

## A successful 10th anniversary for the Verbier High Five by Carlsberg

The 10th edition of the Verbier High Five by Carlsberg was another great celebration after a fantastic ski season. This year's event saw amateur participants and top professionals fighting in a really spectacular way for overall victory.

A total of 335 amateurs and 20 professional competitors attended this High Five which took place in bright, late season sunshine on the five courses set nearby the now popular Carlsberg chalet which situated in the middle of the Verbier ski pistes.

Switzerland's Didier Défago, the winner of January's Wengen and Kitzbuehel downhill races, managed once again to clinch this coveted event thanks to his strong form and his victory in the skier-cross leg, by beating Swiss team-mate and reigning Super-G World Champion Didier Cuche, who, on his side, excelled in the GS run. Sweden's Mattias Hargin, one of the most promising young slalom racers on the World Cup tour came in third - an excellent result for his first participation in this now well established end of season event.

The Verbier High Five by Carlsberg is composed of a series of competitions: giant slalom, Speed, skier cross, triathlon and the parallel slalom. Interestingly enough, Switzerland's retired former downhill star William Besse was the fastest in the speed event in which he managed to beat the current specialists, such as World Championships silver medallist Didier Cuche. This same feat was achieved on the women's side by Frances' Marie Marchand-Arvier, the super giant silver medallist in Val d'Isere 2009.

For the women, Slovenia's Tina Maze, World Champs silver medallist in the giant slalom confirmed her strong season which includes podium finishes in three disciplines, with a win over reigning Olympic giant slalom Champion, Julia Mancuso from USA, whilst GB's Chemmy Alcott, national downhill champion on the previous day, came in third thanks to her success in the skier cross.

In the final parallel team event where the best amateurs each partner a professional to contest a double run, Franzi Aufenblatten together with Aimee Oreiller, also enjoyed a great day with her victory over Germany's slalom World Champion Maria Riesch, who was associated with Amanda Pirie. On the men's side, Dider Défago was again unbeatable, winning the parallel final, partnered by Bastien Darballay as they overcame Switzerland's young, promising star, Sandro Viletta who was partnered by Colin Morrison.



In the snowboarders' parallel team event, Switzerland's Alex Coudray, racing with Christoph Vouilloz overcame Mike Aeschbach and Philippe Piccolet to win their finals.

One of the busiest athletes on the day was double world champion Lindsey Vonn, who took advantage of the event enjoyed a special success as she beat by only a few 10ths of a second, her ex-US Olympic team mate and now husband, Thomas, in the giant slalom. - even if Thomas did not like it quite so much. "It was a great way for me to end this very successful season prior to taking a well-earned holiday." said the 24 yr old American. "I am looking forward to coming back again next year".

Over these 10 years the High Five event has seen some of the very greatest skiers ever. Names such as Hermann Maier, Luc Alphand, Antoine Déneriez, Aksel Lund Svindal, Pirmin Zurbriggen, Tanja Putiainen and Michaela Dorfmeister. "However, this year's line-up was really special. We had 5 Olympic or World Championships gold medallists, 6 silvers and 1 bronze as well as 63 world cup victors and 192 world cup podiums. I would like to thank all our friends in Verbier, our other partners Téléverbier, Helvetia, Craft Alpina and, of course, the professional athletes and amateurs who have supported us so well in this annual celebration of the end of the ski racing season", said Keld Strudahl, International Marketing Director and head of Carlsberg's sponsorship activities.

This Carlsberg-owned event is completely independent of the official FIS circuit and combines professional ski racing with entertainment "Ski-tainment". Its primary objective is to activate the Carlsberg brand through skiing in a manner which enables the Carlsberg markets to build personal relationships with the trade and their consumers and capitalise on these to generate increased sales and market share. Media exposure is a secondary, albeit important objective.

Carlsberg UK has used The High Five since 1999. "From a UK perspective, the Verbier High Five allows us to show the flexibility and scale of the Carlsberg brand. Skiing and in particular this event, delivers a perfect platform to highlight the premium profile of the brand and the quality of its association. In the fantastic surroundings of one of the best ski resorts in Europe, Carlsberg has the ability to pull together people from all areas of the world and all walks of life, creating a relaxed social party for all to enjoy", said Gareth Roberts, Director of sponsorship, Carlsberg UK.

In reference to this Keld Strudahl said, "I think we proved over the years that by creating our own event, which is focused on building relationships with our customers and engaging them was right. We have created a platform which is unique for the Carlsberg brand, and which can create an even stronger relationship with our consumers in the future."

The Carlsberg Group is one of the leading brewery groups in the world, with a large portfolio of beer and soft drinks brands. Its flagship brand – Carlsberg – is one of the fastest growing and best-known beer brands in the world. More than 45,000 people work for the Carlsberg Group, and its products are sold in more than 150 markets. In 2008 the Carlsberg Group sold more than 120 million hectolitres of beer, which is about 100 million bottles of beer a day.

Find out more at [www.carlsberggroup.com](http://www.carlsberggroup.com).