

A SUCCESSFUL 10TH ANNIVERSARY FOR THE VERBIER HIGH FIVE BY CARLSBERG

The 10th edition of the Verbier High Five by Carlsberg was another great celebration after a fantastic ski season. This year's event saw amateur participants and top professionals fighting in a really spectacular way for overall victory.

A total of 335 amateurs and 20 professional competitors attended this High Five which took place in bright, late season sunshine on the five courses set nearby the now popular Carlsberg chalet which situated in the middle of the fantastic Verbier ski pistes.

Switzerland's Didier Défago, the winner of January's Wengen and Kitzbuehel downhill races, managed once again to clinch this coveted event thanks to his strong form and his victory in the skier-cross leg, by beating Swiss team-mate and reigning Super-G World Champion Didier Cuche, who, on his side, excelled in the GS run. Sweden's Mattias Hargin, one of the most promising young slalom racers on the World Cup tour came in third - an excellent result for his first participation in this now well established end of season event.

The Verbier High Five by Carlsberg is composed of a series of competitions: giant slalom, Speed, skier cross, triathlon and the parallel slalom. Interestingly enough, Switzerland's retired former downhill star William Besse was the fastest in the speed event in which he managed to beat the current specialists, such as World Championships silver medallist Didier Cuche. This same feat was achieved on the womens' side by Frances' Marie Marchand-Arvier, the super giant silver medallist in Val d'Isere 2009.

For the women, Slovenia's Tina Maze, World Champs silver medallist in the giant slalom confirmed her strong season which includes podium finishes in three disciplines, with a win over reigning Olympic giant slalom Champion, Julia Mancuso from USA, whilst GB's Chemmy Alcott, national downhill champion on the previous day, came in third thanks to her success in the skier cross.

In the final parallel team event where the best amateurs each partner a professional to contest a double run, Franzi Auftenblatten together with Aimee Oreiller, also enjoyed a great day with her victory over Germany's slalom World Champion Maria Riesch, who was associated with Amanda Pirie. On the men's side, Dider Défago was again unbeatable, winning the parallel final, partnered by Bastien Darballay as they overcame Switzerland's young, promising star, Sandro Viletta who was partnered by Colin Morrison.

In the snowboarders' parallel team event, Switzerland's Alex Coudray, racing with Christoph Vouilloz overcame Mike Aeschbach and Philippe Piccolet to win their finals.

All this action took place watched by several hundred fans and spectators who then came to the Chalet Carlsberg to congratulate their friends and the stars at the awards ceremony Chalet before everyone descended into Verbier for an after-ski party

One of the busiest athletes on the day was double world champion Lindsey Vonn, who took advantage of the event's friendly and relaxing atmosphere by signing autographs and talking with the fans between her races. She enjoyed a special success as she beat by only a few 10^{ths} of a second, her ex-US Olympic team mate and now husband, Thomas, in the giant slalom - even if Thomas did not like it quite so much. "It was a great way for me to end this very successful season prior to taking a well-earned holiday." said the 24 yr old American. "I am looking forward to coming back again next year".

Said Keld Strudahl, Carlsberg International Marketing Director "Over these 10 years our High Five event has seen some of the very greatest skiers ever. Names such as Hermann Maier, Luc Alphand, Antoine Déneriez, Aksel Lund Svindal, Pirmin Zurbriggen, Tanja Putiainen and Michaela Dorfmeister immediately come to mind. But this year's line-up was really special. We had 5 Olympic or World Championships gold medallists, 6 silvers and 1 bronze as well as 63 world cup victors and 192 world cup podiums. I would like to thank all our friends in Verbier, our other partners Téléverbier, Helvetia, Craft Alpina and, of course, the professional athletes and amateurs who have supported us so well in this annual celebration of the end of the ski racing season."

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