

The Pyrenees enter into World Cup history with the first men's downhill race in Grandvalira

The setting was the Àliga d'El Tarter slope, which hosted the first two trials of the discipline, with around 2,500 spectators

Switzerland's Beat Feuz won the Crystal Globe in the downhill category and Italy's Dominik Paris was the fastest on the Àliga slope

Austria dominated the women's races, with a victory for Nicole Schmidhofer in the general classification and for Mirjam Puchner in the Andorran trial

Andorra la Vella, 13 March 2019. Today, Tuesday 13 March, the Àliga slope, located in the sector of El Tarter in Grandvalira, hosted the first two trials of the 2019 Alpine Ski World Cup Finals in Andorra: the men's and women's downhill. This day of competition has enabled the resort to enter the history books as it is **the first time that the Pyrenees have hosted a World Cup men's downhill race**, the ultimate test of all of the Alpine ski disciplines.

The two races, which involved an extremely high level of responsibility on the part of the organisers as this is a new slope on the circuit, were held with "success", as was pointed out by the managing director of Grandvalira-Nevasa, Alfonso Torreño. **"The weather has been kind to us, the slope was in excellent conditions, and the trial was exciting and oozing competitiveness,"** he stressed. What's more, despite being a work day, there was a great response from the public, with around **2,500 spectators** filling the grandstand and the area around the finish line. All in all it has been a great start to the 2019 Andorra Finals, keeping up the good vibes generated by the opening ceremony on Tuesday.

Beat Feuz takes the Crystal Globe

For the second year in a row, Switzerland's **Beat Feuz has taken the Crystal Globe in the World Cup Downhill category**, after finishing in sixth position in the first trial hosted on the Àliga slope and tallying a total of 540 FIS points. Feuz did a time of 1:27.44; 64 hundredths of a second slower than the race winner, Italy's **Dominik Paris (1:26.80)**, who finished second in the general Downhill classification, 20 points behind the Swiss (520 points).

Paris's perfect descent with no mistakes led him to victory, whilst his Swiss rival was more conservative, losing time from the first section and with an error or two along the way. However, his results were good enough to maintain his leadership in the World Cup classification. Feuz said that he was **"very happy and fortunate"** to have achieved this victory, although he considers that winning always involves an element of luck. Born in 1987, this season Beat Feuz has made a total of six podium appearances in DH and one in SG.

For his part, Paris assured us that he's had a **"fantastic" season, exceeding all of his expectations**, and he praised the conditions of the slope, as he prefers routes with snow



that's a little wetter. The third best downhill skier of the season was Austrian Vincent Kriechmayr, who finished up fifth today and has won a total of 339 points this season.

Paris was joined on the podium for this Wednesday's trial by the Norwegian **Kjetil Jansrud** (1:27.14) and the Austrian **Otmar Striedinger** (1:27.21), who respectively moved into 13th and 11th place in the ranking for the event.

Striedinger was happy to have ended the season with a third-placed finish. On the subject of Àliga, he had the following to say: **"It's an excellent slope. The staff have done a great job: it's absolutely perfect for World Cup competitors and especially suitable for a final"**.

Austrian domination in the women's Downhill

In the women's category, the Austrians reigned triumphant in terms of both race position and end-of-season ranking. As expected, **Nicole Schmidhofer won her first-ever Crystal Globe in the Downhill World Cup**, despite finishing 11th on Wednesday (1:33.85). The event itself **was won by her fellow Austrian Mirjam Puchner** (1:32.91), whose performance was the surprise of the day. Just three-hundredths of a second behind Puchner was the German **Viktoria Rebensburg** (1:32.94), while third place went to the Swiss **Corinne Suter** (1:32.99).

The event had to be stopped for around 20 minutes following a fall by the Austrian **Cornelia Huetter**, who injured her knee and shoulder and will be unable to compete in the Super-G on Thursday. Her fellow Austrian **Ramona Siebenhofer** (1:35:15), who was fighting for second place in the final ranking, made a mistake during a jump approximately halfway down the slope, which nearly caused her to fall and meant that **she finished last**. As a result, she was overtaken in the final ranking by her compatriot **Stephanie Venier** (1:33:47). In the end, Schmidhofer took home the title with a total of 468 points, followed by Venier with 372 and Siebenhofer with 354.

At the end of the trial, Schmidhofer drew attention to the fact that the podium for the Downhill World Cup was utterly dominated by the Austrians. **She thanked her team for helping her win her first Crystal Globe, although she remained unsatisfied with her performance in the final trial**. The Austrian, who will celebrate her 20th birthday on Friday, has been one of the revelations of a season in which she has recorded the first three victories of her career.

Puchner, the day's other big star, triumphed in her event after the break following Huetter's injury. "Although I was under pressure, **I concentrated on my own performance and gave it my very best effort**", she said.

PROGRAMME

Thursday 14/3/2019

10:30 a.m. - Slope: Àliga (El Tarter)

Women's SG

12:00 noon - Slope: Àliga (El Tarter)

Men's SG

12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m. - Next to L'Abarset (El Tarter)

Event village featuring the leading brands from the skiing world

5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. – Terrace at L'Abarset (El Tarter)
Après-ski party

Download graphic materials for the day's events here:
http://bit.ly/FINALSDH_WCF19

Digital media that broadcast video images should restrict their downloading and the possibility of inserting images from third parties.

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