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FIS MEDIA INFO

FIS promotes zero-tolerance on doping: Anti-Doping Programme at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2009 in Liberec (CZE)

Oberhofen (SUI), 16th February, 2009/-- The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships feature one of the largest anti-doping programmes of any international major sports events outside of the Olympic Winter Games and underline the FIS position of zero tolerance on doping.

At the 2009 Championships in Liberec (CZE), the FIS anti-doping programme involves pre-competition blood testing of all Cross-Country and Nordic Combined competitors. This testing will be carried out by the FIS-appointed specialist agency, PWC, and approximately 450 pre-competition blood tests will be conducted.

Post-competition doping controls will be conducted by the Czech National Anti-Doping Agency. For all events in the three Nordic disciplines, the number of athletes subject to post-competition doping controls is the top 4 plus 2 at random, as per FIS Rules. In total, approximately 120 post-competition controls will be carried out during the championships.

Additionally, a substantial out-of-competition testing programme has been implemented in conjunction with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) prior to the championships, as was already the case prior to the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships in 2003, 2005 and 2007 as well as the Olympic Winter Games in 2002 and 2006. From 1st-15th February 2009, a total of 78 EPO urine tests and 430 blood screenings have been conducted on athletes preparing to compete at Liberec 2009.

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FIS further increases focus on out-of-competition testing

FIS continues its committed fight against doping in ski sports and the investment in the 2008/09 FIS anti-doping programme amounts to more than 1.5 million Swiss Francs (increase from 1 million in 2007/08). Implemented since 1st January 2009, the new WADA Code emphasises targeted out-of-competition testing as part of the anti-doping work of all International Federations (IFs). Recording high numbers of conducted tests, such as by regularly testing all or large numbers of athletes at FIS World Cup events does not necessarily translate into more success in finding athletes who may be doping. Effective testing is a question of using intelligent information to conduct doping controls at the right time and place.

As of 12th February 2009, FIS has conducted out-of-competition tests since 1st May 2008, as follows:

Cross-Country: 224 Urine tests (of which 209 include EPO analysis) and 1029 blood tests
Nordic Combined: 15 Urine tests (all incl. EPO) and 83 blood tests

In addition, during the same time period, WADA has conducted the following numbers of out-of-competition tests:

Alpine: 7 Urine tests and 5 blood tests (of which 4 include hGH analysis)
Cross-Country: 68 Urine tests (of which 59 include EPO analysis) and 62 blood tests (of which 22 include blood transfusion analysis, 25 HBOCs and 20 hGH)
Nordic Combined: 11 Urine tests (of which 4 include EPO analysis) and 5 blood tests
Freestyle: 14 Urine tests (of which 4 include EPO analysis)
Ski Jumping: 2 Urine tests
Snowboard: 1 Urine test

These numbers do not include the out-of-competition tests conducted by the National Anti-Doping Organisations under their responsibility.

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Refined rules for start prohibition

With the new WADA Code becoming effective on 1st January 2009, the FIS Anti-Doping Rules in regard to longitudinal haematological profiling (blood testing) were also adjusted to ensure that the FIS programme remains at the forefront of testing.

Under the FIS Blood Profiling Programme (article 5.3.1 of the FIS Anti-Doping Rules), athletes with aberrant variations in key hematologic values are excluded from competition. In addition to the existing 5 day start prohibition for elevated haemoglobin concentrations of equal to or exceeding 17.0 for men and 16.0 for ladies, a 14 day start prohibition has been introduced for athletes showing an abnormal haemoglobin z-score, off-score model or Bayesian model (all statistical models which combine various blood parameters). Both methods will be applied to the pre-competition full-field blood tests to be conducted at Liberec 2009. These rules were also applied at the FIS U-23 Cross-Country and Junior World Ski Championships 2009 in the past weeks.

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Organisation of FIS Medical and Anti-Doping Activities

Since 2001, the FIS Medical and Anti-Doping Activities have been divided into two separate programmes. While the FIS Medical Committee is responsible for the FIS Injury Surveillance System (FIS ISS), compilation of guidelines for medical services at FIS events and support of the FIS disciplines in medical questions among other topic areas, the FIS Anti-Doping Programme is an independent programme under which the FIS Anti-Doping activities, including in-and out-of-competition testing, take place.

The FIS anti-doping programme was developed by the eminent expert Professor Bengt Saltin in 2001 and since May 2006, it has been led by Dr. Rasmus Damsgaard (DEN) as the FIS Anti-Doping Expert. Dr. Damsgaard has been closely involved in the FIS Anti-Doping Programme since its beginning.

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Additional resources

FIS FACT SHEET: Update on FIS Anti-Doping Activities December 2008

<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/archive-2008/fis-fact-sheet-anti-dopi.html>

FIS FACT SHEET: Backgrounder on FIS Medical and Anti-Doping Activities

<http://www.fis-ski.com/uk/news/pressreleases/archive-2008/fis-anti-doping-backgrou.html>

FIS FACT SHEET: FIS Medical and Anti-Doping Activities

<http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/fis-fact-sheet-fis-medical-and-anti-doping-activities.pdf>

FIS FACT SHEET: WADA-supported haemoglobin variation study in elite Cross-Country skiers

<http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/fis-fact-sheet-wada-supported-variation-study.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions to Bengt Saltin in Turin 2006

<http://www.fis-ski.com/data/document/faq.pdf>

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About FIS

Founded in 1924 during the first Olympic Games in Chamonix, France, the International Ski Federation (FIS) aims to promote the sport of skiing and snowboarding and directs the development of all ski and snowboarding activities world-wide. It administers the Olympic disciplines of Alpine Skiing, Cross-Country Skiing, Ski Jumping, Nordic Combined, Freestyle Skiing and Snowboarding, including setting the international competition rules. With the help of its 110 member nations, FIS stages more than 6'000 ski and snowboard competitions annually. FIS also makes recommendations for recreational skiing and snowboarding in the interest of all and promotes play in the snow as a healthy leisure activity for children and the youth. For more information, please visit www.fis-ski.com.

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