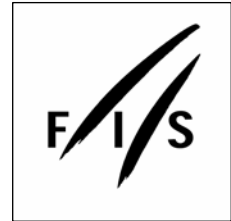




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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## FIS MEDIA INFO

**FIS strongly recommends the use of helmets for all alpine skiers and snowboarders based on new scientific evidence proving the protective effect of helmets**

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Turin, 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb, 2006/ -- Based on new scientific evidence published today in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) showing that helmet use reduces head injuries by up to 60%, FIS strongly recommends the use of helmets for all alpine skiers and snowboarders regardless of skiing ability and age.

The findings of the research conducted among more than 6000 alpine skiers and snowboarders at eight Norwegian ski resorts mark the first time that a well-structured, case-control study has conclusively demonstrated that using a helmet is associated with a reduction in the risk for head injury. Previously, scientific surveys had failed to make an irrefutable case in support of helmet use in alpine skiing and snowboarding, citing problems with reduced field of vision, impaired hearing, and higher risk of cervical spine injuries, among others.

While the use of helmets is mandatory for competitors in FIS downhill, super-G and giant slalom as well as all Snowboarding events, many recreational alpine skiers and snowboarders do not wear a helmet and ski resorts do not typically require helmet use. Only very few countries have legislation requiring the use of helmets by recreational alpine skiers and snowboarders. At the same time, head injury is the most common cause of hospital visits and death among alpine skiers and snowboarders.

“We at FIS are concerned about the relatively high levels of head injuries suffered by recreational alpine skiers and snowboarders worldwide. These research results are very significant in supporting our efforts to make our sports as safe as possible. We call on the entire alpine skiing and snowboarding community to take steps, including drafting new policies or rules, which will lead to an increased use of helmets,” said Professor Bengt Saltin, Chairman of the FIS Medical Committee.

In the research study conducted by a group of scientists led by Roald Bahr, Director of the Oslo Sports Trauma Research Centre at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, there were 578 head injuries (17.6%) among the 3277 injured skiers investigated. Even after adjusting for risk factors such as age, sex, skill level, and type of equipment used, their analysis found that the protective effect of helmet use and reduced risk for head injuries was consistent across all skier and snowboarder groups.

As announced on January 24th, 2006, FIS is in the process of developing an Injury Surveillance System (ISS) for the FIS disciplines at the elite level, demonstrating the active stance that the organization has adopted to help reduce injuries in its disciplines through new rules and regulations, as well as playing a leading role in drafting and coordinating injury prevention programs for all skiing disciplines.

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