

FIS SPEED SKIING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS STARTS THIS WEEKEND

THE FIS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS OF SPEED SKIING, THE FASTEST NON-MOTORISED SPORT ON THE PLANET, START ON SATURDAY IN ANDORRA WITH A STRONG BRITISH REPRESENTATION AND JAN FARRELL SWITCHES CATEGORY TO S1 FOR THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Jan Farrell is the current Speed Ski World Cup SDH winner, the British Downhill record holder, and the third fastest man on DH skis in history. He's switching to the S1 class for the World Championships.
- The World Championships are from the 28th of February to the 1st of March, followed by two World Cups on the 2nd and 3rd of March.
- Three British racers, Marc Poncin, Benja Hedley and Jan Farrell are participating, together with a total of over 130 athletes from 20 countries.
- 2.40m skis and custom built poles, helmets, latex suits & gloves and skiers at over 200km/h
- World Championships preview video from the British Speed Ski Team - <http://youtu.be/nzzUaR6MNHE>

Grandvalira is the venue of the first Speed Ski races of the season; the World Championships and two World Cups, after the first races in Vars were cancelled due to insufficient snow. This is the first time the country organises a FIS World Championship, after several successful World Cups in various disciplines.

On Saturday the 28th, the World Championships start on the Riberal slope, with the star of the show being a large launching tower with an 18m long ramp coming down from it. Speeds in excess of 190km/h and accelerations of 0-60mph in under 4 seconds are expected.

Nadal Antor, chief of race of Grandvalira said: "These races are both dangerous and spectacular. A huge amount of work is required to prepare the piste and guarantee safety; we've been working for months, and minute attention to detail every day is key to a good race. We are also very pleased with the inauguration of the ramp; the racers' response and feedback was very positive. We hope it'll help to establish a Pyrenees record of over 200km/h." Jan Farrell, whose training base is in Andorra, was chosen to be the first man down, back in January this year.

Coach of the British Speed Ski team, Millar Reid, said after the team's training camp in January: "Andorra has proved a resounding success. Jan Farrell, Speed Downhill 2014 overall World Cup winner was trialling and testing his new equipment for his move to the premier class of Speed One this season. Jan's approach focused motivation has been very encouraging, which will mean results will follow. Marc Poncin, 2008 SDH World Cup winner returns to Speed One this season. The veteran used the camp to get accustomed to the S1 equipment again. Our prospects for the World Championships are exciting. Special thanks to Grandvalira and Nadal for making all this happen."

Marc Poncin began Speed Skiing in the late 80's and has gone on to become Britain's most decorated Skier at World Cup level. Marc competed in the 1992 winter Olympics when Speed Skiing was a demonstration sport. He achieved a great amount in the sport including being Britain's fastest skier, clocking 245.23km/h. In 2008 he was Speed Downhill World Champion.

Jan Farrell, from Lancaster, is the current Speed Ski World Cup overall winner in SDH category, and the top qualified British ski racer of any discipline 3 years in a row. He's switching to the S1 category sooner than expected, in time for the World Championships: "It's been a tough decision, but in the last few weeks my training times have been more than satisfactory. I feel strong and motivated, with my homework done after 250 days in the gym and 70 on snow since April. The probability of a medal is lower, but it's worth the risk; S1 is the top category and a good result would be more important than in SDH."

The main difference between the top category S1 and SDH, is the equipment. SDH is limited to standard Downhill equipment, with strong limitations. S1 skis are 2.40m long and Jan says "they have to be very well taken care of: waxed, scraped and brushed meticulously after every training session. This daily work is what makes them faster, bit by bit. This year I've been working on 10 pairs of new Atomic skis, with 3 different base structures, and I've been able to make a lot of experiments in the months of testing we've done. I hope they'll make that little difference during my races this season."

The Leki poles used by team GB are custom bent by the factory to help the athlete adopt the ideal aerodynamic position, and maintain it during the run by providing a reference. The helmets and latex suits are hand made for each racer, every millimetre counts; the smallest imperfection can make the difference between first and fourth.

The third member of the team is Benja Hedley who started Speed Skiing in 2009 is also one of the most successful British ski racers with 8 top-10 finishes in World Cup, is returning after a year without racing, said “It’s great to be back in the rubber suit and racing with the best guys in the world. The British team are looking strong for the World Championships this year, and Andorra are going to put on a fantastic show”. Benja started Speed Skiing in 2009 with just a week of ski lessons in his life and has achieved some impressive results to date including 8th in the SDH World Cup 2 years in a row.

Over 130 athletes from 20 countries have travelled to Andorra for these races that will gather some of the fastest men and women in the world, many of which have surpassed 200km/h on skis. The stars of the show are Simone Origone, World Record holder with a top speed of 252.454km/h and Klaus Schrottschammer, current S1 World Cup winner and Grandvalira track record holder with 185.19 km/h. In the ladies category we’ll see the current World Cup winner Swede Linda Baginski battle with Italian Valentina Greggio who started strong last year in S1.

The preparation and pre-season is key to success in the 20 seconds of a Speed Ski run: “80% of a victory is decided before the start – said Jan Farrell – Training on snow is key to technical improvement, but physical preparation in the gym sets a necessary base. A controlled diet, psychological control, and a complete anthropological study of the body let’s us shave off those thousandths of a second in a race.

To follow the action on Twitter with [@britishspeedski](#), [@janfarrell](#) and [@TeamBSS](#) or on the FIS website – www.fis-ski.com

About Jan Farrell

Jan Farrell was born in 1983, the son of a Czech mother and an English father. Jan first put on a pair of skis when he was 2 years old, and he has never missed a season since the age of five. His first speed ski race was in 2011, and soon began to have success: he is the top ranked British ski racer; 9th in the world in 2012, and 5th in 2013, before winning the top spot in 2014, becoming FIS Speed Ski World Cup SDH Champion. He reached a speed of 210.035 kph, thus becoming the third fastest skier in history on downhill skis. Jan combines his career as a top sportsman with that of an entrepreneur. When he is not skiing and creating content, you will find him in his office at Liberalia, the company he founded at the age of 18. He is actively involved in over half a dozen firms, plays an active role in various federations, including FIS and the Madrid Ski Federation and acts as a Mentor for budding entrepreneurs who are studying their MBA at IE Business School. His passion to create, develop, compete and his will to win is just as strong in his business environment.

Jan is sponsored by:

GoPro, X-Bionic, Atomic, Leki, Liberalia, Manifiesto, GlobalPhysio, SkiClinic and CoppelDental.

MORE INFORMATION:

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