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LEISURE

Athletic prowess and opulence on the Hahnenkamm

Hahnenkammrennen

The Hahnenkammrennen celebrates impeccable athletic performance and attracts prominent spectators from Austria and internationally. Kitzbühel provides the location for the finest and most important annual winter athletic event. The Kitzbüheler Ski Club has been instrumental in organising and promoting the event for 75 years. Economic success through television rights, marketing and cultivating long term partnerships with premium corporations contribute to the spectacle. The greatest exponents of the sport have enjoyed success on the Hahnenkamm. Victory in the Hahnenkammrennen confirms an athlete's pedigree.

Hahnenkamm Mountain is located in the luxurious resort of Kitzbühel. Kitzbühel is situated in the Kitzbühel Alps in north eastern Tyrol. The Kitzbüheler Ache flows through the town. The Tyrolean capital of Innsbruck is located 95 kilometres west of the town. Salzburg is located 80 kilometres north east of Kitzbühel. Chitzbuhel first appeared on a Chiemseer certificate in 1165. Mining was a significant factor for the Kitzbühel economy for more than 3000 years. Silver was discovered during the sixteenth century. Exquisite medieval architecture and grand buildings dominate the Vorderstadt. Wealth from silver mining provided the finance to construct the wonderful buildings. Luxury hotels, exclusive boutiques, renowned restaurants, stylish bars and bespoke craftsmen and women are found within magnificent buildings throughout the town.

Every January prominent Austrian and international spectators visit Kitzbühel to attend the Hahnenkammrennen. It is the great athletic and social event of the Kitzbühel winter calendar. Celebrations occur throughout the week prior to the Hahnenkammrennen in the town's many luxury hotels. The Weißwurstparty is the most exclusive social event of the week. It is held at the Stanglwirt, a five star luxury hotel in the neighbouring village of Going am Wilden Kaiser. The Lipizzaner riding hall provides an extravagant stage for 2,000 guests on the Friday evening of the race weekend. Prince Albert of Monaco, Karl Schranz, Franz Klammer, Gerhard Berger, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Gery Keszler attended the celebration in previous years.

The Kitzbüheler Ski Club is responsible for transforming a distinguished athletic competition into a glamorous festival. The club was established on 20 July 1931 at the Wintersportverein general meeting. The Wintersportverein and the Kitzbüheler Sporting Club agreed to create the Kitzbüheler Ski Club. The Wintersportverein was established in 1902 as the

Wintersportvereinigung. The Wintersportverein was responsible for establishing the first Hahnenkammrennen in March 1931. Ferdinand Friedensbacher won the first Hahnenkamm downhill. The Hahnenkammrennen became the most prestigious event on the alpine skiing calendar in a very short period of time. The demanding and undulating Streif and Ganslern courses became the most coveted races.

Kitzbühel is peerless in the world of alpine skiing. The Kitzbüheler Ski Club has a considerable degree of autonomy to organise and promote the Hahnenkammrennen. The club owns the marketing and television rights. It is a unique situation. The International Ski Federation (FIS) owns the marketing and television rights to all other world cup events. Kitzbühel possesses prestige, heritage, mystique and glamour. No other resort possesses the same allure. The alpine skiing world cup without Kitzbühel is unimaginable. The Kitzbüheler Ski Club allocated approximately €6.5 million to organise the 2015 event. A large proportion of the budget is devoted to television rights. Television rights constitute approximately 35 percent of the club's annual income. The club sold the television rights to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). The Hahnenkammrennen is forecast to generate €40 million for the local economy in 2015. 85,000 spectators are expected to attend the event.

Marketing and sponsorship provides the second largest source of income. WWP secured the marketing rights to the Hahnenkammrennen. WWP is an Austrian sport marketing corporation. Harti Weirather, a former Hahnenkammrennen victor and world champion leads the organisation. Weirather concentrates on long term partnerships with premium corporations. WWP offers sponsorship packages and manages the VIP club at the finish line. WWP contributes approximately 35 to 40 percent of the Kitzbüheler Ski Club revenue. The most expensive VIP ticket at the 2015 event is €3,500. All 1000 VIP tickets were sold. Do and Co, a Viennese catering corporation manages the catering and provides an elaborate tent for guests.

Three courses are used for the Hahnenkammrennen. The Streif is the most demanding and challenging downhill course on the world cup calendar. The length of the course is more than 3,100 metres. Steep terrain is a characteristic of the beginning. The Startschuss and Mausefalle are the most difficult parts of the beginning. The Steilhang tends to decide victory. It is a very technically demanding section requiring athletic precision and courage. The Hausbergkante is the prelude to a tortuous finale. It is a jump requiring impeccable timing followed by a left hand bend over a large roll of terrain known as the Querfahrt. The compression allows competitors to exceed 150 kilometres per hour before the finish line. Austrian victory is important on the Streif. It is the greatest athletic accomplishment for an Austrian athlete. Anton Sailer, Andreas Molterer, Ernst Hinterseer, Egon Zimmermann, Karl Schranz, Franz Klammer, Peter Wirnsberger, Fritz Strobl, Hermman Maier, Stephan Eberharter, Michael Walchhofer and Hannes Reichelt are some of the Austrian athletes to taste victory on the Streif.

The Streifalm was introduced in 1995 for the first super giant slalom race in Kitzbühel. The course is almost 1,400 metres in length. It is recognised as the most demanding and fastest super giant slalom course in the world. The course commences with a gradient of 50 percent.

After the first sharp 'S' curve competitors encounter the Seidlalmsprung travelling at high speed. The Hausbergkante and the traverse are the most demanding parts of the middle section of the course. The Rasmusleitn and Zielschuss require accuracy to maintain speed at the end of the course. Hermann Maier dominated the course in the late 1990s and early 2000s. He achieved five victories. Günther Mader, Stephan Eberharter, Klaus Kröll are other distinguished Austrian skiers to enjoy victory on the Streifalm.

Slalom exponents enjoy the challenge of the Ganslern. The course is 590 metres in length with a vertical descent of 193 metres. The average gradient throughout the course is 35 percent. The course is uncompromising and requires precision to complete with minimal errors. Competitors contest the course twice to determine the victor. The two courses are different. Each course is created by a different coach selected by the committee. Rudolf Matt, Andreas Molterer, Anton Sailer, Josl Rieder, Rudolf Nierlich, Mario Matt, Benjamin Raich and Marcel Hirscher are some of the impeccable Austrian competitors to secure victory on the Ganslern.

The most distinguished honour was victory in the combined event. The combined event added times from the downhill and slalom races to determine overall performances from the weekend. The combined event lost its lustre during the last three decades. Since the late 1980s fewer competitors participated in all disciplines. The demands of professional alpine skiing and athletes concentrating on a few disciplines or a discipline contributed to the decline in significance of the classical combined event in Kitzbühel. The classical combined event was replaced by an event adding times from the super giant slalom event and a single slalom race. The initiative is an attempt to reinvigorate interest in the combined event. However, it undermines the challenge of mastering the downhill and slalom.

Women competed at the Hahnenkammrennen until the early 1960s. Women contested a shorter version of the Streif and the Ganslern. The combined event added times from the downhill and slalom events. The Kitzbüheler Ski Club believed the Hahnenkammrennen became too treacherous in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Women did not compete on the Hahnenkamm after 1961. Austrian skiers dominated the event. Sophie Nogler, Resi Hammerer, Putzi Frandl, Erika Mahringer and Traudl Hecher claimed several victories on the mountain.

It is an ideal locale for developing business relationships and networking. Gösser, a Styrian brewery is the longest sponsor of the event. The relationship between the Hahnenkammrennen and Gösser is eighteen years old. Gösser is attracted to the large Austrian television audience of 1.2 million viewers and 330 hectolitres of beer consumed during the weekend. A1, the Austrian telecommunications corporation began sponsorship in 2004. Susanne Speil, the A1 sponsorship director believes sweeping images of the Streif and Ganslernhang combined with the precise skiing technique required to succeed provides the perfect metaphor to express the A1 brand. Red Bull GmbH is a younger sponsor. Its sponsorship of the Hahnenkammrennen deviates from typical corporate strategy. Red Bull GmbH prefers to stage events or possess a strong presence in a sport, such as a successful

formula one team and FC Salzburg in football. The Hahnenkammrennen combines prestige, athletic prowess, treacherous terrain and courage. Those qualities appeal to Red Bull GmbH.

Athletic excellence and opulence are vital qualities of the Hahnenkammrennen. The event is the most distinguished and desirable winter athletic event in the world. Competitors consider victory on the Hahnenkamm the most important in a career. Prominent members of society attend the weekend to radiate in the ambience and attention. The Kitzbüheler Ski Club preserved prestige and tradition while pursuing a successful marketing strategy to attract long term premium corporate partnerships. Long term corporate partnerships will ensure the Hahnenkammrennen remains the most distinguished winter athletic event.