



PRESS RELEASE

14 February 2017

Preview 2017 BMW IBSF World Championships: Königssee set to be host for the sixth time First weekend to open with women's and two-man bobsleigh and team World Championship events

Königssee (RWH): The world's first ever artificial bobsleigh, skeleton and luge track in Königssee (GER) is set to go down in the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation's (IBSF) history books once again as the host track for the 2017 World Championships. The ice track at the foot of Watzmann mountain was opened in 1968 and has hosted international competitions in the sports of bobsleigh and skeleton every year since then. Königssee has already hosted IBSF athletes competing in the World Championships on several occasions: in 1979 and 1986 (both two-man and four-man bobsleigh), 1990 (men's skeleton), 2004 and most recently 2011 (both of which were all IBSF disciplines – men's and women's skeleton, two-man and women's bobsleigh, four-man bobsleigh, and team events).

When it comes to hosting the World Championships, the Olympia Bobrun St. Moritz Celerina (SUI) is the undisputed leader with 24 bobsleigh and skeleton World Championships, followed by Lake Placid (USA) with ten. As the host of the 2017 World Championships, the artificial ice track in Königssee will now take third place in the rankings, which it shares with Innsbruck-Igls (also the host of six IBSF World Championships).

The journey to the podium at the 2017 BMW IBSF Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships is around five kilometres long. The athletes will take to the ice track in Königssee for four runs in each discipline, hurtling down the 1250-metre track and tackling 12 curves in an attempt to set the fastest time in their quest for a gold medal, with the quickest among them taking around 50 seconds to complete a run.

The artificial ice track in Königssee is known as one of the world's most demanding ice labyrinths. Luge athlete Georg Hackl of Germany (the 1992, 1994 and 1998 Olympic Champion) once called it the "Streif" for luge athletes, comparing it to the legendary downhill ski race for Alpine skiers in Kitzbühel (Austria). His comparison also applies to bobsleigh and skeleton at this year's World Championships. Bobsleigh pilot Elana Meyers Taylor of the USA, the 2015 World Champion and favourite to take this year's title following four successive World Cup victories, referred to the Königssee track's Kreisel curve as her "arch nemesis" at her most recent World Cup win and trial for the World Championships. ©RWH2017

The timetable for the first World Championship week in Königssee

Date/Time CET		Race
Friday, 17 Feb	2.15 pm	Womens Bobsleigh, run 1
	4 pm	Womens Bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 18 Feb	10.30 am	Two Man Bobsleigh, run 1
	12 noon	Two Man Bobsleigh, run 2
Saturday, 18 Feb	3.15 pm	Womens Bobsleigh, run 3
	4.45 pm	Womens Bobsleigh, run 4 (Final!)
Sunday, 19 Feb	10.30 am	Two Man Bobsleigh, run 3
	12 noon	Two Man Bobsleigh, run 4 (Final!)
Sunday, 19 Feb	3 pm	Team Competition

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Outlook women's bobsleigh: German pilots among the favourites at home World Championships

Königssee (RWH): Ask anyone which pilot is the firm favourite to win the women's bobsleigh World Championships and you won't have to wait long for an answer: Elana Meyers Taylor of the USA, who has already won the title once in Winterberg in 2015, is by far the favourite to take the gold medal in the 2017 BMW IBSF women's bobsleigh World Championships. While the 2014 Olympic silver medallist is only in third place in the overall World Cup standings following the seven races of the season so far, this is only because she suffered a crash at the opening weekend in Whistler (CAN). The 32-year-old then began an impressive comeback campaign, collecting two silver medals in Lake Placid (USA) and Altenberg (GER) followed by four successive victories, including one at the World Championship rehearsals in Königssee at the end of January. An interesting talking point has been the fact that all four victories have been attributed to the pairing of Meyers Taylor/Jones when in fact Meyers Taylor has raced with three different brakewomen: Kehri Jones was on the starting line in Winterberg (GER), Briana Jones in St. Moritz (SUI) and, most recently, Lolo Jones in Innsbruck (AUT). For her win at the World Cup in Königssee, Meyers Taylor was joined by Kehri Jones.

Jamie Greubel Poser, Elana Meyers Taylor's team mate from the USA, is currently second in the overall World Cup following six podium finishes in seven races. The race in Königssee could see the 2014 Olympic bronze medallist take her first ever World Championship medal. Two-time Olympic champion (2010 and 2014) and World Champion (2012 and 2013) and current leader in the World Cup standings Kaillie Humphries of Canada also remains a favourite to take a medal.

Germany's bobsleigh pilots are also tipped to secure a medal at their home World Championships in Königssee. Mariama Jamanka, who was the surprise winner of the European Championships in Winterberg back in the middle of January, boosted her chances of winning a medal by finishing third at the World Championship trials in Königssee at the end of January. And the athlete who finished fourth at last year's World Championships, Stephanie Schneider showed that she could also be a contender for World Champion when she finished fourth in Igls at the beginning of February, shortly after her return to the World Cup following a long period of injury. Annika Drazek will also be on the starting line in Königssee attempting to defend her title. In 2016, she pushed Anja Schneiderheinze to gold in the World Championships in Innsbruck. However, her former pilot is now expecting a baby and announced her retirement from competitive sport prior to the start of the season. At the BMW IBSF World Championships in Königssee, defending title holder Annika Drazek is expected to start with Mariama Jamanka after the pair won the European Championships together earlier in the season.

Russia's bobsleigh pilots could also surprise onlookers to take the victory in Königssee. Nadezhda Sergeeva in particular is currently enjoying the best season of her career and won bronze in the European Championships in Winterberg. The Junior World Champions Mica McNeill/Mica Moore of the United Kingdom will also be competing in the BMW IBSF World Championships. ©RWH2017

BMW IBSF World Cup 2016/2017 Women's Bobsleigh / Zweierbob Frauen						
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.	2.	3.		
1. Whistler (CAN)	Dec 2-3, 2016	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie APPIAH, Cynthia	CAN HENGSTER, Christina DEKKER, Sanne	AUT GREUBEL POSER, Jamie GIBBS, Lauren		USA
2. Lake Placid (USA)	Dec 16-17, 2016	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja	USA MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Lolo	USA HUMPHRIES, Kaillie APPIAH, Cynthia		CAN
3. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 6-8, 2017	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Kehri	USA HENGSTER, Christina DEKKER, Sanne		AUT
4. Winterberg (GER) + Ech/EM	Jan 13-15, 2017	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Kehri	USA JAMANKA, Mariama DRAZEK, Annika	GER GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja		USA
5. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 20-22, 2017	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Briana	USA HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN GREUBEL POSER, Jamie GIBBS, Lauren		USA
6. Königssee (GER)	Jan 27-29, 2017	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Kehri	USA GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja	USA JAMANKA, Mariama DRAZEK, Annika		GER
7. Innsbruck (AUT)	Feb 3-5, 2017	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana JONES, Lolo	USA HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN GREUBEL POSER, Jamie EVANS, Aja		USA
8. PyeongChang (KOR)	Mar 17-19, 2017					
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup	2016/2017	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie (CAN) 1446 Points/Punkte	GREUBEL POSER, Jamie (USA) 1419 Points/Punkte	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana (USA) 1320 Points/Punkte		

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Outlook two-man bobsleigh: Defending Champion Francesco Friedrich remains favourite for 2017

Königssee (RWH): Like the women's event, naming a favourite for the two-man bobsleigh is also pretty easy: After six World Cup starts, two silver medals, four wins and a clear lead in the overall standings, things are looking promising for Francesco Friedrich of Germany. If he manages to defend his title and take his fourth consecutive win in the World Championships, the two-man bobsleigh World Champion from 2013, 2015 and 2016 could catch up with Italy's legendary bobsleigh pilot Eugenio Monti. After securing the title in 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1961, he is the only athlete to win the World Championships on five consecutive occasions (in 1960, his Olympic gold medal also counted as a World Championship title).

In the two-man bobsleigh World Cup, Francesco Friedrich has faced stiff competition from his own camp: Johannes Lochner, the runner-up in the 2015 and 2016 World Championships, stole victory from his team mate at the World Championship rehearsals in Königssee. Friedrich ended up sharing second place after recording the same time as Steven Holcomb of the USA. Holcomb, the 2012 two-man bobsleigh World Champion and 2014 Olympic silver medallist in the same discipline, is currently enjoying one of his best seasons of recent years and will arrive at the World Championships in Königssee as second in the overall World Cup behind Francesco Friedrich.

Behind the firm favourites for a medal, a few other athletes could also secure a place on the podium: Alexander Kasjanov of Russia is currently third in the World Cup standings. His only World Championship medals to date – bronze in 2015 and silver in 2016 – stem from the team competition; the athlete, who finished fourth in the Sochi Olympics, is still missing an individual medal. Yunjong Won of Korea, the overall winner in the 2016 World Cup, has only managed one podium finish so far this season when he secured third place at the opening race in Whistler. At the trial run for the World Championships in Königssee, he finished in 16th place. Oskars Melbardis of Latvia, who won the overall two-man bobsleigh World Cup in 2015, missed out on a few World Cup races after undergoing surgery on his back last summer. However, he is now clearly back on good form after securing his first podium finishes of the season (second in two-man bobsleigh and first place in four-man event in Igls).

And who else? Benjamin Maier of Austria, who won bronze in the 2017 four-man bobsleigh European Championships, has also been successful in the smaller sled this season and celebrated his first podium finish in the World Cup in Igls. Justin Kripps of Canada has also named Königssee as his favourite track. He celebrated his first World Cup win here in 2014 and then finished third in 2015.

Richard Oelsner/Alexander Schueller (GER) will arrive at the BMW IBSF World Championships in Königssee as the Junior World Champions in the two-man bobsleigh. ©RWH2017

BMW IBSF World Cup 2016/2017 Two Man Bobsleigh / Zweierbob Männer							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Whistler (CAN)	Dec 2-3, 2016	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	PETER, Rico AMRHEIN, Thomas	SUI	WON, Yunjong SEO, Youngwoo	KOR
2. Lake Placid (USA)	Dec 16-17, 2016	HOLCOMB, Steven McGUFFIE, Samuel	USA	KRIPPS, Justin BROWN, Lascelles	CAN	SPRING, Chris LUMSDEN, Jesse	CAN
3. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 6-8, 2017	FRIEDRICH, Francesco GROTHKOPP, Martin	GER	KASJANOV, Alexander PUSHKAREV, Alexey	RUS	KIBERMANIS, Oskars MIKNIS, Matiss	LAT
4. Winterberg (GER) + Ech/EM	Jan 13-15, 2017	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	LOCHNER, Johannes BLUHM, Joshua	GER	KIBERMANIS, Oskars MIKNIS, Matiss	LAT
5. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 20-22, 2017	LOCHNER, Johannes RASP, Christian	GER	FRIEDRICH, Francesco GROTHKOPP, Martin	GER	HOLCOMB, Steven VALDES, Carlo	USA
6. Königssee (GER)	Jan 27-29, 2017	LOCHNER, Johannes BLUHM, Joshua	GER	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	HOLCOMB, Steven VALDES, Carlo	USA
7. Innsbruck (AUT)	Feb 3-5, 2017	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	MELBARDIS, Oskars STRENGA, Janis	LAT	MAIER, Benjamin SAMMER, Markus	AUT
8. PyeongChang (KOR)	Mar 17-19, 2017						
Current standing BMW IBSF World Cup/ Zwischenstand BMW IBSF Weltcup	2016/2017	FRIEDRICH, Francesco (GER) 1320 points/Punkte		HOLCOMB, Steven (USA) 1219 points/Punkte		KASJANOV, Alexander (RUS) 1170 points/Punkte	

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Outlook for the World Championship team competition: Hosts Germany are the hot favourites

Königssee (RWH): The team competition has been held eight times so far in the bobsleigh and skeleton World Championships. In six of those races (2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2015 and 2016), gold went to a team from Germany. The American team took victory at Lake Placid (USA) in 2012 and in St. Moritz (SUI) in 2013. In the team competition, each of the national teams is composed of a women's and men's two-man bobsleigh team and a male and female skeleton athlete. The times from each run are added up, and the victory goes to the team with the best overall time.

Germany holds the record in the team event with a total of nine medals (six golds, and silver in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2015). The remaining team medals are divided between the USA (two golds, one silver, two bronzes), Canada (one silver and three bronzes), Switzerland (one silver and one bronze), Russia (one silver and one bronze), and Austria (one silver). ©RWH2017

IBSF media guides, starting lists, reports and results in the new press area at ibsf.org

Königssee (RWH): Journalists can now look forward to a fresh new look and more extensive information on the press pages at ibsf.org (available under the "Press" menu or directly at www.ibsf.org/en/media-contacts). For the 2017 BMW IBSF Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships, the menu will contain starting lists for the first runs of all events and the latest media guides:

Media guide - Event information for the entire season, including the BMW IBSF World Cup and BMW IBSF World Championships: This guide outlines key information concerning bobsleigh and skeleton, the IBSF International Rules, the new IBSF draw system and all of the tracks.

Media guides - Athletes for both bobsleigh and skeleton for each World Championship weekend: This guide contains a profile of all bobsleigh pilots and skeleton athletes, including their results, the latest World Cup standings, and an interesting insight into their backgrounds. The Athletes media guides are updated prior to each World Championship weekend.

The press area also contains information on media accreditation, links to the latest press releases, results and information on the IBSF's social media platforms. ©RWH2017

Keep up to date with IBSF news on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube

Königssee (RWH): As usual, all the latest news, start lists, race results, lots of photos and videos, and a wealth of information about the 2017 BMW IBSF Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships will be available on various social media platforms:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IBSFsliding
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IBSFsliding>
Instagram: www.instagram.com/IBSFsliding
YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/bobskeletv

The official hashtag for the World Championships is #BMWworlds17.

A live ticker for all Königssee races and results lists showing all race times and overall times can be found on the IBSF website <http://www.ibsf.org/en>.

Over 40 countries around the world are showing TV coverage of the BMW IBSF World Championships. You can find a list of our current TV partners at: www.ibsf.org/en/broadcasters.

What's more, NBC (in the USA), CBC (in Canada), www.ibsf.org and the IBSF YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/bobskeletv (available in almost all other countries) also broadcast all races as live streams, with commentary provided by Martin Haven and John Morgan on the IBSF channels. ©RWH2017





On the sidelines

Clemens Bracher (SUI) is signed up to start in the 2017 BMW IBSF World Championships for the four-man bobsleigh. The 30-year-old started his bobsleigh career back in 2010, competing in several World Cup races as a brakeman for Beat Hefti and Rico Peter. After switching to the pilot's seat, he has competed in the IBSF European Cup and finished second overall in the two-man bobsleigh this winter. At his first appearance behind the steering ropes in the BMW IBSF World Cup for the four-man bobsleigh, Clemens Bracher and his crew of Alain Knuser, Marco Doerig and Michael Kuonen finished in twelfth in Innsbruck-Igls (AUT). The up-and-coming Swiss bobsleigh star's trainer is Christoph Langen of Germany, long-term coach to the German team. As a pilot, Christoph Langen achieved two Olympic victories (1998 in the four-man event and 2002 in the two-man event) and seven World Championship titles (twice in the four-man event and five times in the two-man bobsleigh). ©RWH2017

China will celebrate a first for the country at the 2017 BMW IBSF World Championships in Königssee. Bobsleigh pilot Qing Ying and her brakewomen Yuanyuan Ma, Xinye Li and Weihong Li will be the country's first ever athletes to compete in the World Championships. The Chinese team's head coach is Manuel Machata of Germany, the 2011 World Champion, European Champion and overall World Cup winner in the four-man bobsleigh. The now 33-year-old moved to China back in autumn 2015: "We're building the team from scratch", said Machata at the time. "We'll start by holding trials for athletes in Beijing." China now has 20 athletes on its IBSF-licensed bobsleigh team. Pilot Ying has been competing in the IBSF's European and North American Cups since the start of the season and achieved her best result in Lake Placid in January, where she finished eighth.

China is set to host the 2022 Olympics. In summer 2015, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) selected the capital city Beijing as the venue for the Winter Olympic Games. ©RWH2017

The World Champions from Innsbruck in February 2016

	Gold		Silver/Silber		Bronze	
Skeleton Women Skeleton Frauen	HERMANN, Tina	GER	FLOCK, Janine	AUT	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS
Skeleton Men Skeleton Männer	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	TRETIAKOV, Alexander	RUS	-	-
			YUN, Sungbin	KOR		
Women's Bobsleigh Zweierbob Frauen	SCHNEIDERHEINZE, Anja DRAZEK, Annika	GER	HUMPHRIES, Kaillie LOTHOLZ, Melissa	CAN	MEYERS TAYLOR, Elana GIBBS, Lauren	USA
Two Man Bobsleigh Zweierbob Männer	FRIEDRICH, Francesco MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	LOCHNER, Johannes BLUHM, Joshua	GER	HEFTI, Beat BAUMANN, Alex	SUI
Four Man Bobsleigh Viererbob	MELBARDIS, Oskars DREISKENS, Daumants VILKASTE, Arvis STRENGA, Janis	LAT	FRIEDRICH, Francesco BAUER, Candy BERMBACH, Gregor MARGIS, Thorsten	GER	PETER, Rico VAN DER ZIJDE, Bror AMRHEIN, Thomas FRIEDLI, Simon	SUI
Team	JUNGK, Axel	GER	TRETIAKOV, Alexander	RUS	GUGGENBERGER, Matthias	AUT
	SCHNEIDERHEINZE, Anja/ BERTELS, Franziska		RODIONOVA, Alexandra/ SHOKSHUEVA, Yulia		HENGSTER, Christina/ DEKKER, Sanne	
	HERMANN, Tina		NIKITINA, Elena		FLOCK, Janine	
	LOCHNER, Johannes/ PAASCHE, Tino		KASJANOV, Alexander/ MOKROUSOV, Maxim		MAIER, Benjamin/ MOLDOVAN, Danut	

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