



## **Preview 5th FIL EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup Winterberg (GER): Mid-season and final Olympic qualifying race in the Sauerland region**

**Winterberg (FIL/06 Jan 2026)** Following the sporting start to the year in Sigulda, Latvia, the team led by OC President Stephan Pieper, Managing Director of Sportzentrum Winterberg Hochsauerland GmbH, welcomes the luge elite to the VELTINS-EisArena Winterberg for the second time this season this weekend. After Winterberg stepped in for Innsbruck-Igls at the start of the season, the 5th FIL EBERSPÄCHER World Cup from January 9 to 11, 2026, in Sauerland will also be about World Cup points and, for the last time, qualification for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Cortina.

102 sleds from 22 nations will compete in Winterberg. Thirty-four women and 37 men have registered for the singles, and 13 women and 18 men for the doubles. In addition to the World Cup races, the fourth of six team relays in the EBERSPÄCHER Team Relay World Cup presented by BMW is scheduled for Sunday.

### **Final Olympic qualifying race in Winterberg**

The race in Winterberg marks the end of qualification for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milano-Cortina. A total of 106 quota places are available for the luge athletes from the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Qualification for the Olympic luge competitions is based on the FIL's World Cup rankings for the Olympic season. Quota places are therefore allocated according to the following quotas per discipline: 25 for men's singles, 25 for women's singles, 34 (17 pairs) for men's doubles and 22 (11 pairs) for women's doubles. Host country Italy can receive one quota place per discipline if it was unable to qualify via the World Cup rankings for the Olympic season.

“The test event in Cortina and the World Cups in Park City, Lake Placid, Sigulda, and Winterberg count toward Olympic qualification. After the EBERSPÄCHER World Cup in Winterberg, we will inform the National Olympic Committees about their quota places, because it is not us as FIL who nominate the athletes, but the respective NOCs,” explains FIL Executive Director Christoph Schweiger. “The second race weekend at the end of January in Oberhof will once again be important for everyone, as it counts towards the formation of the seed list, which will be used to determine the starting order in Cortina. The further ahead you are, the better.”

### **Britcher, Loch, Egle/Kipp, and Wendl/Arlt lead the overall World Cup standings**

The upcoming races mark the halfway point in this year's FIL EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup. After the races in Winterberg, there are still two World Cups in Oberhof (GER) and, after the Olympic Games, in St. Moritz (SUI) and Altenberg (GER) on the





season calendar. After four of nine World Cup races in the Olympic winter, the overall World Cup standings are as follows: Summer Britcher (USA), Felix Loch (GER), and the women's doubles Selina Egle/Lara Kipp (AUT), as well as the German doubles Tobias Wendl/Tobias Arlt, currently lead the World Cup rankings.

She wanted to be present and enjoy every single race, Summer Britcher explained at the start of the season. This calmness seems to be doing the American good, because with two wins and a third place, she has been on the podium at every World Cup so far (Team USA did not compete at the season opener in Winterberg) and leads the overall World Cup standings with 270 points, ahead of the two Germans Merle Fräbel (245 points) and last year's winner Julia Taubitz (244 points). In the men's event, Felix Loch has underlined his current dominance, most recently clinching the 55th World Cup victory of his career (excluding mixed events) in Sigulda. The three-time Olympic champion has already stood at the top of the podium three times this season and is set to knock Armin Zöggeler off his eternal throne. Italy's current sports director leads the statistics with a total of 57 World Cup victories and has won the overall World Cup a total of 10 times in his successful career. Ahead of the World Cup in Winterberg, the 36-year-old Loch leads with 346 points ahead of Jonas Müller (AUT, 330 points) and teammate Max Langenhan (GER, 310 points).

In the women's doubles, Selina Egle and Lara Kipp (AUT) are currently setting the standard, sliding to their second consecutive victory in Sigulda. Having previously finished second twice, the reigning World and European Champions further extended their lead in the overall World Cup standings. With 360 points, they lead ahead of the Germans Eitberger/Matschina (340 points) and Degenhardt/Rosenthal (230 points).

The men's doubles competition remains exciting, with four different winners in four World Cup races. Most recently, Latvians Sevics-Mikelsevics/Krasts clinched their first World Cup victory in front of their home crowd, followed by Wendl/Arlt (GER) and their teammates Bots/Plume. The German duo has now taken the lead in the overall World Cup standings with 266 points, closely followed by Bots/Plume (LAT, 265 points) and Gatt/Schöpf (AUT, 244 points).

An overview of the overall World Cup standings and the individual disciplines can be found here: [fil-luge.org/en/overall-scores?event\\_season\\_id=33](https://fil-luge.org/en/overall-scores?event_season_id=33)

### **Press conference in Winterberg**

On Friday, January 9, 2026, at 10:45 a.m., a press conference with athletes and coaches will take place in the VELTINS-EisArena Lounge. We invite you to attend in person or join us online via the following link:

<https://youtube.com/live/idmb96IKQTU?feature=share>

If you plan to attend in person, please park in the town hall parking lot (Winterberg Town Hall, Fichtenweg 10, 59955 Winterberg) and use the shuttle service.





### **EM accreditation deadline / Press conference on Mini Olympics**

Until Wednesday, January 7, 2026, media representatives can apply for accreditation for the 6th FIL EBERSPÄCHER World Cup and the 57th FIL Luge European Championships in Oberhof (January 16 to 18, 2026). It will be a special sporting weekend, almost like a mini Olympics, because parallel to the luge events, the FIS World Cups for Cross-Country skiing and Nordic combined will also be taking place at the winter sports center in Thuringia. On Tuesday, January 13, at 11 a.m., a press conference will be held at the press center of the luge track, where the organizers will present the overall concept.

The 7th FIL World Cup will also be held in Oberhof from January 22 to 24, 2026.

Press officer Michael Panse points out that separate accreditations apply for both World Cups. Please use the online accreditation form: [Presseakkreditierung – www.axa-winterwochen.de](https://www.axa-winterwochen.de/Presseakkreditierung)

### **Road to Milano-Cortina:**

#### **Norbert Huber (ITA): A South Tyrolean leads China to Cortina**

When the 2026 Winter Olympics kick off in Milano-Cortina, Norbert Huber will be playing a special home game: the exceptional South Tyrolean athlete is head coach of the Chinese national luge team, which will be competing on a track just a few kilometers from his home. Huber has been driving the development of the young team forward for four years with meticulous attention to detail, international expertise, and great passion. With targeted improvements in the start area, new equipment, and an increased focus on mental strength, Team China is optimistic about the new Olympic track in Cortina. Huber is convinced that the team is developing well, surprises are possible, and Cortina 2026 could be the well-deserved reward for his athletes after years of hard work.

[Norbert Huber – A South Tyrolean leads China to Cortina](#)

### **FIL Portraits of the Week:**

#### **Catlin Nash (CAN): Single again: Caitlin's bold path to Olympic glory**

The courage to start afresh: Despite winning silver at the 2020 Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne, Caitlin Nash has broken away from the successful women's doubles team and is now fighting as a solo athlete for her ticket to the 2026 Olympics in Milan-Cortina. Why? "I wanted to know if I could do it on my own and go to the Olympics," says Nash, now 22. "I didn't want to be there just because we were the only women's doubles team in Canada." With ambition, patience, and self-confidence, the Canadian has made it to the top of the world rankings and shows that in luge, courage and conviction count just as much as speed.

[Sliding Solo: Caitlin Nash's Fearless Push Toward Olympic Glory](#)

#### **Nagler/Malleier (ITA): A career full of passion, setbacks, and big surprises**

Ivan Nagler and Fabian Malleier are the figureheads of the Italian luge doubles team. From their surprising Olympic debut in 2018 to European Championship gold in





Oberhof in 2019, the South Tyroleans have experienced highs and lows, overcome setbacks, and grown stronger as a team. With a new coach, experience, and home advantage in Cortina in 2026, they are now aiming for the podium—a realistic goal for a duo that has learned to emerge stronger from every defeat.

[Together in the ice channel – Italian doubles team Ivan Nagler and Fab](#)

## January 18 is World Luge Day Global Celebration of the Sport of Luge

The international luge family will once again celebrate World Luge Day on Sunday, January 18, 2026. Events, taster sessions, and local celebrations will take place in numerous countries around this weekend. The aim is to get people of all ages excited about luge – from leisurely family sledding to a first taste of competitive luge. From sledding in your own backyard to Olympic ice tracks: getting involved is easy. Participation is simple and open to everyone. From January 12 to 20, 2026, the FIL is calling on the global luge community to share photos, videos, and stories related to the sport of luge – using the official hashtags #WorldLugeDay and #SlidingIntoTheWeekend.

### Quotes before the 5<sup>th</sup> EBERSPÄECHER World Cup in Winterberg:

**Summer Britcher (USA):** „I love Winterberg. We had a lot of fun there in the training week. I love racing and was bumped to miss the first race. I am really excited now to go there now. It's been a good season so far. I try to stay grounded and to keep focusing on the same things that let me to that point, which is just enjoying it and focusing on the little things one can do on the track.“

**Lisa Schulte (AUT):** „I like the track in Winterberg because the races there are always very exciting. The start section for the women is difficult and always makes it exciting for us. I failed there in the last race, but I'm going there with a lot of confidence and will do my best. I hope that the new year continues as successfully as we started. We have performed very solidly as a women's team this season and hopefully all three of us will be at the start in Cortina.“

**Dominik Fischnaller (ITA):** „The season so far was not as good as I would have hoped. I had a decent start with a fourth place in Park City and an okay-race in Lake Placid. But last week in Sigulda wasn't very good. I crashed out of 14 in my first run. Luckily I didn't hurt myself, but now we are going to Winterberg where the last race for the Olympic qualification takes place. We are then looking towards Cortina. To be honest, there is just one race this season that really matters, and I hope I can show my full potential on the Olympic track in Cortina.“







**Zachary Di Gregorio (USA):** „We hope to secure the second starting place for the US doubles in Winterberg. So far, things are looking good. That's why the race in Winterberg is very important for us. It's the last qualifying race for the Olympic Games, and we want to impress with both doubles. I like the track in Winterberg. We skipped the first World Cup, but we were there for the training week and we are well prepared. Now we just have to deliver.“

**Christian Eigentler (Head Coach, Austria):** „Sigulda is never easy. We have experienced and endured a lot on this track, so from that perspective, our results are certainly impressive. I was particularly pleased with the victory in the team relay, which confirms the strong performances in the previous individual disciplines and shows that we can always compete at the highest level. Now the cards are being reshuffled in Winterberg. We will start training on Tuesday and want to continue on our path with the same consistency and tenacity as before.“

#### **Schedule 5th EBERSPÄECHER Luge World Cup, Winterberg (GER)**

Local start time (=CET)

##### **Friday, 9 January 2026**

09:00 Nations Cup

14:30 Seeded Training

##### **Saturday, 10 January 2026**

11:50 Women's Singles, 1st run

13:10 Women's Singles, 2nd run

14:25 Men's Singles, 1st run

15:50 Men's Singles, 2nd run

##### **Sunday, 11 January 2026**

09:00 Women's Doubles, 1st run

09:50 Women's Doubles, 2nd run

11:00 Men's Doubles, 1st run

12:15 Men's Doubles, 2nd run

13:50 Team Relay

*All times are subject to change!*

**Live TV-Broadcast and Results:** [fil-luge.org/en/media/eberspaecher-world-cup-47](http://fil-luge.org/en/media/eberspaecher-world-cup-47)

**Link to athletes' biographies:** [Athletes Overview & Achievements - Int. Luge Federation FIL \(fil-luge.org\)](http://Athletes%20Overview%20&%20Achievements%20-%20Int.%20Luge%20Federation%20FIL%20(fil-luge.org))





FIL press photos are available free of charge to the media for editorial reporting on luge and when the photo credit is mentioned: FIL / Photographer at the following link: <https://lugelove.smugmug.com/>

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#### Media Accreditations:

Oberhof 1 & 2. <https://axa-winterwochen.de/presseakkreditierung.html>;

[Rodelweltcup Medien](#)

St. Moritz: <https://olympia-bobrun.ch/medien/>

Altenberg: <https://wia-altenberg.de/spitzensport/weltcup-rennrodeln/presse-weltcup-rennrodeln/>

