



PRESS RELEASE – Preview 2 for 2021 BMW IBSF World Championships in Altenberg 10 February 2021

Second week featuring skeleton, 4-man bobsleigh and premiere of women's monobob Record-breaking champions Kaillie Humphries and Francesco Friedrich on the starting line

Altenberg (RWH): After the first weekend of the World Championships and its two record-breaking World Champions – Kaillie Humphries (USA) winning her fourth title in the 2-woman bobsleigh and Francesco Friedrich (GER) with his tenth World Championship title in total – the second week of World Championship action in Altenberg will feature the skeleton events, including the mixed team World Championships, as well as the 4-man bobsleigh and the World Championship debut of the women's monobob.

In the **women's skeleton**, one of the biggest favourites from the field is overall World Cup winner Janine Flock (AUT). The Austrian athlete, who finished third in last year's World Championships, stood on the podium at all eight races this season and won the overall World Cup standings with a huge lead. At the age of 31, Janine Flock is enjoying the best form of her life and has only finished outside of the top three on three occasions out of a total of 20 World Cup races since January 2018. However, the defending World Champion Tina Hermann will be throwing the full weight of her many training sessions and significantly more races into the ring in Altenberg – she has competed in 18 races here compared to Janine Flock's eight, and has also recorded multiple wins and podium finishes. Nevertheless, Hermann – who with three titles holds the record for most World Championship golds – has had a bumpy season this year.

Another athlete in top form and achieving more success in the 2020/2021 season than ever before is Kimberley Bos: By finishing third in the overall standings, she became the first female Dutch athlete to win one of the trophies awarded to the top three World Cup pilots. And she managed this feat despite competing in one race fewer than the rest of the field: Instead of racing in the BMW IBSF World Cup race in St. Moritz in January, Bos competed in two races in Altenberg, where she came third in the Europe Cup to achieve her first podium finish at the track. Apart from the three top-scoring athletes from the World Cup season, there are a few other names to add to the list of favourites: European Champion Elena Nikitina (BFR/Bobsleigh Federation of Russia), for example. And from the German home team, there is Olympic silver medallist Jacqueline Lölling (GER) or Junior World Champion Hannah Neise. One last insider tip to finish: The race in Königssee saw Anna Fernstaedt (CZE) become the first female Czech athlete to finish on the World Cup podium. And Italy's Valentina Margaglio was close to a top-three finish on several occasions this winter – and also has some fond memories of Altenberg: At the 2020 mixed team World Championships, she and partner Mattia Gaspari took the field by complete surprise to win the bronze medal.

The list of favourites and potential medal winners is equally long in the **men's skeleton**. Overall World Cup winner and record-breaking World Champion Martins Dukurs has been a mainstay on this list for over a decade, as has European Champion Alexander Tretiakov (BFR). For the hosts Germany, the role of favourite is shared between overall World Cup runner-up Alexander Gassner, defending World Champion Christopher Grotheer, and silver medallist from the Junior World Championships Felix Keisinger. The British team is also adding two names to the list for Altenberg in the form of Matt Weston and Marcus Wyatt: Both athletes celebrated their first podium finishes in the BMW IBSF World Cup and finished in the top five on three occasions. One athlete not competing is the runner-up from the 2020 World Championships: Following an injury, Axel Jungk failed to qualify for the German World Cup team for 2020/2021 and was also unable to convince



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German coach Christian Baude with his two appearances in the Intercontinental Cup in Altenberg or his appearance at the BMW IBSF World Cup in Königssee – despite achieving one win on the World Championship track. “For me, Axel’s performances at the starting line were awfully weak,” explained team coach Baude after the World Cup in Königssee. “The World Championships are five days of non-stop training and racing. We as the coaching team believe that Axel won’t be able to cope with this strain based on his current condition.”

For the second time, the World Championship programme will feature the **mixed skeleton team World Championships**. Defending champions are the Jacqueline Lölling and Alexander Gassner (GER). In this event, each team is made up of one female athlete and one male athlete and each country is able to register up to two teams. Teams from different countries are not permitted.

The female skeleton athlete starts the race. Once she has reached the finish line, her team-mate must then start within 30 seconds. The two run times are added together; the team with the lowest overall time will win the mixed skeleton World Championships. The coaches will decide the final line-ups for the mixed teams in the after the skeleton races on Friday.

One year ahead of its Olympic debut at the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing (CHN), the women’s monobob will be celebrating its premiere World Championship appearance at the 2021 BMW IBSF World Championships in Altenberg. Competing in identical sleds produced by iXent in Germany, the event sees athletes acting as push athlete, pilot and brakewoman all at the same time. Based on this winter’s monobob results, the athletes from the home German team are not necessarily among the favourites for a win. Athletes from the USA, Australia and Canada top the list instead: Kaillie Humphries (USA) was one of the winners in the 2020/2021 women’s monobob world series, as was Breeana Walker (AUS), Canada’s Melissa Lotholz and Nadezhda Sergeeva (BFR).

The 4-man bobsleigh race is traditionally the closing event and highlight of proceedings at the BMW IBSF World Championships – and once again the Olympic Champion, European Champion, overall World Cup winner and defending World Champion Francesco Friedrich is the first name to feature on the list of favourites. Based on the results from the four World Cup races this season, his biggest competitor is Benjamin Maier of Austria. The 26-year-old finished on the podium in all four races and, by finishing in second overall, won his first trophy for the best pilots of the World Cup season. Another of the field’s front-runners was Justin Kripps of Canada, who achieved three podium finishes and third place in the overall standings. Arriving at the World Championships in Altenberg as Junior World Champion is Switzerland’s Michael Vogt. ©RWH2021

This season’s winners in the BMW IBSF World Cup – Skeleton, 4-man bobsleigh

	Women’s skeleton	Men’s skeleton	4-man bobsleigh
Sigulda 1 (LAT)	Janine Flock (AUT)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)	-
Sigulda 2 (LAT)	Janine Flock (AUT)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)	-
Innsbruck 1 (AUT)	Elena Nikitina (BFR)	Alexander Tretiakov (BFR) Martins Dukurs (LAT)	-
Innsbruck 2 (AUT)	Janine Flock (AUT)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)	-
Winterberg (GER)	Elena Nikitina (BFR)	Alexander Tretiakov (BFR)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
St Moritz (SUI)	Tina Hermann (GER)	Alexander Gassner (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Königssee (GER)	Jacqueline Lölling (GER)	Alexander Gassner (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Innsbruck 3 (AUT)	Elena Nikitina (BFR)	Alexander Tretiakov (BFR)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
Overall leader	Janine Flock (AUT, 1695 points)	Martins Dukurs (LAT, 1456 points)	Francesco Friedrich (GER, 900 points)





The second World Championship week in Altenberg

Date/time in Altenberg (CET time)		Race
Thursday, 11 Feb.	9:00 a.m.	Women's skeleton, run 1
	10:30 a.m.	Women's skeleton, run 2
Thursday, 11 Feb.	1:00 p.m.	Men's skeleton, run 1
	3:00 p.m.	Men's skeleton, run 2
Friday, 12 Feb.	9:00 a.m.	Women's skeleton, run 3
	10:30 a.m.	Women's skeleton, final
Friday, 12 Feb.	1:00 p.m.	Men's skeleton, run 3
	3:00 p.m.	Men's skeleton, final
Saturday, 13 Feb.	9:00 a.m.	Mixed skeleton team World Championships
Saturday, 13 Feb.	11:30 a.m.	Women's monobob, run 1
	1:00 p.m.	Women's monobob, run 2
Saturday, 13 Feb.	3:45 p.m.	4-man bobsleigh, run 1
	5:15 p.m.	4-man bobsleigh, run 2
Sunday, 14 Feb.	9:00 a.m.	Women's monobob, run 3
	10:30 a.m.	Women's monobob, final
Sunday, 14 Feb.	3:00 p.m.	4-man bobsleigh, run 3
	4:30 p.m.	4-man bobsleigh, final

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

On the sidelines

Nico Walther (GER), third place in the 2020 4-man bobsleigh World Championships, assisted Canadian bobsleigh pilot Chris Spring on his journey to the BMW IBSF World Championships in Altenberg. Spring suffered a terrible crash during training in Altenberg on 5 January 2012 and had not trained since on that date. In order to qualify for the 2021 World Championships after taking a year out, Chris Spring had to compete in the IBSF Europe Cup in early January – in Altenberg and with a training session on 5 January. Nico Walther, who announced his retirement after winning World Championship bronze in the 4-man bobsleigh last year, reached out over social media after Spring announced his upcoming return to the track. “He said: ‘If you need any help, just send me a text and I'm more than happy to help you’,” explained Chris Spring on [torontosun.com](https://www.torontosun.com). “So, we got on a call together. We went over the track. There has been a lot of texting back and forth. I've sent him videos of my runs. He'd go through them and give me feedback,” said Spring. “And even the coaches that are here, the German coaches, have been helping me out. It's just another beautiful example of how great this sport is and the family that it creates.” ©RWH2021

The finale to the BMW IBSF World Cup in Innsbruck (AUT) saw **Ander Mirambell (ESP)** compete in his 90th race in the series. The 37-year-old is therefore now in fourth place in the list of skeleton athletes with the most World Cup starts: The only athletes with more appearances on World Cup starting lists are the overall World Cup winner Martins Dukurs and his brother Tomass, with over 140 World Cup races each, and Alexander Tretiakov (BFR) with over 120. ©RWH2021





Shannon Galea (MLT) is representing one of the newest IBSF nations in not one but two different respects: In April 2020, the 32-year-old founded the national federation of Malta, which has been an official member of the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation IBSF since autumn 2020. When it came to appointing the official posts in the federation, Shannon Galea placed her trust in President Julian Pace Bonello and General Secretary Joseph Cassar. While still owning all administrative responsibilities, she started her skeleton training in Whistler, working with the team from Bobsleigh Canada Skeleton. In her first race for the 2020/2021 North American Cup, she secured her best result so far, finishing eighth in Lake Placid. Shannon Galea, whose father emigrated to Canada from Malta with his family in the 1970s, is a sports teacher and spent many years as a professional softball player. Her most recent job saw her working in athlete support at Team Canada. “After 4 years of researching, sport policy writing, WADA code compliance, application for an international federation membership, 488 emails, 12 pages of written rules and bylaws = 1 CONSTITUTION that will create opportunity, participation and Olympic/Paralympic sized dreams for a new small nation that will be added to the world of Skeleton and Bobsleigh”, wrote Shannon Galea on Instagram. ©RWH2021

For the first time in history, a Paralympic Champion has qualified for the BMW IBSF World Championships in the form of bobsleigh pilot **Evan O’Hanlon (AUS)**. The 32-year-old competes as a sprinter, mainly in the Paralympic category T38 (cerebral palsy). At the 2008 Beijing Paralympics, he became the Paralympic Champion over 100 and 200 metres and in the sprint relay. At London 2012, he once again won gold in the 100 and 200 metres, before securing another silver in the T38 100-metre event at Rio 2016. He has also won eight World Championship titles in various sprint and relay events. As a bobsleigh pilot, Evan O’Hanlon has qualified for the BMW IBSF World Championships via the 2020/2021 IBSF Europe Cup. In the 2-man bobsleigh, O’Hanlon and his push athlete Joseph Williamson (replaced in heat three by Dylan Sorensen due to injury) finished in 24th place. After competing in his fourth Paralympics at Tokyo 2021, Evan O’Hanlon is aiming to qualify for Beijing 2022 – which would make him the first Paralympic athlete to compete in another Olympic discipline and also appear at both the summer and winter games. ©RWH2021

- >> [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 Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Cup 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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