

Winter World Masters Games 2020: First Competition Already Underway!

Innsbruck, Austria – 10.01.2020 – The Winter World Masters Games 2020 opened in Innsbruck today. The first competition took place this morning at 9:55 ahead of tomorrow's official opening ceremony.

A total of 3,185 athletes from 58 countries have registered to take part in the WWMG 2020. Within the first few hours of the event, 2,026 accreditations were issued and 702 welcome bags handed out at Olympiaworld Innsbruck. This venue will serve as the main organisational hub of the Games and house the Info Desk, Sport Info Points, Transport Desk, Tourist Info Desk and Merchandising Stand.

Famous faces at the Short Track competitions

Olympiaworld Innsbruck will also host many of the ice-based sports – including the first competition of the WWMG 2020 today: the 1,500 metres and relay heats. Each heat featured six to seven skaters going head to head. Ladies competition started first this morning. James Lynch who is one of the most experienced athletes in the field pointed out: “The WWMG 2020 are something very special for me. I have never been so nervous before the start of a race”. The former professional skater can look back on a highly successful career, including a gold medal at the first ever Short Track World Championships in 1978. Today, the friendly Australian is still a familiar face on the short track scene. He was one of the most prominent cheerleaders for the WWMG 2020 in the lead-up to the event. “James called me and told me that I should take part in the WWMG 2020,” explains former Olympian Mike McMillen. Born in Belgium, starting for New Zealand he stopped training on a regular basis two years ago. “It’s mainly about having fun, meeting athletes from the whole world and seeing the short track family again,” he says. That is an attitude shared by Bartosz Konopko from Poland. “It has been two years since my last race. For me the WWMG 2020 are a great opportunity to get a bit fitter and meet my idols,” comments Konopko, who discovered his passion for short track skating aged 13.

The other competitions are also set to offer plenty of action and excitement. On Sunday, 12.01.2020, Veronika Windisch from Austria will compete in front of her home crowd. The former short track star from the city of Graz in south-eastern Austria competed in Olympic Games and world championships during her professional career.

All Short Track competitions will take place from 10 until 12 January at Olympiaworld Innsbruck. They will be held in cooperation with the Austrian Speed Skating Association. Spectators are welcome to watch all the WWMG 2020 competitions free of charge. More information about the sports schedule can be found on the event website: <https://www.innsbruck2020.com/en/programme>.

Looking ahead to the opening ceremony

As well as the sporting competitions taking place at the WWMG 2020 venues throughout Tyrol, the Games will also play host to the *Masters Village* in the heart of Innsbruck. This is the central meeting point for athletes, fans and locals. The first highlight will be the official opening ceremony, which will take place on Saturday, 11.01.2020, at 18:00. It will begin with an athletes' parade past the famous Golden Roof and into Maria-Theresien-Straße, Innsbruck's main shopping street and the location of the Masters Village throughout the WWMG 2020. The WWMG 2020 Mascots will then be presented on stage before the Winter World Masters Games 2020 are officially declared open. The event will conclude with the first of many live concerts featuring the Austrian band Matakustix. Members of the public are welcome to join athletes and fans at the opening ceremony. Admission is free of charge. More information about what's going on at the Masters Village during the WWMG 2020 can be found here: <https://www.innsbruck2020.com/en/programme>.

4.096 Zeichen

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