out on his first World Cup podium finish in Innsbruck, his points from finishing in fourth place were enough to push him up to third place in the overall standings. At the awards ceremony, he became the first ever bobsleigh pilot from the Czech Republic to receive one of the crystal trophies for the best pilots of this World Cup season. ©RWH2021

### This season’s winners in the 2020/2021 BMW IBSF World Cup – Bobsleigh pilots

	<b>2-woman bobsleigh</b>	<b>2-man bobsleigh</b>
Sigulda 1 (LAT)	Mariama Jamanka (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER) Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Sigulda 2 (LAT)	Laura Nolte (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER) Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Innsbruck 1 (AUT)	Laura Nolte (GER)	Johannes Lochner (GER) Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Innsbruck 2 (AUT)	Stephanie Schneider (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER) Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Winterberg (GER)	Laura Nolte (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
St. Moritz (SUI)	Stephanie Schneider (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Königssee (GER)	Kim Kalicki (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Innsbruck 3 (AUT)	Kaillie Humphries (USA)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
<b>Overall winner 2020/2021</b>	<b>Katrin Beierl (AUT, 1506 points)</b>	<b>Francesco Friedrich (GER, 2685 points)</b>





## Additional info

- >> [Athlete profiles on ibsf.org](#) with medals tables, news and photos for all athletes
- >> All [results](#) from IBSF races and training sessions
- >> Photos are available on the [IBSF Flickr account](#) (editorial purposes only and with photo credits!)
- >> [Press accreditation is available from the respective track](#) – please consult the COVID-19 regulations in good time and register in advance! >> [Information on the IBSF's COVID-19 regulations](#)

As usual, all races in the 2020/2021 BMW IBSF World Championships will be available to view on a live stream on [ibsf.org](#) (with live results ticker) or [Youtube](#). Information about channels and TV broadcasts is available at [ibsf.org/en/broadcasters](#)

Further information, photos and videos are available on our **social media channels** / @IBSFsliding:



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