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PRESS RELEASE – Preview for BMW IBSF World Cup in Sigulda 1

17 November 2020

Bobsleigh and skeleton athletes begin an unprecedented World Cup winter in Sigulda Small but strong field of competitors – Olympic and World Champions, up-and-coming stars

Sigulda (RWH): In the 2019/2020 winter season, Sigulda in Latvia hosted the European Championships in bobsleigh and skeleton, as well as the finale to the BMW IBSF World Cup. Thousands of spectators lined the track or flocked to the stage to watch the medal ceremony. There was a sea of people and flags when the Olympic gold medal from Sochi was presented to local hero Oskars Melbardis and his bobsleigh team. For sport-loving Latvians and the athletes from all over the world, the event was a three-day celebration.

Opening World Cup event to be without spectators but plenty of team spirit

For the opening event to the 2020/2021 BMW IBSF World Cup, the bobsleigh and skeleton world will once again be welcomed to Sigulda – though this time around the conditions will be quite different. There will be masks, social distancing and hygiene rules but no fans lining the track: Just like all countries and areas of life, the COVID-19 pandemic will also shape the sporting action and images from the World Cup opener in Latvia. Thanks to the extensive hygiene concept created by the IBSF and all teams and organisers, bobsleigh and skeleton events will still be taking place this winter – as things currently stand. This will only be possible with lots of hard work and discipline from everyone involved. Without a current negative COVID19 test, no one will enter the country. Before entering the track area, everyone will be tested again. In case of a positive test, the local health authorities will decide on further measures such as quarantine. All athletes and World Cup participants must wear masks and keep their distance. >> [To the COVID-19 guidelines of the IBSF and the tracks](#)

Olympic Champions, World Champions and up-and-coming stars on the starting line

The starting line-up for the World Cup opening event in Sigulda will be small but strong. There will be Olympic Champions, such as Francesco Friedrich (GER) in the 2-man bobsleigh and Mariama Jamanka (GER) in the 2-woman bobsleigh. The skeleton World Champions Tina Hermann and Christopher Grotheer will also be travelling to Sigulda with the German national team. Some top up-and-coming stars to compete include the overall winner of the Europe Cup Amelia Coltman (GBR) and Hannah Neise (GER), who came second in the 2016 Youth Winter Olympic Games and will be making her World Cup debut in the women's skeleton. One athlete who will not be appearing is bobsleigh pilot Stephanie Schneider (GER). The defending World Cup Champion will initially have to let Olympic Champion Mariama Jamanka lead the German team's efforts. Junior World Champion Richard Oelsner (GER) sustained an injury during the German Championships and will be sitting out the World Cup events in 2020 at the very least.

USA and Canada to join the World Cup in January

In an effort to keep travel and quarantine periods to a minimum, the bobsleigh and skeleton athletes from the USA and Canada will not join any International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation (IBSF) races in Europe until January 2021. This decision was made by the countries' national associations. Based on current information, the same will also apply to the teams from China and Korea. ©RWH2020





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The first World Cup weekend in Sigulda

In the women's and men's skeleton and the 2-woman bobsleigh, the next two weeks will see athletes competing in the first two out of eight World Cup races in total. For the 2-man bobsleigh, athletes will complete four out of the total of twelve planned races, with two races being held each weekend. There will be no 4-man bobsleigh events in Sigulda as the track is not designed for this race.

Date/Sigulda time	CET time (-1h)	Race	
Friday, 20 Nov.	10:00 a.m. 11:30 a.m.	09:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	Women's skeleton, run 1 Women's skeleton, run 2
Friday, 20 Nov.	3:00 p.m. 4:45 p.m.	2:00 p.m. 3:45 p.m.	Men's skeleton, run 1 Men's skeleton, run 2
Saturday, 21 Nov.	09:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m.	08:00 a.m. 09:30 a.m.	2-woman bobsleigh, run 1 2-woman bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 21 Nov.	1:45 p.m. 3:15 p.m.	12:45 p.m. 2:15 p.m.	2-man bobsleigh 1, run 1 2-man bobsleigh 1, run 2
Sunday, 22 Nov.	2:30 p.m. 4:00 p.m.	1:30 p.m. 3:00 p.m.	2-man bobsleigh 2, run 2 2-man bobsleigh 2, run 2

Subject to changes – Up-to-date times (local time at the track and the user's local time) are listed on the [IBSF website](https://www.ibsf.org). ©RWH2020

On the sidelines

For **Janine Flock (AUT)**, Sigulda is like a home track. The World Championship bronze medallist is in a training group with the Latvian team surrounding six-time World Champion Martins Dukurs and his brother Tomass. Her partner Matthias Guggenberger works as a coach in Latvia. So, the 31-year-old has spent plenty of preparation time in Sigulda: According to a press release by the Austrian Olympic Committee, Janine Flock travelled almost 2,000 kilometres north in mid-October and quickly decided to extend her training camp until the start of the World Cup due to the status surrounding coronavirus. "We have incredible training facilities, a starting track, therapy, equipment, everything is there," said Janine Flock. "The standard of training is incredible. I have to make sure I set my own goals. At the moment, I'm saying that if I finish eight tenths of a second behind then I have done ok." ©RWH2020

Tomass Dukurs (LAT) is the longest-serving member of the skeleton field at the start of the 2020/2021 BMW IBSF World Cup. In January 2004, almost 17 years ago, the now 39-year-old started in his first ever World Cup race in Lillehammer (NOR). After finishing in 13th place on his debut, Tomass Dukurs went on to win his first and, to date, only World Cup race a mere two weeks later on 6 February 2004 at his home track in Sigulda. This made him the first ever Latvian to achieve this feat – the 54 subsequent skeleton World Cup wins for Latvia were achieved by his younger brother Martins. The record-breaking World Cup title holder and six-time World Champion is also one of the veterans of the starting line-up in Sigulda. He made his first World Cup appearance on 26 November 2004. Another athlete making his debut that day was Olympic Champion Alexander Tretiakov of Russia. Collectively, the three athletes have made a total of 371 World Cup appearances to date. ©RWH2020





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Akwasi Frimpong (GHA), a skeleton athlete from Ghana, has been training with the Russian national team since October according to an announcement by the Russian Bobsleigh Federation made during the Russian Championships in Sochi. The Russian team for the BMW IBSF World Cup currently includes the 2014 Olympic Champion Alexander Tretiakov, European Champion Elena Nikitina, and the 2018 Olympic silver medallist Nikita Tregubov. The Russian skeleton coach is Dirk Matschentz. Last winter, the German was the coach to World Champion Tina Hermann and Christopher Grotheer (GER). ©RWH2020

2020 defending World Cup title holders, World and European Champions – Skeleton

	Women's skeleton	Men's skeleton
Overall winners in the BMW IBSF World Cup 19/20	Jacqueline Lölling (GER)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)
2020 World Champions	Tina Hermann (GER)	Christopher Grotheer (GER)
2020 European Champions	Elena Nikitina (RUS)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)

2020 defending World Cup title holders, World and European Champions – Bobsleigh

	2-woman bobsleigh	2-man bobsleigh	4-man bobsleigh
Overall winners in the BMW IBSF World Cup 19/20	Stephanie Schneider (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
2020 World Champions	Kaillie Humphries (USA)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)	Francesco Friedrich (GER)
2020 European Champions	Nadezhda Sergeeva (RUS)	Oskars Kibermanis (LAT)	Johannes Lochner (GER)

Further information

- >> [Athlete profiles on ibsf.org](https://www.ibsf.org) with medals tables, news and photos for all athletes
- >> All [results](#) from IBSF races and training sessions >> The current [rankings](#)
- >> 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](https://www.ibsf.org) (with live results ticker) or [Youtube](#). Information about channels and TV broadcasts is available at [ibsf.org/en/broadcasters](https://www.ibsf.org/en/broadcasters)

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

