

SÖLDEN: GREEN LIGHT FOR THE WORLD CUP OPENING

The International Ski Federation (FIS) has given the green light for the race course on Rettenbach Glacier following the official snow inspection. From 23 to 25 October 2026, the Audi FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Opening in Sölden will once again take center stage in international skiing. While the world's elite, including top stars like Mikaela Shiffrin, Marco Odermatt, Lucas Pinheiro Braathen and last year's Austrian winner Julia Scheib, are already making their final practice runs on the glacier ahead of the season opening event, preparations among fans are also well underway: if you want to watch the first races of the World Championship season live on-site get your ticket at soelden.com.

Since the beginning of October, the slopes on Rettenbach Glacier have been open for public skiing and ski team training sessions. The excellent conditions on the race course are the result of meticulously planned preparation: the proven snow farming method, combined with high performance snow-making systems operated by Bergbahnen Sölden, guarantees a compact and race-ready base. "We were able to ensure the races only thanks to 60,000 m³ of snow stockpiled in the spring specifically for the World Cup course. I would like to thank the excellent team of Bergbahnen Sölden, who have perfected the art of snow farming," says Isi Grüner, Race Course Director. A recent spell of colder weather made it possible to activate the snowmaking systems, ensuring an ideal snow surface. "Aside from snow-making, our experienced team can now complete all the work on the race course without needing night shifts. Again this year, the course is highly demanding, particularly on the steepest section. With three wave-like bumps leading into the finish area, the excitement remains high right to the end," explains Grüner, looking forward to the World Cup Opening. In addition to Austrian stars such as last year's winner Julia Scheib and her teammate Stefan Brennsteiner, top international athletes like Mikaela Shiffrin (USA), Marco Odermatt (SUI) and Lucas Pinheiro Braathen (BRA) are taking advantage of the prime conditions for intensive training units on Rettenbach Glacier. With gradients of up to 68 percent and an altitude difference of about 370 meters, the challenging giant slalom course requires the athletes' utmost technical precision right from the start.

Women's opening event

After the public bib draw on Friday evening, the sporting action gets underway on Saturday with the women's giant slalom races. The first run starts at 10:00, followed by the final run at 13:00. In addition to the racing action, fans will be treated to a varied side and entertainment program: the Zwiirn band will create a party atmosphere in the finish area at the glacier. In the late afternoon, starting at 17:30, the traditional Fan Club Parade - accompanied by lively Swiss Guggamusig - will wind its way from Postplatz on the valley



floor to Giggijoch Gondola base station where the official women's awards ceremony and the men's bib draw will take place starting at 18:30. Followed by Beatstarz and DJ In-Style providing the perfect music for the evening.

Exciting Men's competition

On Sunday, the men take over the slope at Rettenbach Glacier. The first run starts at 10:00 and the final race for the first World Cup points of the season begins at 13:00. The Mountain Crew will provide musical entertainment in the finish area on Sunday. Immediately after the race, the official men's awards ceremony will be held against the scenic backdrop of Rettenbach Glacier.

Premiere: Sölden Ski World Cup goes 100 % cashless

In cooperation with Mastercard, the 2026 Sölden Alpine Ski World Cup will be 100% cashless for the very first time. Cashless payment is the only option throughout the entire event area - both on the glacier and at Giggijoch Gondola base station, including all food, bar and merchandise stands. All major debit and credit cards are accepted, as well as all NFC-enabled payment methods (e.g., Apple Pay, smartwatches). Cash payments or cash exchanges on-site are not possible. The usual payment options in Sölden's restaurants remain unaffected.

Tickets for the World Cup Weekend are available online in advance at soelden.com and at the ticket offices on-site. All tickets include free use of the shuttle buses running from Ötztal-Bahnhof at the valley entrance to the Glacier Stadium and back again.

Preview

The World Cup Opening also kicks off the glacier skiing season in Sölden. In mid-November, the entire Sölden ski area will begin regular winter operations. With an official 147 kilometers of slopes, 31 state-of-the-art mountain lifts and three summits over 3,000 meters easily accessible by gondola lift, the destination at the heart of Ötztal offers reliable skiing fun at altitudes of up to 3,340 meters until the beginning of May.

