Preview 2nd EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup in Park City (USA): Return to the 2002 Olympic track with singles competition over two days of racing

Park City (FIL/09 Dec 2025) After a spectacular World Cup kick-off last weekend in Winterberg, the world's best lugers are traveling to North America. Olympic qualification races two and three will be held on the Olympic tracks in Park City and Lake Placid. Built for the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the action will first get underway on the Utah Olympic Park Track. A total of 122 sleds from 24 nations have registered for the World Cup races on December 12 and 13, with 39 women and 45 men competing in the singles and 16 women and 22 men in the doubles. In addition, the second of six team relays is scheduled for Saturday as part of the EBERSPÄCHER Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW.

Unlike usual, the individual races for women and men in Park City will be held on two competition days instead of one. "We decided to separate the races to make the decision on Saturday evening more dramatic. You qualify for the second run and then have a night in between, which is a good test for all athletes for the Olympic Games, where there are also two runs on one day and two runs on the next. We deliberately scheduled the decisions for the evening to make them more spectator-friendly, with the winners in the individual and team relay events being crowned within just under three hours. At the same time, on Friday evening we are focusing entirely on the doubles, which are otherwise always somewhat overshadowed by the individual decision," explains FIL Sports Director Matthias Böhmer.

The World Cup circuit last visited Park City in December 2022. At that time, Dajana Eitberger won the women's singles race ahead of Emily Fischnaller (USA) and Julia Taubitz (GER) in her final single season. In the men's event, Italy's Dominik Fischnaller won ahead of Felix Loch (GER) and David Gleirscher (AUT). While the Italian duo Vötter/Oberhofer triumphed in the women's doubles ahead of Degenhardt/Rosenthal (GER) and Nash/Corless (CAN), the men's doubles podium was dominated by German-speaking athletes: Eggert/Benecken (GER) won ahead of Gatt/Schöpf (AUT) and Wendl/Arlt (GER).

German-speaking festival to kick off the season

Spectators enjoyed a German-Austrian festival at the start of the season in Winterberg. With four victories and a total of nine podium places, Germany narrowly came out on top. Jessica Degenhardt and Cheyenne Rosenthal stood at the top of the podium three times. They won the women's doubles, with Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt in the mixed doubles, and in the final team relay. “I am incredibly happy for the whole team. They showed great spirit again in the team relay, all delivered a first-class performance, and ensured a wonderful end to a successful weekend in Winterberg,” said German national coach Patric Leitner enthusiastically. “We are looking forward to Park City and hope that the track is in good condition. There are also track workers from Königssee on site who are real experts in ice construction.

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We have two tough races left before Christmas, and then the majority of our Olympic team should be in place. At the moment, our athletes are living life on the edge, both physically and mentally."

Road to Milano-Cortina:
The long way to Cortina – Olympic qualification
The sport of luge will be on the Olympic program for the 17th consecutive time at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan-Cortina. A total of 106 lugers will compete in five disciplines: men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles, and team relay. Before they can race down the new ice track at the Cortina Sliding Center, however, they must master the demanding qualification process. The 106 starting places will be allocated to the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in accordance with the maximum quotas. In the women's and men's singles, each NOC can enter up to three athletes, and in the doubles up to two pairs. One team per nation will take part in the team competition, consisting of already qualified singles and doubles starters. After the first official qualifying race at the test event in Cortina, the EBERSPÄCHER World Cups in Park City and Lake Placid (both USA), Sigulda (Latvia) and Winterberg (Germany) will serve as qualifying competitions. Detailed information and link to the qualification criteria: How do you qualify in Luge for the Milano-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics

Ticket sales for Milano Cortina 2026 are underway
Good news for all luge fans who want to watch the Milano Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics competitions live: tickets for the luge competitions are still available on the official ticket platform (as of December 7, 2025). For those still searching for a special Christmas gift, how about unforgettable sporting moments at the newly built Pista Olimpica Eugenio Monti in Cortina d'Ampezzo? Click here for ticket sales: Milano Cortina 2026 Official Ticketing - Luge

FIL Portraits of the Week:
Chevonne Forgan & Sophia Kirkby (USA): America's hope in women's doubles
Women's doubles will make its debut at the 2026 Olympic Games in Milan-Cortina – and the US duo wants to be among the frontrunners. After World Cup victories, consistent podium finishes, and a strong 2024/25 season, Forgan/Kirkby are eagerly looking forward to the Olympic track in Cortina. For both of them, it's not just a sporting goal, but also an emotional milestone: they want to pave the way for the next generation of young female lugers. With team spirit, confidence, and hard preparation, they want to continue their success and make a strong statement at the Olympic Games. Chevonne Forgan & Sophia Kirkby – America's hope in women's doubles

Ashley Farquharson: Mental strength for Milan-Cortina 2026
US luger Ashley Farquharson is focusing more on sports psychology in her preparations for the 2026 Winter Olympics – and gaining a new competitive edge in the process. She has expanded her mental routine with visualization, breathing

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techniques, and process-oriented goals to gain consistency and self-confidence. At the same time, she is working with her coaching team on technical precision and a return to more consistent results after a challenging season. During the intensive training block in Europe, Farquharson has already gained important experience on the new Olympic track in Cortina and is looking forward to her second Games with a much greater sense of maturity. Her goal: to stay calm over four runs over two days and reach her full potential – because “when everything comes together, anything is possible.” Ashley Farquharson: Using Sports Psychology To Boost Competitiveness F

Quotes:

Hannah Prock (AUT): „My equipment was already well tuned during training in Winterberg, so we hardly changed anything for the race. I was very nervous at the start, but then I was able to relax very well on the track. I'm really happy and, of course, completely satisfied.“

Julia Taubitz (GER): „Winterberg didn't go as planned. The first run was okay, I only had minor problems in the upper section. The runner wasn't working properly, so we made some adjustments for the second run, but I couldn't get to grips with it. I'm really looking forward to Park City and Lake Placid. I love being in America, but also in Asia. I like the track in Park City very much and the whole surrounding is especially nice for us because we're staying in vacation homes there. Natalie Maag, Jessica Degenhardt, Cheyenne Rosenthal, and I got our dream house again. We're a cool group, and it's a week of sharing a flat, which is a lot of fun. We cook together, and it's a nice change from the hotel life we lead in winter. I really like both tracks. In Park City, it's the mix of feeling and yet steering and speed. That's why it's good that we were in Winterberg beforehand. If we had only raced in Cortina and Innsbruck, we would have had a speed shock there at first.“

Emily Fischnaller (USA): „I would say clearly, the Cortina race did not go well for me. I learned very obviously what does and what is not going to work for me this season, with some equipment choices. Now there is just a little bit of extra fire ready for the two home races. Two American World Cups coming up, so I have a fire in me and I am ready to get back to it.
I think that if your are in sport long enough, like a lot of us have to deal with some really big injuries and the mental and physical challenges that that brings can be really overwhelming at moments, so to be where I am now – I am really proud of that. Because there were a lot of moments where the fear of not knowing if I was going to be able to do it felt all-consuming, so to be able to push through those and be here in this spot at the opportunity to qualify for my third Olympic Games is pretty empowering.“

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Ashley Farquharson (USA): „I have done fourth place so many times, that I don`t really know what to chance to finally get on the podium (laughs). I am really excited about the speed that I am showing, but I am not trying to count any chickens before the hatch. I know that everyone around me are going to be working twice or three times as hard to make sure and try to get their spot on the podium as well. So, while I think it`s cool and it`s exciting, the work`s not done, and hopefully this momentum can kind of carry me through the next few home races. But I know that nothing is guaranteed, and we are going to keep working hard on the fundamentals of sliding, the fine-tuning and the equipment.
Even though there is still so much to be done around the Olympic track, when we raced, there was a moment on the handles where I was like, wow, this could be me again. I do enjoy the track. I think it´s really fun. It`s not super high pressure or anything super tricky, but there are some really fun elements, and it was a cool process to learn this one, and open up a unique opportunity for collaboration among the team. I am trying to stay in the now and put my head down, do the work.“

Max Langenhan (GER): „It's great that we're racing in America again this year. For me, it will be fairly normal in Lake Placid because I've raced there many times before. In Park City, on the other hand, I'm a rookie. There are only a few others besides me. I've always missed out on racing there due to injuries. That's why I'm really looking forward to finally being able to race there. Everyone else is already making fun of me because I'll be allowed to do systematic runs from the women's start and slowly work my way up, but I hope I'll still enjoy it. I've already heard that there's a crazy crucial section at the top of the men's start. So I'm really excited. Other than that, I'm not taking anything special with me to get into the Chrismas spirit, except maybe tea. I hope I'll have most of my presents by then and only have to buy a few small things in December.“

Felix Loch (GER): „I am completely satisfied with my World Cup kick-off in Winterberg. There were a few minor issues, but I knew the sled was right and that I just had to slide down reasonably straight. I hope things continue like this in America. It will certainly get a little more difficult, but we will continue to push hard.Park City is always exciting, especially for us men. The first three turns are always a highlight, or rather a challenge. Fortunately, the weather is cooperating; we don't have minus ten degrees, which would make the whole thing a little more difficult. That's why I'm confident that it will be a great week for us. I'm delighted that we're finally back there, because I really enjoy the track in Park City.“

Valentin Cretu (ROM): „I think Park City is a very challenging track, it is high-speed and very technical in the upper part. For those who manage to go right after the C-Corner it will be a very good race. In tracks like these and also in Lake Placid not everyone is having enough training, so the competition itself could be full of surprises. It depends, of course, of all the other athletes and how they set up their material, but since we haven`t been there for quite some time, it will be a challenging week for everyone.“

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Jonathan Gustafson (USA): „Leading the US team in Cortina boosted a little bit. It´s more the success of the team, rather than myself. We saw some really good speed and good results from our doubles athletes, both women and men, and from our women`s singles. So it`s really good to see that speed and that good placing going into the season right away on that first qualifying race.“

Tucker West (USA): „Did I change anything to the preparation of other Olympics before? You can say all. I definitely try to lean on some strenghts. We had a good off-season with summer training. The name of the game this year ist going to be ‚Staying Healthy‘. I had some issues earlier this year with an injured neck, and that`s kind of carried on into the racing season. Getting healthy and staying healthy is my game now and that`s what`s going to be different.
I had the neck injury when we were in Sigulda. I got an MRI and it ended up being a bulding disc or herniated disc, whatever you want to call it, in the C5, C6 area. Which normally is fine, it`ll go back in and be fine on it´s own. But it pushed hard enough on the nerve that caused a little bit of nerve damage in my right side. I lost all the strength in my right arm. The start has always been my strong suit, so to lose that has been a little bit difficult. I wouldn`t say I am on the good side of it yet, but the pain is gone, which is great. I just need to get the strenght back, it has been a slower process that I would have liked.

Andriy Mandziy (UKR): „Park City is always a big challenge for us, because corner two-three are very difficult for us. I hope I will manage fine, because last time I raced there was eight years ago.“

Beattie Podulski (CAN): „Winterberg for us has been really good. We do have a love-hate-relationship with the track. We are happy with the solid runs we put there last weekend and since we crashed there last year, this was our redamtion.”

Kailey Allan (CAN): „We are looking forward to Park City and Lake Placid. My family is coming to the Park City race, which is fun. They don`t get to watch us normally, so I am very excited to go. However, I have never been there, new track, new challenge.”

Chevonne Forgan (USA): „We've had a great time so far. We managed to break our own start record at the US Start Championships, both in the regular start and the reaction start. We are really looking forward to feeling the Olympic spirit this season. It has been a different feel to the season, being an Olympic qualifying year, but that feels very exciting and it`s very motivating. I think there is always pressure, and that`s kind of your job as an athlete to be able to handle that. So far it has been going really well and it´s really motivating us to be the best we can be.“

Sophia Kirkby (USA): „Personally I am not feeling as much pressure as I think I should be. For the most part, going into this Olympic year, my main goal has to be

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to have fun and do my best. We have a home World Cup coming up in Lake Placid, New York, and it will be the third Olympic qualifying race of the season. We always really appreciate the support of our friends, families, and local fans.“

Juri Gatt (AUT): „We had a great race weekend in Winterberg with top results and superb performances. Unfortunately, there were a few minor issues in the team relay, but overall we can be absolutely satisfied with this start to the season.“

Marcus Mueller (USA): „We gonna try to keep the momentum going. We are really looking for two consistent runs in this Olympic qualifier. We know we have some speed, so we are super excited for these home tracks coming up. We also try to keep the feeling that we are always the ones hunting, not being hunted as much as possible. It always feels good to be the one chasing someone else. We try not to think about it and pretend we are still the ones targeting other sledges.
I think Park City was one of the first full World Cup height starts we ever went from together on the doubles sled. It`s the first track where we had that experience, that speed and ever since we have been lucky enough to always be able to spend a week or two there. There is a lot of comfortability there.“

Ansel Haugsjaa (USA): „Our performance in Cortina was a big cofidence booster, seeing the second place on that track. I think we are really looking to keep that momentum and keep that feeling going. It`s very exciting to be on these two home tracks. In Lake Placid we don`t have as much training on as maybe we would like, but Park city is definitely a really comfortable home track for us. Last year we were lucky enough to race Junior Nationals in Park City and we had a lot of training over the last few years here.

Christian Eigentler (Head Coach, Austria): „A start like this naturally gives us a boost and confirms our efforts. It looks like we worked well during the summer and in our preparations on the ice. Of course, the competition will be tougher with the return of the Italian A team, which trained in Cortina this week, and the US team, which also skipped Winterberg to prepare for the World Cups at home, but we are well prepared. We are very happy with the results and are looking forward to the upcoming tasks overseas.“

Schedule & TV coverage
2nd EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup, Park City (USA):
Local start time (=CET)

Friday, 12 December 2025
10:00 (18:00) Nations Cup
15:10 (23:10) Men’s Singles, 1st run
16:35 (00:25) Women’s Singles, 1st run
18:00 (02:00) Men’s Doubles, 1st run

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18:50 (02:50) Women's Doubles, 1st run
19:45 (03:45) Men's Doubles, 2nd run
20:25 (04:25) Women's Doubles, 2nd run

Saturday, 13 December 2025
16:15 (00:15) Men's Singles, 2nd run
17:20 (01:20) Women's Singles, 2nd run
19:00 (03:00) Team Relay (12 teams)

Subject to change without notice!

Live TV-Broadcast fil-luge.org/en/media/eberspaecher-world-cup-44

Link to athletes' biographies: Athletes Overview & Achievements - Int. Luge Federation FIL (fil-luge.org)

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