

## THE HAHNENKAMM-RACE, KITZBÜHEL 2010

### Highlight of the Alpine Skiing World Cup

Every sport has its cornerstone, its rock, its centrepiece, and to run the Alpine Skiing World Cup without the Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel is unthinkable. This season will see the 70<sup>th</sup> running of this incredible event over the weekend of 22 to 24 January 2010. While three races will take place that weekend (Super G, Downhill and Slalom), it is the Hahnenkamm Downhill on Saturday that is one of the annual highlights of the ski-racing calendar and one race that every racer wishes to win in his career.

From the breathtaking start at 1665 metres (5465 feet) above sea level, racers plunge down the slope's vertical drop of 860m (2822 ft) at speeds up to 150 km/h (93mph), covering the 3312 metres (10,866 feet) of the course in less than two minutes before dramatically crossing the finish line in the spectator-packed finish area. Yet the Hahnenkamm-Race is more than simple statistics, and behind these numbers lies the greatest ski spectacle in the world. The Downhill on Kitzbühel's almost impossibly difficult slope, the *Streif*, leaves one continually searching for superlatives that could adequately portray it. The simplest way to describe this drop down the most fearsome slope on the World Cup tour is simply: "The Race."

The Hahnenkamm-Race is broadcast internationally by over 40 television stations thanks to a distinctive aura that keeps viewers captivated, even in countries with little interest in ski racing. What Wimbledon is to Tennis and Monaco is to Formula 1, Kitzbühel is to ski racing: unparalleled and unique.

Rolex is a great and true supporter of this exceptional event. For over 80 years the name of the Swiss Watchmaker has been synonymous with the best of sports and the arts. Providing support and assistance in ski racing since the early days of the Alpine Ski World Cup makes Rolex more than a sponsor – it is a true partner. The image of the race is embodied with what the racers on the *Streif* depend on: Precision, Elegance and Reliability. Put simply: Perfection.

Rolex has been the Official Timekeeper of the Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel since 2007.



## THE BEST OF THE BEST

Only the very best can win on the most difficult slope in the Downhill World Cup. Just saying the name *Streif* sends tremors down the spine of any inexperienced racer and 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, Cuche and, last year’s winner, Defago.

And within that list of winners are some truly exceptional people. In 1985 legendary racer Pirmin Zurbriggen, the first to win all five specialties of modern alpine ski racing, won the first Downhill title of his career in Kitzbühel. While he would go on to win the overall World Cup title four times, an Olympic gold medal in 1988 in Downhill, and nine World Championship medals, in 1985 Zurbriggen had his sights set on one win in particular: the Hahnenkamm Downhill. Back then ‘The Race’ was split into two runs over the Friday and Saturday. During the second of the two runs Zurbriggen injured his knee in a compression and left the finish arena in an ambulance, marking to this day, the only time in the history of the World Cup that the prize giving ceremony has taken place without the winner on the podium.

Another exceptional athlete to have won ‘The Race’ is Rolex Testimonee Hermann Maier, a man of sheer determination and charisma.

Maier came to global attention at the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano in 1998 when he won the Olympic Gold in Super G and Giant Slalom in spite of a major crash in the Downhill. But the greatest success in the career of Herman Maier was his 2002 comeback, a remarkable recovery following a horrendous motorcycle accident in August 2001.

Maier’s career brought him ten medals at the Olympic Games and World Championships, in addition to 54 World Cup wins. He won the Overall World Cup four times, the Downhill title twice, the Super G title five times and the Giant Slalom title three times. An essential part of “the Herminator’s” legendary status comes from his strong performances in Kitzbühel, particularly in the Super G: five wins and a second out of seven starts, the best results in history. Over the years, Super G Friday in Kitzbühel became synonymous with Hermann Maier, and the most powerful roar of the crowd over the entire weekend was reserved exclusively for him, clearly the crowd favourite.

In autumn 2009, Hermann Maier announced his retirement from active participation in ski racing, however he will continue to work closely with the Hahnenkamm-Race as a Rolex Testimonee.

While Maier can put his successes down to his exceptional strength, aggressiveness, and his willingness to risk everything, Jean Claude Killy, 1967 Downhill winner, was the exact opposite and yet was also successful on this slope. Killy raced with elegance, greater precision and a distinct feeling for the slope and the racecourse. Killy became a three-time Gold Medal winner at the 1968 Olympics in Grenoble and 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 contrasting styles of Maier and Killy suggest there is no such thing as “the ideal racer” when it comes to tackling this challenging slope. So while one can never predict exactly who will win the next edition of this fearsome event, one thing is certain: only the best can make it to the top of the podium in Kitzbühel.

Race winners have also come to expect a traditional Kitzbühel award in honour of their success- a gondola, with their name on it, is added to the lift that takes skiers up the Hahnenkamm. This honour is reserved for the few and is a treasured moment for the winners of the Hahnenkamm-Race disciplines. In 2003 Daron Rahlves made time to attend the naming ceremony during the World Championships, Marco Buechel could not wait to sit in his after his victory in 2008, and Hermann Maier is rumoured to always take his own gondola to the top when racing- even if it means waiting an extra 20 minutes for that particular one to come around.

## **THE KEY TO WINNING ON THE STREIF**

Whether a racer competes 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. Racers leap out of the start house and after just 100 metres on the course they come face to face with the Mousetrap (*Mausefalle*). At a gradient of 85 degrees, skiers can find themselves flying up to 60 metres down the hill. Upon landing, the racers must be ready to turn left immediately while simultaneously coping with a compression. A mere ten seconds later the racers have to be ready for the *Steilhang*, one of the most revered sections of a Downhill course anywhere in the world, covered in sheet ice that makes stability a fight between the skis, the slope and the racer’s physical abilities. Successful racers practically fly out of this section and down the *Bruckenschuss*, while the less attentive find themselves in the safety fencing.

After *Alte Schneise*, *Seidlalm* and *Lärchenschuss* the racers reach the jump before the *Hausbergkante*, where the crowd of 40,000 screaming fans have their first glimpse of the skier shooting down the slope. In the finish area the excitement builds as fans can follow both the action from the start and the racer’s peak speed on the giant Rolex screens.

After landing and tackling the delicate left hand turn across the *Traverse*, racers barely slow down as they reach the turn that leads towards the finish. With speeds approaching 150 km/h (93 mph), racers plummet down the ice and snow towards the notoriously difficult finish jump. The jump launches racers into the air just before they give one last push to cross the finish line, a climactic finish making for massive enthusiasm both on the part of racers and the ski fans. Everyone still remembers when Italy’s Kristian Ghedina did an incredible spread eagle jump and miraculously landed on his feet for a successful finish, a moment that will go down in ski racing history forever.

The noise and supporting cheers in the finish arena are at times deafening, and as skiers cross the finish and instantly turn to see their time, their reaction conveys the result in absolute terms- pure bliss or extreme disappointment. With milliseconds determining success or failure, there is no room for error and the run must be perfect. This is the challenge that Kitzbühel presents, and only the best of the best can win the Hahnenkamm-Race.

## EVOLUTION OF “THE RACE”

The first race down the Hahnenkamm was a modest affair that took place in 1931. The years have brought many changes and “The Race” has developed from its early origins into a huge event.

The expertise of the Kitzbühel Ski Club as host, combined with the excellent broadcast coverage provided by ORF, brings the perfect show together every year, attracting a worldwide audience of over 500 million viewers. While the VIPs settle down in the grandstands, wrapped in a mass of blankets, other enthusiasts gather along the side of the course, where the competition for creating the best atmosphere is never ending. Those wanting the best vantage points have often been standing in position for up to three hours before racing begins.

No other ski race in the world attracts so much media and press attention. There are representatives from all the top newspapers, magazines and TV stations, many of whom do not attend any other ski event yet are three, four or five deep in the finish area of this race. The atmosphere in the Media Corridor is especially exciting: nowhere else is it so difficult to speak to the winners; nowhere else is it so difficult to become that winner.

Over 1,000 media are onsite for each edition, not to mention the fans, racers and clanging cowbells that unite to create Kitzbühel’s famously festive alpine atmosphere. If you cover one race this year, then “The Race” in Kitzbühel is it: this is man against the mountain with fastest to the bottom taking the spoils. People from all walks of life, all nations and all ages come together every January to enjoy this unparalleled spectacle, one of the world’s greatest mountain performances. This event is fascinating and, as each race is entirely unique, it is impossible to get used to the Hahnenkamm-Race.

If you cannot make it onsite for the 2010 edition, we invite you to visit [www.hahnenkammnews.com](http://www.hahnenkammnews.com), where media can find more background information, daily press releases during the event, and a range of multimedia material, including high-quality sport and lifestyle photography.



## PROGRAMME

### Hahnenkamm-Race Kitzbühel 2010

#### Tuesday, 19 January 2010

**11.30** 1<sup>st</sup> Downhill Training

#### Wednesday, 20 January 2010

**11.30** 2<sup>nd</sup> Downhill Training

**14.00** Hahnenkamm Junior Race

#### Thursday, 21 January 2010

**11.30** 3<sup>rd</sup> Downhill Training

#### Friday, 22 January 2010

**11.30** **HAHNENKAMM SUPER G**

**18.30** Medals Ceremony HAHNENKAMM SUPER G

**18.45** Draw of starting numbers for HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL; at the Zielhaus

#### Saturday, 23 January 2010

**11.30** **HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL**

Followed by "KitzCharityTrophy", Ramuslietn

Followed by Winners Press Conference in Press Centre

**18.30** Medals Ceremony HAHNENKAMM DOWNHILL & Draw of starting numbers for the HAHNENKAMM SLALOM; at the Zielhaus

#### Sunday, 24 January 2010

**10.30** **HAHNENKAMM SLALOM** 1<sup>st</sup> Run

**13.45** **HAHNENKAMM SLALOM** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.



## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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To learn more about Rolex and its involvement with sports in general visit [www.rolex.com](http://www.rolex.com)  
For more information about the Rolex Skiing portfolio visit [www.hahnenkammnews.com](http://www.hahnenkammnews.com)

