

Marcel Hirscher: “I’d like to be able to race in Andorra every year”

The Avet slope in Grandvalira becomes a meeting point for ski lovers from all over the Pyrenees, bringing together more than 5,000 people

Alexis Pinturault wins the Giant Slalom in Soldeu, a discipline that has already been adjudicated to the unbeatable Marcel Hirscher

Shiffrin maintains her leadership setting the best time in the Slalom and taking home the Crystal Globe

Andorra la Vella, 16 March 2019. The Avet slope in the sector of Soldeu de Grandvalira, which hosted the **Men’s Giant Slalom and the Women’s Slalom in the 2019 Alpine Ski World Cup Finals in Andorra**, brought out the new skiable platform for the first time, allowing the finish line to be extended and providing more space for the public. **Around 5,000 people**, mostly from **Andorra, the Pyrenees and France but also even further afield**, came to enjoy the descents of the best skiers in the world, transforming the Avet slope into the epicentre of the Pyrenees for Alpine skiing. The public made the most of the show put on by the competitors and there was intense interaction between both the skiers and their audience thanks to the proximity of the grandstand to the slope.

The new finish line at the Avet stadium has passed the enormous test involved in hosting the World Cup Finals. Good weather has once again been the star of this penultimate day of the event, with sunshine and mild temperatures but with a slope and snow conditions that have met the demands of the International Ski Federation (FIS). **The work of the technicians, together with the great position of the slope, has enabled the snow to be kept in conditions that have surprised the skiers.** In particular, the unbeatable **Marcel Hirscher** said that the conditions in Soldeu were above his expectations, as he hadn’t expected to find “winter conditions with spring weather.” In this sense, he affirmed that “the organisation is perfect” and that he would like to be able to “**race here every year**”.

This is one of the few slopes on the World Cup circuit that can host both a Giant Slalom and Slalom at the same time as, due to its width, it is possible to set up two courses at the same time. What’s more, the participants stressed that the Avet is considered to be **one of the best slopes on the circuit for hosting technical trials.**

Pinturault wins the GS in a discipline dominated by Marcel Hirscher

After an exciting second round, France’s **Alexis Pinturault** won the last Giant Slalom on the World Cup circuit, clinching his first victory of the season in this discipline. Switzerland’s **Marco Odermatt** took second place and Slovenia’s **Zan Kranjec** set the third best time. Despite the Frenchman’s excellent performance, the Crystal Globe in this discipline was



already adjudicated two weeks ago to Austria's **Marcel Hirscher**, who completed the course in sixth place this Saturday. That makes seven victories in this discipline for Hirscher throughout his career and a total of **20 Crystal Globes** by the time these Finals are over. Regarding his possible retirement, the 30-year-old Austrian revealed that **he is planning on making a decision in two weeks**. In the general classification of the Giant Slalom, he is followed by Norway's **Henrik Kristoffersen**, who came eleventh today, and **Pinturault**.

As he completed the second round, Pinturault expressed his delight saying, **"I've been pursuing victory for a long time, I was really close and finally I've done it."** The Frenchman also **congratulated the organisers** as, despite the high temperatures, "the slope is very good, much better than in other places."

Shiffrin asserts her leadership in the Slalom

Mikaela Shiffrin already had the Crystal Globe for the Slalom in the bag, but wanted to continue to build on her success with the Avet slope as her stage. She's managed to make the top of the podium in all of the races so far **bringing her tally of victories in World Cup trials to 59**. This season alone she has totted up 16 victories, a historic record. At just 24 years of age, at present her ambition knows no bounds.

Second place in this Saturday's race was taken by Switzerland's **Wendy Holdener**, who won the first round with a perfect descent, but was unable to keep up with the pace of her American rival in the second round. Shiffrin clinched victory by just 7 hundredths of a second. Also joining them on the podium was Slovakia's **Petra Vlhová**.

The three great names of the race are also the names at the top of the Slalom and the final classification, although Holdener is in third place and Vlhová second.

Shiffrin, who admitted having to "take risks" to ensure victory, revealed at the end of the race that **Vlhová has become her main rival**. Despite her long list of victories, she assured us that her dream **"isn't over" – quite the opposite – "it keeps on growing."** In fact, this Sunday, she will have another chance of making that happen if she takes away the Crystal Globe from the Giant Slalom.

It has also been a special day for Sweden's **Frida Hansdotter**, who is retiring this season. She looked emotional as she received recognition from the public and remarked that **although she won't be coming back to Andorra, the World Cup should**, because the organisers "have done a very good job."

'Soroll, soroll', Andorran heritage

It's the third time that Andorra has hosted the World Cup and there are already certain aspects that are becoming a tradition. One of these is the chant '*soroll, soroll*' (noise, noise) that speaker and entertainer **Robert Gobern** has managed to introduce into the vocabulary of the spectators cheering on the skiers. **"My job is make sure everything that everything's a celebration,"** he explained, and thanks to the new grandstand in Soldeu it's a lot easier as, being so close to the skiers, they can greet the public and there is more of a connection.

In fact, the sign was put out at the beginning of the day saying that the grandstand was full and **people from all over the world** could be seen. "It's incredible," exclaimed Roman Lanouse, who travelled from France and who has been following the competition for the last few seasons, without missing a single one. He pointed out that these Finals have no reason to envy those held in the Alps.



Travelling a bit further, from the Swiss ski resort of Valais, Michel Jonvaux was delighted with the atmosphere of the competition and claimed that Grandvalira “**is the best venue I've visited**”.

A large number of skiing clubs from all over the Pyrenees were also present, **bringing over 600 people to Soldeu**. For all of them “it’s a great opportunity” to see the best skiers up close, explained Laia Rabassa, a young member of the Pallars Sports Association.

As far as mobility was concerned, the organisers appreciate the fact that a lot of the spectators who came to Soldeu this Saturday **made use of the transport provided from El Tarter and Grau Roig**, bearing in mind that one of the biggest challenges of the event was guaranteeing access to the town.

Download images here: http://bit.ly/WCF19_SOLDEU16_03_19

Those publishing video images are to restrict their download and the possibility of using them on third-party websites.

All of the photos are subject to copyright. The name of the photographer of each image is in the file name.

Irene Casasayas
Chief of Media

AUDI FIS Finals Ski World Cup Grandvalira Andorra Soldeu-El Tarter 2019
GRANDVALIRA

Tel. +34 679 42 14 45 / +376 339 498

www.grandvalira.com/fis-ski-world-cup-finals-andorra-2019

