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78th International Inferno Races sold out

All 1850 entry slots for the downhill contest at the 78th International Inferno Races from 19th – 22nd January 2022 have sold out. Several former winners will be vying for repeat victory amid fierce competition from home and abroad. Staging the event will require prior sanitary approval by the District Governor's Office in Interlaken.

The 78th International Inferno Races in 2022 are completely sold out. This year too, well over 2100 ski racers applied for a limited number of 1850 entries in the Inferno Downhill. The 2022 competitor field is studded with top-class names. In the women's race, local great Marianne Rubi has announced her retirement after 8 victories. However, there is no lack of

worthy potential successors: with two-time winner Nadine Züger-Mächler and the four-time victorious Nicole Eiholzer-Bärtschi, two former winners will be lining up at the starting gate. The start list of the men's race features several former winners seeking repeat glory: prior-year winner Ruedi Brawand from Grindelwald, three-time downhill winner Matthias Salzmann from Naters and Flavio In-Albon, the 2017 winner who crashed badly at the Höhelücke in the following year. A renewal of a long-standing clash also looks likely in the Inferno Super Combined, with six-time overall winner and defending champion Oliver Zurbrügg from Lauterbrunnen and four-time winner Matthias Salzmann going head-to-head again.

Prestigious national challengers

Two successful former Skicross World Cup athletes will be in action: Richard Spalinger, the 2008 World Cup podium racer in Flaine (F) and Conradin Netzer, three-time podium placed in the Skicross World Cup and Swiss Skicross champion 2011. Philippe Steiner and his Deaf-Racer Team will also be lining up at the start. Steiner and his colleagues are competing in the downhill as hearing-impaired athletes.

Stiff competition from abroad

The defending champions will face stiff competition from Austria: Josef "Pepi" Strobl is taking part in his first Inferno Downhill. He claimed 7 World Cup victories and 22 podium places in his career, making him one of the most successful ski racers in Austria. Strobl is a three-time consecutive winner of the Inferno's Austrian counterpart, the White Ring in Lech. He will represent the Doppelmayr Racing Team, which is tipped to win the team competition. Top contenders in the main event include fellow team members Mathias Gorbach and Ricardo Rädler, two more serial winners of Austrian open-participation ski races.

The former Formula 1 world Champion and 22-time Formula 1 winner Damon Hill is likely to compete again in the upcoming edition, setting up a duel in the downhill with his former Formula 1 rival, the three-time Grand Prix winner Johnny Herbert. An outside chance is the ambitious Japanese ski racer Shintaro Kaneko. The 44-year-old will represent the Bartgeier Team together with teammates from Switzerland and Austria.

Official go-ahead pending

As matters currently stand, the 78th International Inferno Races will need the go-ahead from the Bernese authorities. Major events require sanitary approval – in this case issued by the District Governor's Office in Interlaken. The Organising Committee (OC) is in contact with the authorities and a final decision is pending. This means that participants cannot be informed until December 2021 about the exact procedure regarding the issue of race numbers, a potential Covid-19 test centre or full programme details.

Information about the company

Schilthorn Cableway Ltd is based in Interlaken and connects the Lauterbrunnen valley from Stechelberg with the car-free mountain villages of Gimmelwald and Mürren, continuing via Birg station to the Schilthorn summit at 2970 m.a.s.l. In front of Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, the Schilthorn region offers numerous activities for guests from all over the globe. The Schilthorn acquired international prominence through the filming of the James Bond movie "On Her Majesty's Secret Service" in 1968.

Contacts



Christoph Egger

Press Contact

Direktor

media@schilthorn.ch

+41 79 631 10 81