

## Preview 1st EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup, Lillehammer (NOR): Season opening at the Olympic ice track and premiere for Mixed Events in Norway

**Lillehammer (FIL)** This week, the international luge elite will kick off the new season on November 30 and December 1, 2024 in Lillehammer (NOR). The world's elite lugers return to the 1994 Olympic track in Norway after four years. 37 women, 40 men, 11 women's doubles and 22 men's doubles from 22 nations have registered for the 1st EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup of the 2024/25 season. There are a total of nine EBERSPÄCHER World Cup venues in seven countries and on three continents on the FIL's artificial track calendar. In addition, six EBERSPÄCHER Team Relay World Cups presented by BMW and three of the newly created EBERSPÄCHER Mixed Events presented by SKECHERS will be held. The highlight of the season will be the 53rd FIL World Championships, which takes place at the beginning of February 2025 in Whistler, Canada.

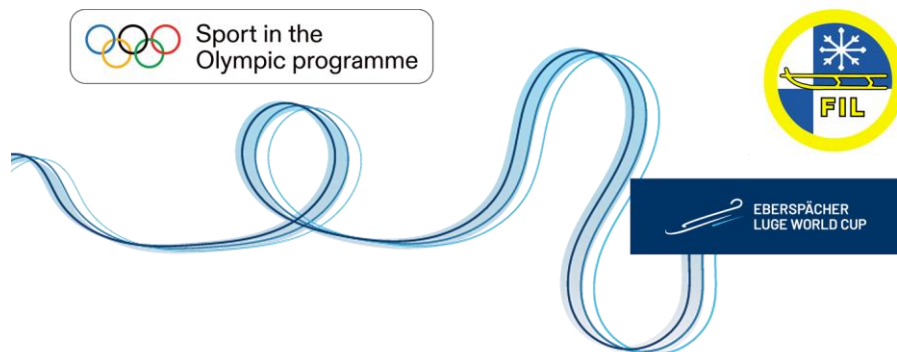
"The new season is already dominated by the Olympic Games Milan-Cortina 2026, as the last three races, including the World Championships, will be held on the Olympic tracks from 2010, 2018 and 2022. The Asian market is becoming increasingly important for us. The federations in South Korea and China are brutally strong and bring a lot of athletes to the World Cup. They have a very good infrastructure and it was only logical for us to return there for the first time after the Olympics and host World Cups," explains FIL Sports Director Matthias Böhmer, looking forward to the final Asian tour.

The same number of men and women will be competing as in the previous season, i.e. an equal number of 30 men and 30 women (12 seeded, 18 qualified via the Nations Cup) and 24 men and 24 women doubles (12 seeded, 12 qualified via the Nations Cup). A maximum of four single-seaters and three doubles may compete per nation. Besides the classic EBERSPÄCHER World Cup in the disciplines of women's and men's singles as well as women's and men's doubles, the premiere of the newly created Mixed Events will also be held in Lillehammer. Two mixed teams per nation will be allowed to compete in the mixed singles and mixed doubles events. For the first time, international teams are also permitted in this new competition.

### Lillehammer Olympic Bobsleigh & Luge track

For the first time since 2020, the lugers are back at the bobsleigh and luge track in Hunderfossen, 15 km north of Lillehammer. The track itself is completely unique and the only one of its kind in the Nordic region. There are a total of 16 tracks in the





world today, but Lillehammer is known for being the first to launch the winter season in October. The arena was built for the 1994 Winter Olympics and has been an important attraction for tourists in the area for 30 years. In recent years, the sport has returned in full force and there is activity in the arena at all hours of the day and night throughout the winter. A number of World and European Cups are now also held in Lillehammer and in 2027 there will be a big celebration when they host the IBSF Bobsleigh & Skeleton World Championships.

Total length: 1.710 m

Largest competition length: 1.365 m

Largest height difference: 114,3 m

Biggest drop: 15%

Calculated maximum speed: 128 km/h (4-man bob)

Ice-covered surface: 6,670 sqm

Number of curves: 16

Further information about the Olympic track in Lillehammer and the World Cups can be found at the following link: <https://www.slidingfestival.no/en>

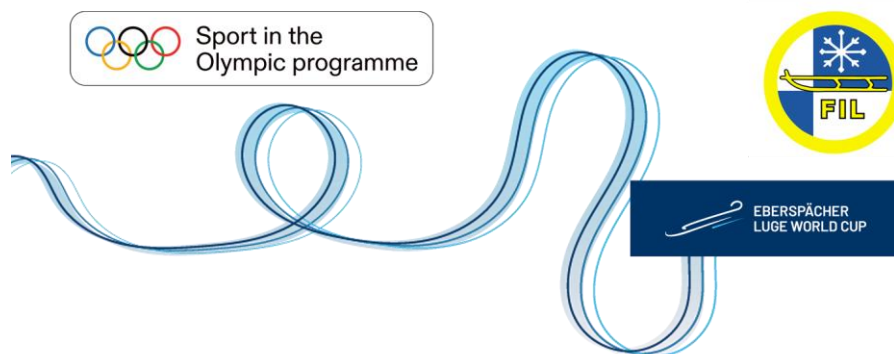
### **Premiere for EBERSPÄCHER Mixed Events presented by SKECHERS**

At the request of the FIL Sports Commission, the 72nd FIL Congress 2024 in Lake Placid voted in favor of the introduction of a new FIL race series for the World Cup and at the 2025 World Championships. The EBERSPÄCHER Mixed Events will replace the previous Sprint World Cup this season.

“The sprint competition has lost popularity among athletes, media representatives and spectators in recent years, and we had no chance of it becoming an Olympic event from the IOC,” explains Matthias Böhmer, FIL Sports Director. “Therefore, we tried to create a competition that is cost-efficient but includes as many athletes from as many different nations as possible. Mixed events are also popular in other winter sports disciplines, as they give equal rights to 100 percent of the genders, i.e. there is always a man and a woman or a men's and a women's doubles team competing. A new feature for us is that international teams are formed and we can therefore integrate every participating nation into the competition.”

For the Mixed World Cup in the singles and doubles disciplines, one man and one woman compete in the singles and one man and one woman doubles in the doubles in a mixed relay team. Each discipline uses its usual starting height. After the first athlete has hit the touchpad at the finish line, the gate opens automatically for the second athlete. The touchpad at the finish line will be a little smaller than in the established team relay. Two mixed teams per nation will be allowed to take part in the competition. Also new: for the first time, mixed teams from two nations are also permitted if they are unable to form their own mixed team.





After the premiere in Lillehammer, two more EBERSPÄCHER Mixed Events presented by SKECHERS will follow in Altenberg (GER) and PyeongChang (KOR). The Mixed World Championships will celebrate their premiere as Mixed Singles and Mixed Doubles at the 53rd FIL World Championships from February 6 to 8, 2025 in Whistler, Canada.

### FIL-Race Calendar 2024/2025:

This year's FIL EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup kicks off in Lillehammer, Norway, while the World Cup final will be held at the end of February 2025 at the Yanqing Olympic Sliding Center in China. The highlight of the season will be the 53rd FIL World Championships from February 5-8, 2025 on the 2010 Olympic track in Whistler, Canada. The FIL season calendar is as follows:

29.11. – 01.12.2024: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Lillehammer (NOR)  
 06. – 08.12.2024: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Innsbruck-Igls (AUT)  
 13. – 15.12.2024: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Oberhof (GER)  
 03. – 05.01.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Sigulda (LAT)  
 10. – 12.01.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Altenberg (GER)  
 17. – 19.01.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Winterberg (GER) & 56. FIL European Championships  
 24. – 26.01.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Oberhof (GER)  
**06. – 08.02.2025: 53. FIL World Championships 2025 Whistler (CAN)**  
 14.– 16.02.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup PyeongChang (KOR)  
 21.– 23.02.2025: EBERSPÄCHER World Cup Yanqing (CHN)

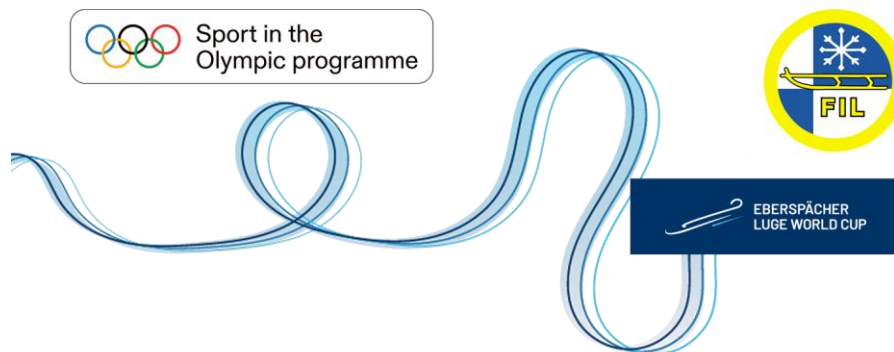
### Defending champions at the start

All the winners of the previous season's overall World Cup are back at the start with Julia Taubitz, Max Langenhan (both GER), Andrea Vötter / Marion Oberhofer (ITA) and Thomas Steu / Wolfgang Kindl (AUT). While Max Langenhan and the newly formed men's doubles Steu/Koller won the big crystal globe for the first time, Julia Taubitz was celebrating her fourth victory in the overall World Cup, the third in a row. The Italian women's doubles Vötter/Oberhofer successfully defended their title and stood on top of the podium for the second time. In the team relay, Team Germany triumphed for the thirteenth time.

### Adjustment of the starting order

The FIL has learned the lessons from past chaotic races caused by the weather and is now applying a new starting order. In the singles competition, the 5th-placed sled from the Nations Cup will start first in the first race run. The order continues in such





a way that the first-placed sled from the preliminary run receives starting number 5. Starting with bib number 6, the seeded group will follow by the draw, starting with group placed 7 to 12, followed by the group 1 to 6 placed. The remaining sleds will then start, starting with the 6th-placed sled from the Nations Cup and continuing to the end.

In the first race of the doubles, the third placed doubles from the Nations Cup will be the first sled to start, followed by the others, so that the first placed sled from the preliminary run will receive the number 3. Starting with number 4, the seeded groups follow by drawn order, with seeded groups 7 to 12 starting first, followed by 1 to 6. The remaining sleds follow in order, starting with the fourth-placed doubles team from the Nations Cup and ending with the last team. The top 20 in the singles and top 18 in the doubles will qualify for the second round, starting in reverse order as usual. The changes are intended to create more fairness and at the same time increase the dynamics of the competition.

### The latest news from the teams

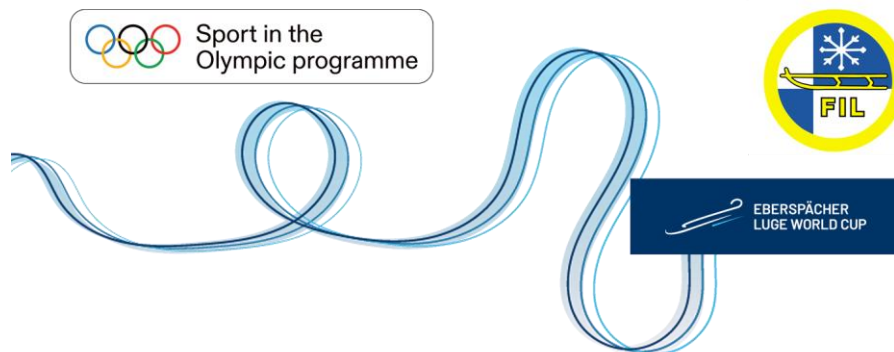
**Toni Eggert (GER)** delivers the most spectacular comeback in the luge world. The record World Cup winners (54 World Cup victories), eleven-time World Champions and Olympic medallists Toni Eggert/Sascha Benecken only officially retired from competitive sport in January 2024 at their home World Cup in Oberhof. Following a period as a coach in the USA, the 36-year-old Eggert is now returning to the ice track with his new doubles partner, 23-year-old **Florian Müller** from Oberwiesenthal. [Comeback of the year: Toni Eggert is now competing with Florian Müller](#)

**Dajana Eitberger** will be competing in doubles with **Magdalena Matschina** from this season. Despite winning World Championship gold with Germany in the team relay in her first season in the women's doubles with Saskia Schirmer, the 33-year-old has decided to make a fresh start. The 19-year-old Magdalena Matschina already has experience in doubles and, according to Eitberger, the chemistry between the two was right from the start. The common goal: the 2026 Olympics. [Eitberger Now Shares Doubles With Matschina](#)

The season is over for **Adikeyoumu Gulijenaiti**, known as Guli, before it has even begun. The 23-year-old Chinese athlete crashed with doubles partner Jiaying Zhao during training on the Olympic track in Yanqing and suffered a fractured fibula. According to Chinese head coach Norbert Huber, the ninth-placed in the overall World Cup in the previous season will take their time to prepare for the Olympic season after their recovery.

While **Wolfgang Kindl (AUT)**, who had been suffering from mononucleosis, regained his old strength faster than expected, teammate **Hannah Prock** had to put the brakes on. The 24-year-old Tyrolean, who has been struggling with pain since suffering a sacrum injury in the winter of 2022/2023, is receiving treatment at home





and will miss the World Cup opening. She will return to the track for the home World Cup in Innsbruck/Igls at the earliest.

## National Champions in the World Cup

Numerous athletes are traveling to Lillehammer with medals from their national championships. The US team competed in the 2024 Norton USA Championships on November 3 and 5. While Ashley Farquharson and Tucker West won the singles, three-time World Championship medalists Chevonne Forgan and Sophie Kirkby triumphed in the women's doubles. The reigning junior world champions Aidan Mueller and Ansel Haugsjaa surprised everyone. They relegated Dana Kellogg / Frank Ike and Zack DiGregorio / Sean Hollander to second and third place respectively.

Team Germany held its national championships in Winterberg on November 16. Anna Berreiter and Felix Loch came out on top in the singles, the latter for the ninth time in his career. Jessica Degenhardt and Cheyenne Rosenthal triumphed in the women's doubles, while Tobias Wendl and Tobias Arlt celebrated their seventh title in the men's doubles.

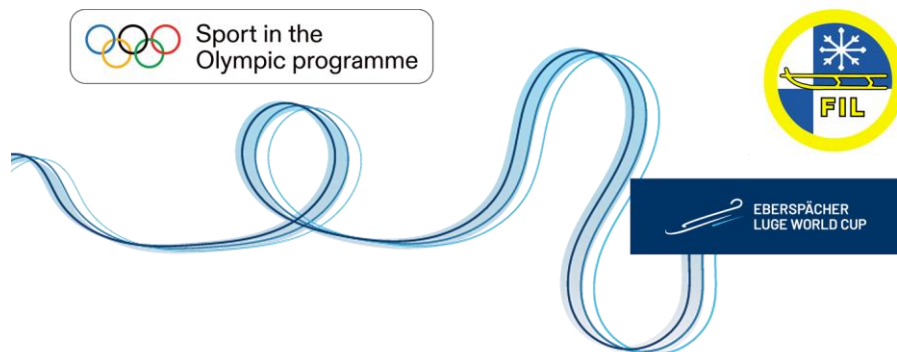
The Austrian national championships will be held in Innsbruck-Igls (AUT) during the Christmas break from December 26 to 28.

## Russia still suspended

In an effort to ensure a safe, peaceful and ethical sport, the delegates of 27 national federations present at the 72nd FIL Congress in Lake Placid (USA) decided by a large majority to further suspend the Russian Luge Federation from FIL-sanctioned competitions. On the basis of section 4.5.8 of the FIL Statutes and with regard to the war of aggression currently being waged by Russia against Ukraine, the participation rights of athletes, coaches, trainers and other officials of the Russian Luge Federation were suspended until further notice.

## Quotes on the World Cup opening:

**Alexander Ferlazzo (AUS), 5<sup>th</sup> at the 2025 World Championships:** "I plan to take part in all the World Cups this year. The big race is the World Championships in Whistler, which is my home track. I'm now training with the Canadians and I did a lot of runs in Whistler in the pre-season. Now it's time to get down to business in Europe. I'll be spending Christmas in London. The most important thing for me is to complete as many races as possible. I think getting used to the pressure of competing is more important now than continuing to get to know the tracks.

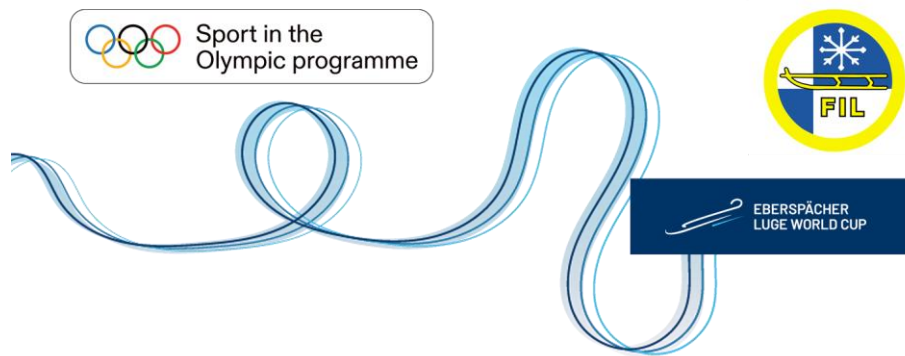


I'm at a point in my career where it's important to do a lot of races as it's my training season for the Olympic season. I hope that my sled is at a stage where I'm happy and don't have to make any drastic changes for next season. I hope that I slide well and that the competition pressure in the race is not too intense. This season is a learning season for me for the Olympic season. ”

**Natalie Maag (SUI):** “The start of the season will be very exciting. I still struggled a bit at the training camp in Lillehammer, but that was logical as it was the first week on ice and I wasn't there last year either. I'm sure I'll feel more comfortable with a few more runs. I struggled a bit this summer with my shoulder and finger. That lasted 12 weeks, which is why I would like to stay healthy for now. Apart from that, it's always difficult to say where you currently stand at the start of the season. But I'd be lying if I said I'd be happy with 12th place at the end. I want to keep fighting my way up and maybe finish on the podium again in the World Cup. I don't have a specific goal, as this is an interim year for me on the way to the Olympic Games. I'm really looking forward to the new Mixed Event. I will be racing with Alexander Ferlazzo. He placed fifth at the World Championships in Altenberg, so he's someone who really has what it takes. I'm looking forward to competing with him, having the team feeling and, above all, achieving something. I'm a competitive athlete and the idea of performance is there. In the Mixed Event, a lot depends on me, because I first have to hit that touchpad. We've already practiced the reaction start in recent years, but it's a true challenge for me. Every time you sit there and wait for the gate to open, my body starts to shake. If you jerk too early and the gate opens at the exact moment, you've already missed the start completely. I think it will be very cool and will do a lot for our sport. It would be great if this discipline also became an Olympic event.”

**Carolyn Maxwell (CAN):** “I always just try and take it day by day, week by week, even with World Champs Preparation on the home track in Whistler. I think really trying to focus on the current task ahead of me and whatever, just making small steps day by day and trying to never really lose focus. Yes, the big picture is that, but you've got to have the building blocks in place to get there and really make sure that you're not getting too far ahead of yourself with that kind of stuff. Focus on the basics just like your craft, your skills at that point. I'm kind of a big believer in that it'll all fall into place and it'll be what it will be. You put in the work, it's all you can really ask out of yourself at the end of the day. If it works out, it works out, if it doesn't, it doesn't. If you can go into it knowing that you did everything you could, that's all you can really ask of yourself.”





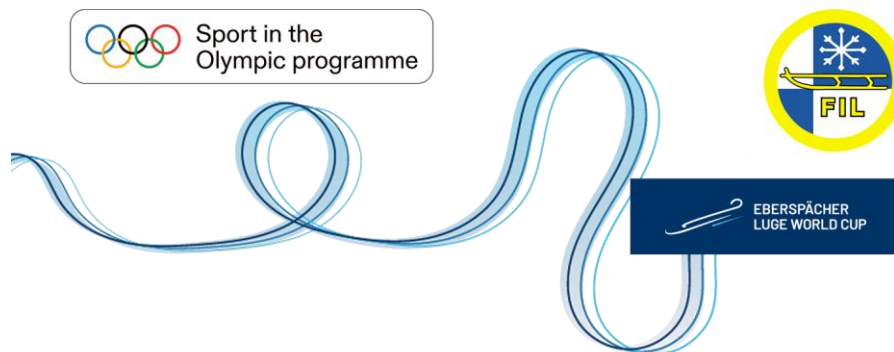
**Jonny Gustafson (USA):** “It feels good to be back in racing mode now. In Norway we haven't raced for a couple of years (since January 2020), this will be interesting. Let's see what it brings.”

**Patric Leitner (GER):** “The nomination for the new Mixed Events is very simple for us: fastest man and fastest woman, second-fastest man and second-fastest woman, and the same for the doubles. Just like we always do for the team relay. The new Mixed Events will be exciting thanks to the reaction start, and I'm optimistic that it will be well received by the spectators and will eventually become an Olympic event.”

**Julia Taubitz (GER):** “My preparation went very well, I remained injury-free and trained well. I'm particularly looking forward to the two weeks in Whistler this season. I think it will be very exciting World Championship races. It's always difficult to really hit the mark there because the track section is pretty short, especially for us ladies. PyeongChang will also be cool because we haven't been there for a long time. However, my highlight will be Beijing. I think it will also be emotional for me to come back there, but I'm looking forward to it. Apart from the second run at the Olympics, I really enjoyed racing there. So I'm optimistic. I think the new Mixed Events are great because it's very challenging from a sporting point of view and it's a chance for us to convince the IOC to give us another medal opportunity. I personally liked the sprint, I was a sprinter and it suited me perfectly.”

**Anna Berreiter (GER):** “For me as Patric Leitner's home athlete, it makes a difference that he is now the national coach. He is much busier, but we trained well together over the summer. Athletically, we worked well as a team and I know that I can also rely on him in winter. Apart from that, you learn from every situation and, above all, I learn a lot from the low points of my career. I am always my own biggest critic and that is the biggest challenge for me. Every year, my head plays a lot of tricks on me that I have to get rid of. I'm certainly taking a few things from last season that I want to improve on, and I want to listen more to my gut feeling again and why I'm really doing this sport.”





**Max Langenhan (GER):** “It's hard to decide between the overall World Cup or the World Championship title. The overall World Cup is the title that demonstrates more how well the season was, but becoming World Champion in Whistler at the end doesn't sound bad either. The best thing would be for me to win one title and Felix the other. I can learn a lot from Felix. I don't know if it's the same the other way round (grins). I think Felix is a huge help for us younger athletes, no matter which tracks it is, whether it was Lake Placid last year or PyeongChang this year, where nobody from our men's team has been except Felix.”

**Tobias Wendl (GER):** “We're still having a lot of fun and are doing well. We're even more athletic, once again at a higher level. We trained well in the summer and are in good shape.”

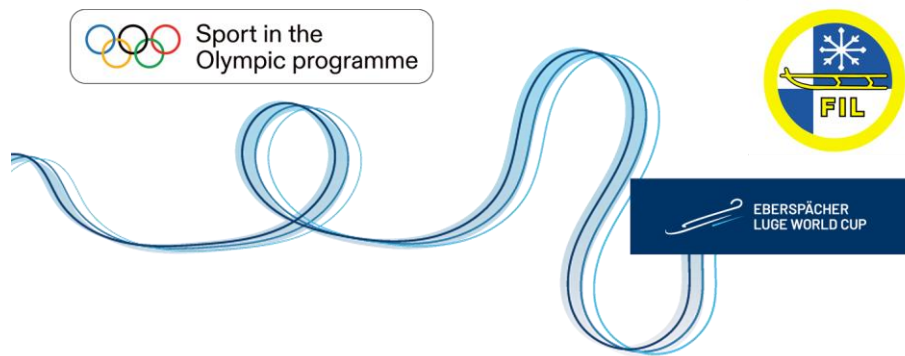
**Tobias Arlt (GER):** “We learn something new every year. This year is incredibly fun. We've worked a lot on the material and developed a little bit, which we think has gone in the right direction. We're looking forward to the season and the World Championships in Whistler. We really enjoy racing there and feel very comfortable. The ice is always in top condition and we love sliding in the mountains when the weather is nice. The track suits us, but first we're looking forward to the next tasks in the World Cup.”

**Toni Eggert (GER):** “I always wanted to luge, even when I was standing at the track last year as coach of the US team. When I saw the sleds go by, I always thought that I'd rather be on the other side. However, the decision that I would seriously try to find a way to come back was actually made at the World Championships in Altenberg, and then we finally decided to do it at the World Cup in Oberhof.”

**Florian Müller (GER):** “When you get a request from such a world-class athlete, it's really crazy at first. It was very cool for me that Toni asked me, but it's a big step to switch from singles to doubles. But I'm really looking forward to it. It was a big change at the beginning, as you don't have as much control over the sled anymore. It's really fun now. We're looking forward to this season. There are new impulses, new ideas, that's great.”

**Dajana Eitberger (GER):** “The decision to switch to women's doubles was quite successful. I worked very, very hard for that last year. At the moment, there's still the possibility that only one women's doubles will make it to Cortina. I didn't change for nothing, because I want to be that one sled and hope to get that push with Magdalena, especially at the start. It became clear over the summer that we both



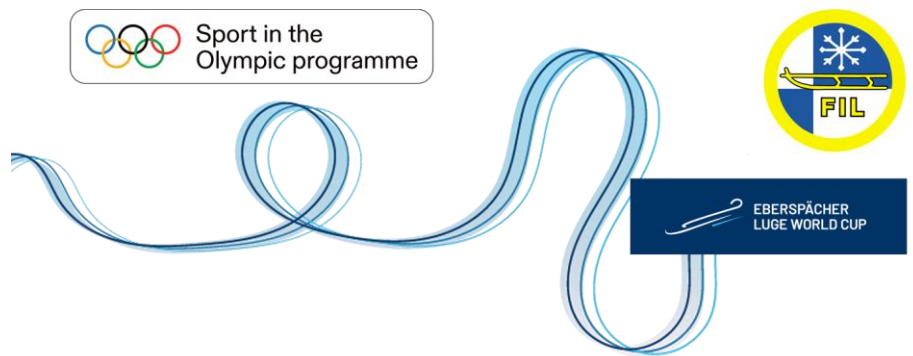


get on very well together, that it's a lot of fun and that the athletic values are a good match.”

**Magdalena Matschina (GER):** “I was overwhelmed at first because I hadn't expected it. But I quickly realized what a huge opportunity this was for me, which I would probably never have had again, and that's exactly why there was no question about it. It's a lot of fun. I think we can both learn a bit from each other. I'm definitely learning to be very calm at the start because I just know that Dajana is a very experienced luger and I don't have to think about it at all.”

**Thomas Steu (AUT):** “Due to Wolfi's illness (infectious mononucleosis), we started our preparations late, but we consciously moderated the program and were still able to achieve what we had planned. I haven't yet raced together with Wolfi in Lillehammer, but that shouldn't be a problem. I personally feel very comfortable on this track, the more ice there is, the more difficult it is to slide. The first two turns after the start and turns 12 and 13 are the key sections in my opinion.”

**Christian Eigentler (AUT head coach):** “We're at a good level, there's a lot of energy, the rhythm feels right. The preparation program was tough, but the high intensity was necessary to improve in all areas. In general, I'm happy with how things are going, the team makes a strong impression, but the loss of Hannah naturally weakens the whole thing. The problem with her sacrum has been with her for some time and we fully support her decision to undergo therapy in Thalgau. Hannah is a technically very mature luger. When she is fully fit, she will be able to perform at her best. We hope that she will finally get her symptoms under control after such a long period of suffering and will soon be able to show us what she is capable of again.”



## Schedule & TV coverage

### 1. EBERSPÄCHER Luge World Cup, Lillehammer (NOR)

Local start time (CET/MEZ)

Friday, November 29, 2024

10:30 Nations Cup

14:30 Training Seeded group

### Saturday, November 30, 2024

09:00 Women's Doubles, 1st run

09:55 Women's Doubles, 2nd run

10:55 Women's Singles, 1st run

12:15 Women's Singles, 2nd run

13:35 Men's Doubles, 1st run

14:55 Men's Doubles, 2nd run

### Sunday, December 1, 2024

09:30 Men's Singles, 1st run

10:55 Men's Singles, 2nd run

12:00 Mixed Doubles

13:05 Mixed Singles

*Subject to change without notice!*

Live TV-Broadcast: [fil-luge.org/en/multimedia/eberspaecher-world-cup-35](https://fil-luge.org/en/multimedia/eberspaecher-world-cup-35)

The season's opening will be broadcasted live on <https://www.fil-luge.org/en/home> and [FIL Luge - YouTube](#), ORF Sport+, ZDF and TV3 (Latvia).

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

## Media Contacts:

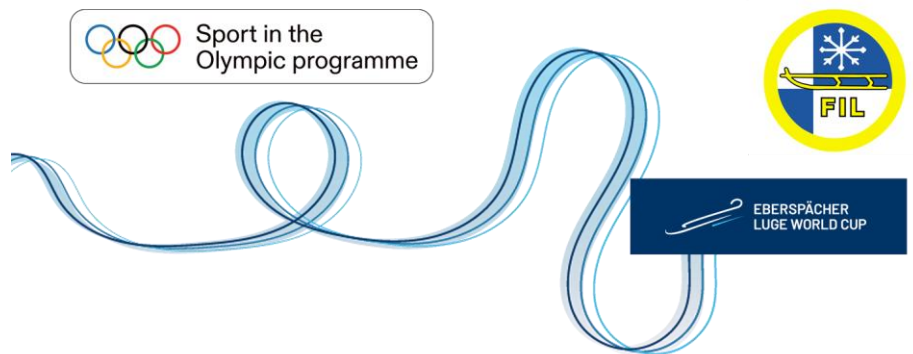
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**For a World Championships press accreditation for the 53rd FIL World Championships in Whistler (CAN), please send an e-mail with contact details and a copy of your press card to Chris Dornan, e-mail: [hpprchris@shaw.ca](mailto:hpprchris@shaw.ca), phone: +1 403620 8731. The FIL annual accreditation is also valid. For further information and special offers from the Canadian Tourism Association in Whistler, please contact FIL Press Officer Margit Dengler-Paar.**

## Press photos:

Photos for editorial purposes can be found on the FIL photo database:  
<https://lugelove.smugmug.com/>

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Thank you!

