November 19th, 2015

**A record seven titles at the FIL World Championships
Sprint World Championships makes its debut**

Berchtesgaden (RWH) For the first time in its 58-year history, the International Luge Federation (FIL) is set to award seven World Championship titles on the artificial track in 2016. The venue for this remarkable event will be the track in Königssee, Germany, the oldest and most prestigious labyrinthine ice track in the world, which also happens to be located near the FIL headquarters on Rathausplatz in Berchtesgaden.

Over three days from January 29-31, 2016, some 150 athletes from more than 20 nations will compete for World Championship titles in the Olympic disciplines of men’s and women’s singles, doubles and team relay. The FIL Sprint for men, women and doubles will be included in the World Championship schedule for the first time. Initially intended as a trial event, the new format is likely to be featured as an integral part of future FIL Championships. All FIL Sprint events are scheduled to take place on the Friday (Jan. 29) in Königssee.

The artificial ice track in Königssee is the perfect backdrop for the World Championship debut of the new competition as it is hosting the event for the fifth time following the events in 1969, 1970, 1974 and 1999. The oldest ice track in the world has been extensively modernized on several occasions, most recently ahead of the 2011 Bobsled and Skeleton World Championships. The entire lower section of the track including the finish area was redesigned, and new function rooms were added. Today the Königssee track, which has 16 curves and is over 1,640 meters in length, is one of the most modern facilities in the world.

And there is also a good omen for the trial run of the FIL Sprint at the World Championships. The well-established team relay event, which is highly regarded by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), was first introduced in Königssee on January 7, 2007. This is considered one of the standout moments of the International Luge Federation (FIL), with President Josef Fendt (GER) at the helm.
Preview of Viessmann Luge World Cup – women’s singles
Record-breaking champion Sylke Otto’s position under threat
Tatjana Hüfner and Natalie Geisenberger hot on Otto’s heels

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Sylke Otto’s position as a record-breaking winner of the Viessmann Luge World Cup will come under serious threat during the forthcoming winter season. The most successful female luger of all time, with two Olympic victories and four World Championship titles, garnered a total of 37 Viessmann Luge World Cup wins during her illustrious career. But Tatjana Hüfner, Olympic Champion in 2010 and three-time World Championship gold medallist, and Natalie Geisenberger, Olympic Champion in 2014 and two-time World Champion, are rapidly catching Otto, who also headed the overall classification on four occasions.

The duo of Hüfner (33 wins) and Geisenberger (31 wins) currently lie third and fourth, respectively, behind Silke Kraushaar-Pielach (36 wins) who, like Otto, has since retired from the sport. With nine Viessmann World Cups and three World Cup events in the new FIL Sprint, it seems that it is now only a matter of time before Otto is overhauled at the front. Geisenberger, who was first in the overall rankings for the third time last winter, took six wins during the 2012-2013 winter season, seven in the Olympic winter, and eight last season.

By contrast, Hüfner currently has other things on her mind aside from record-breaking statistics. The five-time overall winner, joint record holder with Kraushaar-Pielach, is still suffering the after-effects of a torn Achilles tendon in her left foot, a non-contact injury sustained playing football (soccer) in August. After three months on the sidelines, the 32-year-old enjoyed a lightning comeback during an internal qualification event held by the German federation, even though she was not obliged to take part due to the bronze medal she won at the 2014 World Championships. Hüfner was right in the mix at the head of the field alongside reigning World Champion Geisenberger.

Alongside his two experienced athletes, Germany’s head coach Norbert Loch can also count on Dajana Eitberger, who proved herself by winning the FIL European Championships in Sochi (RUS). The upbeat Thuringian luger sums up her season’s objective for the main event on the Königssee track at the end of January in no uncertain terms. “I want a medal at the World Championships, the color doesn’t matter,” said Eitberger.

The 24-year-old is expected to be featured at the head of the field alongside long-time rival Hüfner and, of course, Geisenberger. Miesbach-born Geisenberger also sees serious threats in the form of Canadian Alex Gough, although she will not compete in the World Cup due to her studies, Olympic bronze medallist Erin Hamlin from the USA, and Vice World Champion Tatiana Ivanova (RUS). “I don’t think the luge scene has changed much over the summer and there will suddenly be a talented newcomer who can immediately compete for victories,” said Geisenberger.
Overall winners of the women’s Luge World Cup

Natalie Geisenberger moves up to fourth

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Thanks to her third season-long victory, Olympic Champion Natalie Geisenberger of Germany has moved up to fourth place in the overall women’s World Cup standings alongside Austrian Angelika Schafferer. Silke Kraushaar-Pielach and Tatjana Höffner, both of Germany, continue to head the list with five overall wins apiece, but an overall victory in 2015-2016 winter could leave Tatjana Höffner, who won silver at the 2014 Olympics, to complete her set of medals (following bronze in 2006 and gold in 2010), as sole number one.

In the 38 years since the women’s singles was first showcased in the 1977-1978 season, a total of 19 female lugers have taken the title of overall winner. Viessmann has been the main and title sponsor of the Luge World Cup since the winter of 1996-1997.

List of overall winners of the women’s luge World Cup

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Wins</th>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
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<td>Silke Kraushaar-Pielach (GER)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tatjana Höffner (GER)</td>
<td>07/08, 08/09, 09/10, 10/11, 11/12</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sylke Otto (GER)</td>
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<td>Angelika Schafferer (AUT)</td>
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<td>Natalie Geisenberger (GER)</td>
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<td>Cerstin Schmidt (GDR)</td>
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<td>Ute Weiß-Oberhoffner (GDR)</td>
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<td>Gerda Weissensteiner (ITA)</td>
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<td>Regina King (FRG)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vera Zozulia (URS)</td>
<td>81/82</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Steffi Martin (GDR)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bettina Schmidt (GDR)</td>
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<td>Marie-Luise Rainer (ITA)</td>
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<td>Gabi Kohlisch (GER)</td>
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<td>Jana Bode (GER)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Andrea Tagwerker (AUT)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Barbara Niedernhuber (GER)</td>
<td>04/05</td>
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* In the winter of 1983-84 Steffi Martin and Bettina Schmidt shared first place in the overall World Cup ranking
Record holders in the Viessmann women’s Luge World Cup

Women: Tatjana Hüfner and Natalie Geisenberger waiting in the wings

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Tatjana Hüfner of Germany and her teammate Natalie Geisenberger are poised to overtake compatriots Silke Kraushaar-Pielach (37 victories) and Sylke Otto (36 victories) in the list of record winners of the Viessmann Luge World Cup. Vancouver Olympic Champion Tatjana Hüfner is in third place on 33 individual victories, with Natalie Geisenberger hot on her heels in fourth with 31 wins.

Canadian Alex Gough and Russian Tatiana Ivanova are ranked 18th on three victories apiece alongside Sonja Wiedemann (GER), Cameron Myler (USA) and Melitta Sollmann (GDR). Recent additions to the winners list include Erin Hamlin (USA) who won the sprint race in Altenberg, and Dajana Eitberger (GER) who took victory in Sochi. American Kate Hansen, who won the season-ending Viessmann Luge World Cup in Sigulda during the Olympic winter, is in joint 29th place with 11 other lugers who have since retired.

Record holders in the Viessmann women’s Luge World Cup

1. Sylke Otto (GER) 37 victories (retired)
2. Silke Kraushaar-Pielach (GER) 36 victories (retired)

   ... 29. Erin Hamlin (USA) 1 victory 2014/15: Altenberg Sprint;
   Dajana Eitberger (GER) 1 victory 2014/15: Sochi
Berchtesgaden (RWH) It doesn’t take a prophet to forecast yet another instalment of the ongoing German battle in the doubles at the Viessmann World Cup. Once again, the main protagonists in winter 2015-2016 are likely to be Olympic Champions and three-time World Champions Tobias Wendl/Tobias Arlt and overall World Cup winners Toni Eggert/Sascha Benecken. The two pairs were separated by just 16 points in the final standings at the end of last season.

Although both pairs claimed six individual victories, Wendl/Arlt were always marginally ahead with their gold medals at the World Championships and European Championships. Eggert/Benecken looked particularly impressive during the internal qualification events, defeating Wendl/Arlt by eight tenths of a second on the Königssee track that is set to host the forthcoming World Championships. In their defense, however, Wendl/Arlt have a free pass to the World Championships as reigning World Champions.

Head coach Norbert Loch believes that the German dominance of the doubles event is rooted in a long-standing tradition. “The doubles has really developed over time for us,” said Loch. It is worth noting that the list of record-holders in the Viessmann World Cup is headed by three German duos. Leading the way at the top of the table are Patric Leitner/Alexander Resch, Olympic Champions in 2002, with 34 individual victories, followed in second place by Wendl/Arlt (29 victories) ahead of Stefan Krauße/Jan Behrendt (27 victories), who took Olympic gold in 1992 and 1998.

It is also notable that there was a seamless transition as soon as one pair retired. Leitner/Resch succeeded Krauße/Behrendt, becoming World Champions in their debut season in the winter of 1998-1999. And Leitner/Resch had barely packed away their sled after taking Olympic bronze in Vancouver in 2010 than Wendl/Arlt stepped up to the plate. “We have always emphasized the importance of doubles to our up-and-coming lugers,” explained Loch.

However, the former Olympian notes that, even in a luge powerhouse like Germany, the current young athletes are increasingly focusing their attention on the singles. Loch muses that it might be a good idea to bring back higher start heights for young athletes.

Behind the German leaders, the Sics brothers of Latvia, Andris and Juris, Olympic silver medallists in Vancouver and bronze medallists in Sochi, Russia, battled it out for the remaining World Cup points during the 2014-2015 season against Austria’s current World Championship silver medallists Peter Penz/Georg Fischler, and Italian “grand masters” Christian Oberstolz/Patrick Gruber, who finished third in the World Championships in Sigulda. Oberstolz/Gruber are set to start their 17th World Cup winter season, which will earn them the title of longest-serving World Cup competitors.
Overall Luge World Cup winners in doubles
Wendl/Arlt remain third – Raffl/Huber still in the lead

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Tobias Wendl/Tobias Arlt unable to advance. The Olympic Champions from Germany had to concede victory to their teammates Toni Eggert/Sascha Benecken in the overall rankings during last winter’s Viessmann Luge World Cup. As a result, they remain third in the list of overall World Cup doubles winners with three victories. But Wendl/Arlt are still some distance behind the unchallenged leaders Hansjörg Raffl/Norbert Huber of Italy, who notched eight victories during their careers, and their fellow Berchtesgadeners Patric Leitner/Alexander Resch who have six victories to their names. The German duo shares third place with Günther Lemmerer/Reinhold Sulzbacher (AUT), Mark Grimmette/Brian Martin (USA) and Stefan Krauße/Jan Behrendt (GER).

In the 38 years since the doubles were first showcased in the 1977-1978 season, a total of 17 pairs have taken the title of overall winner. Viessmann has been the main and title sponsor of the Luge World Cup since the winter of 1996-1997.

List of overall World Cup winners in the doubles

1. Eight overall victories
   Hansjörg Raffl/Norbert Huber (ITA):
   82/83, 84/85, 85/86, 88/89, 89/90, 90/91, 91/92, 92/93

2. Six overall victories
   Patric Leitner/Alexander Resch (GER):
   99/00, 01/02, 03/04, 05/06, 06/07, 07/08

3. Three overall victories
   Günther Lemmerer/Reinhold Sulzbacher (AUT):
   79/80, 80/81, 81/82*
   Stefan Krauße/Jan Behrendt (GER): 93/94, 94/95, 95/96
   Mark Grimmette/Brian Martin (USA): 97/98, 98/99, 02/03
   Tobias Wendl/Tobias Arlt (GER): 10/11, 12/13, 13/14

7. Two overall victories
   Peter Gschnitzer/Karl Brunner (ITA): 77/78, 78/79
   Christian Oberstolz/Patrick Gruber (ITA): 04/05, 08/09

9. One overall victory
   Georg Fluckinger/Franz Wilhelmer (AUT): 81/82*
   Jörg Hoffmann/Jochen Pietzsch (GDR): 83/84
   Thomas Schwab/Wolfgang Staudinger (FRG): 86/87
   Yevgeny Belousov/Alexandr Belyakov (URS): 87/88
   Chris Thorpe/Gordy Sheer (USA): 96/97
   Steffen Skel/Steffen Wöller (GER): 00/01
   André Florschütz/Torsten Wustlich (GER): 09/10
   Andreas Linger/Wolfgang Linger (AUT): 11/12
   Toni Eggert/Sascha Benecken (GER): 14/15

* In the winter of 1981-82 Lemmerer/Sulzbacher and Fluckinger/Wilhelmer tied as the overall winners of the luge World Cup doubles
Berchtesgaden (RWH) Olympic Champions Tobias Wendl/Tobias Arlt moved from fourth to second in the list of record doubles World Cup winners. With six wins last season, they are now just five victories shy of front-runners Patric Leitner/Alexander Resch of Germany. The German duo of Toni Eggert/Sascha Benecken, overall winners of the 2014-2015 Viessmann World Cup, moved up to 10th place following six wins last season.

Record-holders in the Viessmann Luge World Cup doubles

1. Patric Leitner/Alexander Resch (GER) 34 victories (retired)
3. Stefan Krauße/Jan Behrendt (GDR/GER) 27 victories (retired)
4. Hansjörg Raffl/Norbert Huber (ITA) 26 victories (retired)


... 23. Peter Penz/Georg Fischler (AUT) 3 victories: 2010/11: Park City (joint first with Linger/Linger, AUT); 2011/12: Igls, Paramonovo
Preview of Viessmann Luge World Cup in men’s singles
Quartet of lugers set to fight for victory against Felix Loch
Pavlichenko, West, Edney, Kindl and Mazdzer all on the list of winners

Berchtesgaden (RWH) A mischievous smile darts across the face of Semen Pavlichenko as a memory comes to mind. The notable moment occurred at a reception hosted by the Governor of the Leningrad Region, when the man himself slipped Pavlichenko his mobile number and told him to get in touch at any time if he needed to. “I realized then that I had become an important figure,” says Russia’s first ever Luge World Champion.

The 24-year-old not only took World Championship gold in Sigulda (LAT) during the 2014-2015 winter season, but also claimed the European Championship title as he celebrated his first success in the Viessmann World Cup on the Olympic track in Sochi (RUS). Aside from the Russian, another four men entered the history books by claiming their maiden wins in the World Cup in the first season following the retirement of serial winners Armin Zöggeler (ITA) and Albert Demchenko (RUS).

Tucker West became the first American in 17 years to win a Viessmann World Cup, while Sam Edney (CAN) became the first ever Canadian to enter the winner’s enclosure. Wolfgang Kindl took bronze at the World Championships and also claimed the first victory for an Austrian luger in the Viessmann World Cup in nine years. And finally, Chris Mazdzer of the USA won his first ever World Cup at the FIL Sprint in Calgary.

They all gave Olympic Champion Felix Loch a hard time last season, although he ultimately won the overall Viessmann World Cup classification for a fourth time thanks to his seven victories. With the exception of Edney, who is set to take a sabbatical year, all of the athletes intend to force the German to fight hard for victories again this season. “I always want to win,” said Pavlichenko on their behalf ahead of the forthcoming winter luge season, which will feature nine Viessmann World Cups in six countries in addition to the jewel in the crown – the World Championships in Königssee.

Loch goes into the season-opening event in Innsbruck at the end of November as defending champion. However, following a season without a championship title, he is prioritizing the championship battles in Königssee. “The aim is pretty clear with a home World Championship: to make it onto the top step of the podium,” says the 26-year-old, who won his first World Championship nine years ago, in 2008, at the tender age of 17 in Oberhof (GER). Loch continued: “A home World Championship is something special. You don’t have a chance to compete in front of relatives, friends and fans every day. On top of that, there is always a great atmosphere at Königssee. It’s definitely something to look forward to.”

The most successful active luger also takes a positive view of the introduction of the FIL Sprint as an additional World Championship discipline. “It’s cool that we have an extra race,” said Felix Loch. “The format is also quite interesting. There is bound to be room for a few minor improvements, but the sprint is generally heading in the right direction.”
Overall winners of the men’s Luge World Cup
Felix Loch now on his own in third – Zöggeler and Prock in the lead

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Two-time Olympic Champion Felix Loch of Germany won the overall classification of the Viessmann Luge World Cup for a fourth time last season and is now on his own in third place in the all-time rankings. The Italian trio of Paul Hildgartner, Ernst Haspinger and Norbert Huber are just behind him in fourth place.

With 10 overall victories apiece, the undisputed leaders are Austria’s Markus Prock and Armin Zöggeler of Italy, who retired from the sport after the 2014 Olympics.

Only 11 athletes have won the title of overall victor in the 37 years since the racing series was launched in the 1977-1978 season. Viessmann has been the main and title sponsor of the Luge World Cup since the winter of 1996-1997.

List of overall winners in men’s singles

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<th>Overall Victories</th>
<th>Athlete(s)</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Armin Zöggeler (ITA)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Felix Loch (GER)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Ernst Haspinger (ITA)</td>
<td>79/80, 80/81*, 81/82</td>
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<td>Paul Hildgartner (ITA)</td>
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<td>Norbert Huber (ITA)</td>
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<td>Georg Hackl (FRG)</td>
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<td>Albert Demchenko (RUS)</td>
<td>04/05</td>
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</table>

* In the winter of 1980-81, Ernst Haspinger and Paul Hildgartner finished joint first in the overall World Cup rankings.
Record-holders in the men’s Viessmann Luge World Cup
Men: five new names on the winners’ lists

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Five new names have been added to the history books following the retirement of record-breaking champion Armin Zöggeler of Italy, who took 57 individual victories in the Viessmann Luge World Cup, and Albert Demchenko (15 wins). A few of last season’s wins certainly had an historic aspect.

American luger Tucker West took the first World Cup victory for the USA in 17 years in the third race of the season on his home track in Lake Placid. The last US winner was Wendel Suckow in the run-up to the Olympics in Nagano (JAP) on February 16, 1997. Sam Edney, who is set to start a one-year sabbatical from the sport this winter, became the first ever Canadian to take victory. And when Wolfgang Kindl achieved his very first World Cup win on the 1994 Olympic track in Lillehammer (NOR), it also marked the first victory for Austria since December 17, 2005, when Markus Kleinheinz took victory in Altenberg (GER). World Champion Semen Pavlichenko of Russia not only claimed the European Championship title at the season finale on the Olympic track in Sochi, but also his first victory in the Viessmann Luge World Cup. Chris Mazdzer of the USA, athlete’s representative of the International Luge Federation (FIL), won the sprint in Calgary.

Two-time Olympic Champion Felix Loch, who also won gold at the 2014 Olympics with the German team relay, remains in fourth place on 25 wins since taking his first victory in Altenberg in the winter of 2009-2010. The Berchtesgadener has his sights firmly set on his mentor, Georg Hackl, and Markus Prock of Austria, who both have 33 wins.

Record-holders in the men’s Viessmann Luge World Cup

1. Armin Zöggeler (ITA) 57 victories (retired)
2. Markus Prock (AUT) 33 victories (retired)
   Georg Hackl (GER/FRG) 33 victories (retired)

... 11. Andi Langenhan (GER) 7 victories: 2008/09: Innsbrucks; 2009/10: Oberhof; 2011/12: Calgary, St. Moritz, Paramonovo; 2012/13: Königssee 1, Sochi

... 24. Dominik Fischnaller (ITA) 1 victory: 2013/14: Lillehammer
   Chris Eißler (GER) 1 victory: 2013/14: Winterberg
   Tucker West (USA) 1 victory: 2014/15: Lake Placid
   Sam Edney (Canada) 1 victory: 2014/15: Calgary
   Chris Mazdzer (USA) 1 victory: 2014/15: Calgary Sprint
   Wolfgang Kindl (AUT) 1 victory: 2014/15: Lillehammer
   Semen Pavlichenko (RUS) 1 victory: 2014/15: Sochi
Preview of the Viessmann Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW

Germany is a major title contender

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Who else but Team Germany? Regardless of the line-up, the track or the weather conditions, the quartet fielded by the German Bobsleigh, Luge, and Skeleton Federation (BSD) is the clear favorite heading into the sixth season of the Viessmann Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW.

The German team has made it onto the top step of the podium 24 times in the 30 popular team relay events staged to date. Not to mention all the World Championship titles they have accumulated since the event was first staged in 2008, and their victory at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi. At the European Championships, however, the German lugers have twice met their match in the Latvian team (2008 and 2011) and were also once defeated by Russia (2014).

At the Viessmann World Cup, the German dominance has been broken on only six occasions, three times by the Italian team, twice by the Russians, and once by the Canadian team that won the 2011-2012 season opener in Innsbruck. This winter, the Viessmann Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW, will be contested at the events in Innsbruck (AUT), Lake Placid (USA), Sigulda (LAT), Sochi (RUS), Altenberg and Winterberg (both GER).

The winners of the individual Viessmann Team Relay World Cups presented by BMW - German quartet unchallenged in the lead

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Team Germany heads the list of winners of the Viessmann Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW with a clear 24 victories. Italy’s team have notched up three wins to date, and the Russians two, while Canada’s quartet stood on the top step of the winner’s podium at the 2011-2012 season opener.

1. Germany

2. Italy
   3 victories: 2011/12: Königssee, Sigulda; 2013/14: Winterberg

3. Russia
   2 victories: 2010/11: Sigulda; 2013/14: Altenberg

4. Canada
   1 victory: 2011/12: Innsbruck
Felix Loch: “I’ve really found the knack at Königssee”
No championship title last season for two-time Olympic gold medallist

Berchtesgaden (RWH) Two-time Olympic Champion Felix Loch is full of optimism as he looks ahead to the 46th International Luge Federation (FIL) World Championships on his home track at Königssee in late January 2016. Loch, who failed to win a major championship title last season, told an interviewer from FIL Press that he feels like he now has the knack. Loch attributed the below-par results of his early career to driving errors which he has now eliminated, resulting in an upturn in form in recent years. He claims that his objective at his home World Cup is clear. Loch: “We want to be on the top step of the podium.”

FIL Press: After a winter without a championship title, what is your objective ahead of the 2015-2016 season?
Felix Loch: It’s relatively straightforward. The World Championships are being staged here at home in Königssee. It’s obvious that we want to make it onto the top step of the podium. There’s still a while to go before the season gets underway, but we are certainly on the right track at the moment.

FIL Press: What lessons did you learn from last winter?
Loch: “On reflection I didn’t really learn anything new. Things just didn’t work out at the World Championships in Sigulda. There were a few minor issues, some related to my driving and others to do with the sled itself. But ultimately that is part of the sport. To be honest, I was just happy to finish second in the end. I was just as pleased with that as with a World Championship title. And I achieved it in Sigulda on a track where my rivals completely demolished me three years ago, so second place was OK.

FIL Press: The World Championships are coming to your home track. Does that bring extra pressure?
Loch: I can’t tell what the pressure will be like yet. I love competing on my home track and things have always worked out well in the last few years. Before that, maybe four or five years ago, things weren’t looking so good, but I’ve really got the knack now. My previous problems were mostly due to driving errors that I have since sorted out. We also know what we need to do in terms of setting up the sled. Ultimately it all depends on the weather conditions on race day. Competing in a home World Championship event is something special as you don’t get many opportunities to contest the World Championships in front of your family, friends and fans every day. On top of that, there is always a great atmosphere at Königssee.

FIL Press: Who do you think are your main competitors?
Loch: I think it will be similar to previous years. A young luger may put in an appearance somewhere, but apart from that I reckon it will be the usual suspects at the front. I don’t think it is possible to make a quantum leap in luge performance within a short space of time.

FIL Press: What do you think about the FIL Sprint which is due to be staged as an additional World Championship event?
Loch: I think it’s cool that we have an extra race - that is great in itself. I think the format is quite interesting, although there is still room for a few minor improvements, but the International Luge Federation will keep an eye on that. On the whole the athletes are happy to have an extra race. If everyone gets together and discusses the situation we are bound to find a good solution.
Olympic track in PyeongChang on schedule

PyeongChang (RWH) The construction of the future Olympic track in PyeongChang, Korea, is on schedule and it will be ready for homologation in early 2016. This information was provided by the President of the International Luge Federation (FIL), Josef Fendt of Germany, and Executive Director Christoph Schweiger, when they returned from their trip to the host venue for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Fendt and Schweiger accompanied the Evaluation Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on its inspection in PyeongChang to see for themselves the progress of construction work on the artificial ice track. The Olympic track in PyeongChang is scheduled for completion in early 2016. Homologation is planned for March 2016, ahead of the pre-Olympic test competition in winter 2016-2017.

IOC’s Coordination Commission to meet with IF representatives at PyeongChang

PyeongChang (RWH) The International Olympic Committee (IOC)’s Coordination Commission for the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 has concluded its fifth visit (September 22-24) to the Korean host city, positive about the progress being made, while underlining the importance of test events for the Games preparations. The Commission was joined for the meeting by representatives of the seven International Federations of sports on the program of the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018. They were able to share their expertise and actively contribute to shaping the project. President Josef Fendt of Germany represented the International Luge Federation (FIL) at the meeting.

Commenting after the gathering, IOC Coordination Commission Chair Gunilla Lindberg said: “The preparations for the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018 are developing well. Support from all the local partners continues to be strong, with the national and regional governments both present during our meetings. We were also delighted to have with us representatives of the seven International Federations on the 2018 program, who brought their sport-specific expertise to the discussions.”
FIL President Fendt pays an inaugural visit to Beijing following Olympic selection

Beijing (RWH) Just two months after Beijing was selected to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, the President of the International Luge Federation (FIL), Josef Fendt of Germany, visited the Chinese capital for the first time. Accompanied by Ivo Ferriani, President of the International Bobsleigh & Skeleton Federation (IBSF), Fendt met with high-profile hosts led by Sports Minister Liu Peng and Zhao Yinggang, President of the Chinese Luge Association.

The IOC was represented by Irina Gladkikh (IOC Winter Sports Director) and Tim Gayda (IOC Sports Advisor). Among several topics the parties also discussed the location of the sliding center and further steps in the site development. Both associations are increasingly pushing for reduced track construction costs and have requested that the cost of additional buildings that have not been requested by the IBSF or the FIL should be reviewed.

Fendt discussed the development of luge in the future Olympic host city during an in-depth meeting with Mr. Yinggang, who is also Deputy General Secretary of the Bid Committee, which is still active. The President of China’s Luge Association was very grateful for the involvement of Wolfgang Schädler, which was initiated by the FIL. In his new role as sports coordinator, the Liechtenstein-born trainer, who was the former coach of the US and Russian luge teams, recently ran the first ever professional training course in China before selecting the members of the new national team.
China’s national team undertakes first sliding tests

Zwickau (RWH) China’s first ever national luge team has undertaken inaugural sliding tests. Sports coordinator Wolfgang Schädler elected to use the plastic luge track in Zwickau, Saxony, to get his team into the swing of things before they took to the artificial ice track in Königssee for the first time.

Under the watchful eyes of two additional coaches and a team doctor, the 12 athletes in Zwickau experienced a luge track for the first time and were able to develop a feel for sliding, as well as working on their sitting position and start technique. After three days of training the team was able to slide the entire length of the track and also carry out their first timed runs. China’s young lugers also made significant progress in Königssee.

China put together its first national luge team in the summer, prior to the 2022 Winter Olympics being awarded to Beijing. Schadler, the Liechtenstein-born team director, spent more than two decades coaching the US team and more recently worked as a coach in Russia.

Austrian Egger plans end-of-year comeback

Innsbruck (RWH) Reinhard Egger, who finished eighth at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi (RUS), is planning to return to the ice track in late 2015. The 26-year-old Austrian had to undergo surgery for a herniated disc back in August. Egger contracted an infection during the procedure, which greatly delayed his recovery. “The summer was brutal, but I’m feeling much better now,” Egger is quoted as saying on the website of the Austrian Luge Federation (ÖRV).
Canada’s Sam Edney takes a one-year break

Calgary (RWH) Canadian luger Sam Edney, winner of the Viessmann World Cup in his hometown of Calgary last winter, is set to take a one-year break from the sport. The 31-year-old, who finished fourth with Canada’s relay team at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, intends to use his sabbatical year to complete his studies, according to Canada’s head coach Wolfgang Staudinger.

Edney, who finished seventh overall in the 2014-2015 Viessmann World Cup, plans to return to luge for the 2016-2017 season and compete in his fourth Winter Olympics in 2018. His best result in the International Luge Federation (FIL) World Championships was fifth at the event staged at Whistler in his native Canada.

Martin Hillebrand now working for Austria

Innsbruck (RWH) Martin Hillebrand, long-time athletic trainer for the German Bobsleigh, Luge and Skeleton Federation (BSD), and recently returned from a spell working in Russia, is now working for the Austrian Luge Federation (ÖRV), according to the ÖRV website.

The 64-year-old from Berchtesgaden will work with Thorsten Flath to bring greater momentum to the start procedure. Hillebrand was the fitness trainer for the German luge team for decades before working as athletic trainer for the Russian team for three years.

Aileen Frisch retires

Altenberg (RWH) German luger Aileen Frisch, Under 23 World Champion in 2013, has decided to call it a career. The 23-year-old From Altenberg said her decision came due to what she felt was a lack of opportunity in the German women’s team, according to head coach Norbert Loch.

Aileen Frisch took gold in the individual competition and the team relay at the Junior World Championships in 2012. Her best result in the Viessmann World Cup was third on the artificial track in Königssee during the 2012-2013 winter season.
Armin Zöggeler’s biography now on sale

Lana (RWH) The biography of Italian Armin Zöggeler, the most successful luger of all time, has recently been published. Written by Simone Battaglia, a sports journalist for the “Gazzetta dello Sport”, the book is entitled “Ghiaccio acciaio anima”, which translates as “Ice, Steel and Soul”, and recounts the life story of the South Tyrolean athlete. Zöggeler is the only winter sportsman to collect a medal at six successive Olympic Games, including two gold medals (2002 and 2006). The 41-year-old also holds a record six International Luge Federation (FIL) World Championship titles.

Kim McRae and John Fennell capture First Career National Singles

Whistler (RWH) Kim McRae and John Fennell will slide into the 2016 Viessmann World Cup season as the king and queen of Canadian luge. The two Calgary-based Olympians captured national singles titles, along with Tristan Walker and Justin Snith who won their sixth straight doubles title, on Saturday at the Canadian Luge Championships in Whistler, B.C. This was published by the Canadian Luge Association (CLA) in Whistler.

70 lugers eligible for YOG in Lillehammer

Lillehammer (RWH) According to the allocation index used by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), a total of 70 participants are eligible to compete at the second Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Lillehammer, Norway (February 12-21, 2016).

A total of 19 men and women will take to the start line, along with 14 doubles teams. Host country Norway is entitled to enter an additional starter in the women’s and men’s singles as well as the doubles events. Each nation is entitled to enter two women, two men and one doubles team.
Olympic bronze medallist Erin Hamlin captains the US team

Lake Placid (RWH) Olympic bronze medallist Erin Hamlin is set to lead the US team at the Viessmann Luge World Cup. In addition to the 2009 World Champion, the US association (USA Luge) has also selected Sochi Olympian Summer Britcher and 2013 Junior World Champion Emily Sweeney, alongside up-and-coming talent Raychel Germaine.

Chris Mazdzer and Tucker West, who both took maiden wins in the World Cup last season, will compete in the men’s event alongside Olympian Aidan Kelly. Taylor Morris will contest the three Viessmann World Cup events in North America. In doubles, US hopes rest on Matt Mortensen/Jayson Terdiman, Justin Krewson/Andrew Sherk, and Jake Hyrns/Anthony Espinoza.

FIL Executive Board sets up a working group for marketing and publicity campaigns

Berchtesgaden (RWH) The International Luge Federation (FIL) is going on the offensive. The Executive Board has passed a resolution to establish a working group to deal with marketing and public awareness campaigns in relation to luge. Deputy Executive Director Babette Wegscheider was appointed chairperson.
Nine Viessmann World Cups, World Championships in Königssee

Berchtesgaden (RWH) The key events on the race calendar for the winter of 2015-2016 published by the International Luge Federation (FIL) are nine Viessmann World Cups in six countries and the 46th World Championships in Königssee (GER).

Königssee, the oldest and most prestigious artificial ice track in the world, is set to host the World Luge Championships from January 29-31, 2016. This will be the fifth time the event has been staged here, following the events in 1970, 1974, 1979 and 1999. It will also be the first time that the newly created FIL sprint event is part of the World Championships.

Six Viessmann Luge World Cups will be staged ahead of the World Championships, and the season will finish with three more. In keeping with tradition, the artificial ice track in Innsbruck-Igls (AUT) will host the season opener in the Viessmann Luge World Cup on November 28-29. This will be followed by three overseas events in Lake Placid, USA (December 4-5, 2015), Park City, USA (December 11-12, 2015) and Calgary, CAN (December 18-19, 2015).

Back in Europe, Viessmann Luge World Cups will be staged in Sigulda, Latvia (January 9-10, 2016) and Oberhof, Germany (January 16-17, 2016) ahead of the 46th FIL World Championships. The season will conclude with events in Sochi, Russia (February 6-7, 2016.), Altenberg, Germany (February 13-14, 2016 – this World Cup also counts as the 47th FIL European Championships) and the final in Winterberg, Germany (February 20-21, 2016). Three BMW Sprint World Cups are also scheduled for Park City, Whistler and Oberhof, along with six Viessmann Team Relay World Cups presented by BMW in Innsbruck-Igls, Lake Placid, Sigulda, Sochi, Altenberg and Winterberg.

The schedule at a glance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Innsbruck-Igls, AUT</td>
<td>28–29 November 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Lake Placid, USA</td>
<td>4–5 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Park City, USA</td>
<td>11–12 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Calgary, CAN</td>
<td>18–19 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Sigulda, LAT</td>
<td>9–10 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Oberhof, GER</td>
<td>16–17 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46th FIL World Championships Königssee</td>
<td>Königssee, GER</td>
<td>30–31 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Sochi, RUS</td>
<td>6–7 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Altenberg, GER</td>
<td>13–14 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th Viessmann World Cup</td>
<td>Winterberg, GER</td>
<td>20–21 February 2016</td>
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Final Standing Viessmann Team-Relay World Cup presented by BMW

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2014/2015</th>
<th>Gold/Gold</th>
<th>Silber/Silver</th>
<th>Bronze/Bronze</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lake Placid - 05./06.12.2014</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>ITA</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Königssee - 03./04.01.2015</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>CAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberhof – 17./18.01.2015</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>RUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterberg - 24./25.01.2015</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>RUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lillehammer - 31.01./01.02.2015</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>AUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sochi - 28.02./01.03.2015</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>LAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesamtwertung/Overall</td>
<td>GER – 600 Punkte</td>
<td>RUS - 420</td>
<td>USA - 405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Standing Viessmann World Cup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014/2015</th>
<th>Damen / Women</th>
<th>Herren / Men</th>
<th>Doppelsitzer/Doubles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innsbruck - 29./30.11.2014</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innsbruck - FIL-Sprint Weltcup</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Placid - 05./06.12.2014</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Tucker West USA</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary - 12./13.12.2014</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Sam Edney CAN</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calgary - FIL-Sprint Weltcup</td>
<td>Alex Gough CAN</td>
<td>Chris Mazdzer USA</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Königssee - 03./04.01.2015</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberhof – 17./18.01.2015</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winterberg - 24./25.01.2015</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lillehammer - 31.01./01.02.2015</td>
<td>Tatiana Ivanova RUS</td>
<td>Wolfgang Kindl AUT</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altenberg - 21./22.02.2015</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Altenberg - FIL-Sprint Weltcup</td>
<td>Erin Hamlin USA</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sochi - 28.02./01.03.2015</td>
<td>Dajana Eitberger GER</td>
<td>Semen Pavlichenko RUS</td>
<td>Wendl/Arlt GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesamtwertung/Overall</td>
<td>Natalie Geisenberger GER – 1080 Punkte</td>
<td>Felix Loch GER - 975</td>
<td>Eggert/Benecken GER – 1071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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