

**INTERNATIONAL SKI FEDERATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FIS Introduces Innovative Knee Injury Prevention Brace**

An innovative knee brace, developed over the past years in cooperation with the German Ski Association and their partners has been approved for use in official FIS competitions.

FIS Chief Race Director Guenter Hujara, Coaches Working Group Chairman Sasha Rearick and German Men's Alpine Team Head Coach Charly Waibel provided the update on the newest injury prevention technology at a press conference in Val Gardena.

Hujara is pleased to see the proposal become a reality, "The work of the Injury Surveillance System since 2008 has focused on knee injury protection and we welcome the development of such new safety measures. Working together with the National Ski Associations and consulting the Coaches Working Group to find the right solutions is a crucial part of a broader FIS injury prevention philosophy," Hujara said.

The brace, which was repeatedly tested by a select group of athletes in training and competition, provides additional support and protection to athletes' knees without providing supplementary unauthorised mechanical support.

"It's great to see the work completed over the past few years to protect our athletes. We have collaborated closely with the ski manufacturers to adapt the material and make it safer for the athletes. As of this season we have also fully implemented the new helmets (compliant to the EN 1077 and ASTM 2040 test procedures), and the airbag system is in the final test stages. At the World Cup races since Lake Louise, new gate panels are being used in speed disciplines to mark hot spots (key points) on the course. This new knee brace comes as a great addition in ensuring the best possible protection is provided to the athletes," Hujara added.

Waibel was the lead person in the development of the new knee brace, his athletes in the German ski team were among the first to test it and experience its benefits.

“We have seen the importance of this brace with athletes who are coming back from an injury, as it gives them the confidence to come back knowing that they now have some additional support. In addition, it helps athletes that have not been injured as it stabilizes their knees and prevents unnatural movements and subsequent injuries,” Waibel explained.

The development of the knee brace received the full support of Rearick, Chairman of the Coaches Working Group and US Men’s Team Head Coach. He sees it as an additional step in making Alpine Skiing as safe as possible.

“We have put a lot of work towards providing all athletes with the opportunity to use equipment to ensure maximum protection without compromising mobility or offering support provided by rigid segments. Today we finally can offer them a tool which is fully aligned with the FIS principles, protecting the athletes and offering them the best possible injury prevention technologies without compromising the sport. As we implement this new safety tools, we need to continue the evaluation of their effectiveness of intended use.”