



Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel 2009

Traditions keep the world's major alpine ski show alive

Every sport has its cornerstone, its rock. The Ski World Cup without Kitzbühel is unthinkable.

The Hahnenkamm-Race is the highlight of the annual ski-racing calendar, even if the World Championships or Olympics follow. Over 40 TV stations cover the race and it is a priceless event that captivates even those who do not usually follow ski racing.

This jewel of an event has been recognised by Rolex. For the past 80 plus years the name of the Swiss Watchmaker has been synonymous with the best of sport and the arts. Providing support and assistance in ski racing since the conception of the Alpine Ski World Cup makes Rolex more than a sponsor – it is a true partner.

Sporting events such as Kitzbühel require active care and attention to uphold their stature. Traditions need to be maintained and not compromised. An example of this is the reinstatement of the Slalom course on the famed Ganslernhang. Previously, lack of snow had led to the Slalom being moved to the lower portion of the Downhill course. In order to avoid this emergency solution in the future, the Kitzbüheler Ski Club (K.S.C.) has built a new chairlift opening greater access to the Ganslernhang by enabling the start of the Slalom to be raised to a higher point on the slope and creating a wider finish area. The theme this year will be: "old course – new atmosphere".

From the early races to "The Race" it is today

From the start at 1665 metres (5465 feet) above sea level, to the finish at 805 metres (2641 feet), the length of the course is 3312 metres (10,866 feet). Behind these naked numbers is the greatest ski spectacle in the world: the Hahnenkamm Downhill on the Streif in Kitzbühel. Man continually searches for superlatives to adequately describe the race but it is not always possible. The simplest way to describe this annual event down the most fearsome slope on the World Cup tour is: The Race. This says it all.

The first race was small and amateurish and was run down the Hahnenkamm between the wars in 1931. From its conception to today, the race has developed into a huge event. What Wimbledon is to tennis and Monaco is to Formula 1, "Kitz" is to ski racing: unparalleled and unique. What is certain is that at Kitzbühel only the best is good enough. From Infront, one of the largest Sporting Rights businesses in the world, to the WWP Agency of Harti Weirather and Hanni Wenzel, a sponsorship agency of world renown, to the prestigious Swiss Watchmaker Rolex, the image of the race is embodied with what the racers on the Streif depend on: Precision, Elegance and Reliability. With the combined skill of the Kitzbüheler Ski Club (K.S.C.), the host broadcaster ORF, and 500 million TV viewers, the perfect show is carefully nurtured and delivered to sitting rooms around the world. Around 1000 journalists and photographers, fans from all the teams ringing cow bells in an alpine celebration, celebrities from business, culture and sport, the young and old, workers and aristocrats mix together in the largest social gathering, all looking for one thing: to have a place to watch the greatest show in the mountains.



Only the best win on the Streif

Only the best win on the hardest Downhill in the world. The names of past winners read like a who's who of ski racing, from Killy, Sailer, Schranz and Collombin, to Klammer, Read, Zurbriggen, Heinzer, Aamodt, Strobl, Maier, Eberharter, Walchhofer, Rahlves and Cucho.

But Kitzbühel attracts more than just racers and winners. Truly exceptional people compete in this exceptional arena. In 1985 Pirmin Zurbriggen won the first two Downhills of his career on the Friday and Saturday. In the second of the two races he injured his knee in the compression after the final dash. The winner left the arena on crutches and in the ambulance. To this day it is the only time in the history of the World Cup that the prize giving ceremony has taken place without the winner on the podium.

This is typical of the exceptional personality of Rolex Testimonee Hermann Maier, a man with incomparable charisma and an amazing aura about him.

Only the best win on the Streif. But this does not mean that there is an ideal ski racer for the course. While Maier can put his successes down to his exceptional strength, aggressiveness, and his willingness to risk everything, Jean Claude Killy was the exact opposite and was also successful. Killy raced with elegance, greater precision and a distinct feeling for the piste, the slope and the racecourse. The Frenchman had, incidentally, ski contracts with two different ski firms: one for Europe and one for North America. Killy became a three-time Gold Medal winner at the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble and he retired when he was only 24 years old. Killy also became the Organising Committee President of the 1992 Winter Olympic Games in Albertville and today is an active and respected Executive Member of the International Olympic Committee.

The key to winning on the Streif

Whether a racer races with the power of a Maier or the fine technique of a Killy, the key to winning on the Streif is to master both qualities. After just 100 metres of the course, racers meet the Mousetrapp and at 85 degrees in steepness, the racers fly up to 60 metres down the hill. Upon landing the racers must be ready to immediately turn left as well as cope with a compression.

A mere ten seconds later the racers have to be ready for the Steilhang, one of the most revered sections on a Downhill course the world over, covered in sheet ice making it a fight between skis, the piste and physical abilities. Racers shoot out of this section down the Bruckenschuss or else they land in the safety fencing!

After Alte Schneise, Seidlalm and Lärchenschuss the racers reach Hausberg. Then there is the jump before the Hausbergkante and then a first sighting for the crowd of 40,000 screaming fans. After landing and tackling the delicate left hand turn across the Traverse, racers can barely stop as they reach the turn that leads to the finish jump. With speeds approaching 150 km/h (93mph), racers head towards the finish jump that was only built a few years ago. In 2004 the crowd held their breath when Italy's Kristian Ghedina made a spread eagle jump here.



The uniqueness of the stadium

If Kitz would not exist, it would have to be invented. This is a downhill course set amidst a town of almost 8500 inhabitants. It is not necessary to travel by car, cable car, ski or snowboard in order to get to the theatre where "The Race" happens. While the VIP's settle down in the grandstand wrapped up in a mass of blankets, the fan clubs gather along the side of the course where there is competition for creating the best atmosphere. When the race starts at 11.30 am those at the front of the netting have been standing there for over three hours in order to get the best vantage points.

No other ski race in the world attracts so many media and press. There are representatives from newspapers, magazines and TV, many who do not attend any other ski events, yet they are two, three or four deep at the finish area. The atmosphere in the Media Corridor is especially exciting: nowhere else is it so difficult to speak to the winners. But nowhere else is it so difficult to become that winner. Kitzbühel is fascinating and, with each edition entirely unique, it is impossible to get used to the Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel.

- Information: www.hahnenkammnews.com



PROGRAMME

Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel 2009

Tuesday, 20 January 2009

11.30am 1st Downhill Training

Wednesday, 21 January 2009

11.30am 2nd Downhill Training

Thursday, 22 January 2009

11.30am 3rd Downhill Training

Friday, 23 January 2009

11.30am HAHNENKAMM SUPER-G

6:30pm Medals Ceremony HAHNENKAMM SUPER-G &
Draw of starting numbers for the HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL;
at the finish building

Saturday, 24 January 2009

11.30am HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL

followed by "KitzCharityTrophy"

6:30pm Medals Ceremony HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL &
Draw of starting numbers for the HAHNENKAMM SLALOM;
at the finish building

Sunday, 25 January 2009

10.15am HAHNENKAMM SLALOM 1st Run

1:15pm HAHNENKAMM SLALOM 2nd Run

followed by Medals Ceremony HAHNENKAMM SLALOM

and HAHNENKAMM COMBINATION; at the slalom finish area

The jury reserves the right to change the schedule



ROLEX AND SPORTS

Precise, waterproof and robust, at its launch in 1926 the Oyster was already synonymous with a pioneering spirit. Adapted to the lifestyle of a rapidly evolving society in which leisure played a more and more prominent role, this wristwatch was destined to gradually replace the traditional pocket watch.

The sports world offered an extraordinary field of validation and expansion for this timepiece of unprecedented quality. Hans Wilsdorf, founder of Rolex, achieved a masterstroke in 1927 by equipping Mercedes Gleitze, a young Englishwoman, with a Rolex Oyster when she swam the English Channel. He reserved the front page of the Daily Mail to announce the event to the public at large. Even though the watch had remained immersed in seawater for over 10 hours, it continued to keep accurate time, proof of its undeniable waterproofness and robustness. The young entrepreneur had just created the "Testimonee" campaign.

From then on, the advances of the Oyster would be inextricably linked to sportsmen and women excelling in disciplines that were new at the time, for example aviation, automobile racing or mountaineering: in 1933 Stewart Blacker flew over Everest; in 1947, pilot Chuck Yeager became the first person to break the sound barrier; in 1935, Sir Malcolm Campbell broke the land speed record in his bolide Bluebird, attaining 301 mph (484 km/h). In 1953, the expedition led by Sir John Hunt, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tensing Norgay was the first to conquer Everest. Through their achievements, these highly visible personalities underscore the technical qualities of the Oyster.

Over the years, new sports disciplines would be added. Today, besides the alpine ski Kitzbühel Hahnenkamm Races, Rolex is involved in five major sports: golf, sailing, tennis, equestrian sports and automobile sports. All of these disciplines combine precision and endurance, and call on participants to push themselves ever beyond their limits.



PRESENTATION OF ROLEX

Rolex is recognised the world over as the leader in the Swiss watchmaking industry and enjoys an unparalleled reputation for quality and know-how.

The birth of Rolex

The origins of Rolex date back to the beginning of the 20th century. At a time when pocket watches were still the order of the day, Hans Wilsdorf, a young Bavarian just 24 years old, wagered on the future of the wristwatch. The pioneering spirit of the founder is the subject of some of the finest chapters in the history of contemporary watchmaking and was the source of two major innovations. In 1926, Rolex invented the Oyster, the first waterproof and dustproof watch, and, in 1931, the first self-winding mechanism equipped with a Perpetual rotor. Over the years, Rolex has created a full line of Oyster watches, with a strong identity and intrinsic features. Recognisable at a glance, this collection includes over 170 models available in 3,200 possible combinations. The Cellini collection later enhanced the choice offered to consumers loyal to the legendary Rolex quality. The reliability and performance of the product have built the worldwide reputation of Rolex.

An international company

Today with Bruno Meier at the helm, Rolex is present in some one hundred countries. The company ensures the distribution of its watches and the quality of their maintenance through a network of 28 affiliates and several thousand official Rolex jewellers.

A Rolex watch is made to last. Assembled by hand, it benefits from the company's know-how and decades of cumulative expertise. An after-sales service, unique in its genre, ensures the proper functioning of the watches over time. It is based on the competence of nearly 4,000 watchmakers, trained by Rolex, who work for the affiliates or for jewellers of the Group worldwide. A universal and timeless brand, Rolex continues to conquer new markets and expand its presence worldwide.

State-of-the-art technology

Responding to growing demand while integrating the latest technologies requires constant evolution of the means of production. In the mid-1990s, Rolex opted for a vertical integration of its production facilities, thus ensuring its control over the manufacture of all its watch components and guaranteeing its autonomy. In the interest of consistency and efficiency, the company consolidated all its activities in Switzerland at four functional sites.



In Geneva

The Rolex headquarters is home to all the administrative activities of the company, to those related to the final assembly and sales of the watches, as well as to the after-sales service.

The Chêne-Bourg site brings together all the activities related to the development and manufacture of the dial and gem-set elements. The Plan-les-Ouates site groups all the activities related to the development, manufacture and quality control of the case and bracelet.

In Bienne

The Bienne site is the location of all activities related to the manufacture and assembly of Rolex watch movements.

An image of excellence

The name Rolex is synonymous with performance. In 1927, Mercedes Gleitze, a young Englishwoman, swam the English Channel in just over 10 hours wearing an Oyster. Upon arrival, the watch was still in perfect working order. The company immediately placed an advertisement in the Daily Mail proclaiming the success of the waterproof watch and the beginning of "the triumphant march of the Rolex Oyster around the world". This event also marked the start of a long association between Rolex and exceptional personalities who bear witness to the excellence of the product and are Testimonees of the brand. These associations give rise to numerous partnerships and sponsoring activities in fields as varied as art and culture, tennis, golf, sailing, and equestrian and automobile sports.



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To learn more about Rolex and its involvement with sports in general visit www.rolex.com
For more information about the Rolex Skiing portfolio visit www.hahnenkammnews.com