

## Press release



Bad Kleinkirchheim, 7 December 2023

# Legend Race with the "Ski Kaiser" of Austria

**Franz Klammer – the most successful downhill racer of all time – celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in Bad Kleinkirchheim with a race of ski legends. More than 50 former ski stars, friends and companions took part in the exciting event sporting a true World Cup vibe.**

When talking about Carinthia's Bad Kleinkirchheim, the name of a ski legend instantly comes up: Franz Klammer! Memories of his very first lift ride or him winning the European Cup on the "K70" downhill run for the first time at just 18, as well as social evenings in a mountain hut are what Franz Klammer connects with the winter destination of Bad Kleinkirchheim.

The ski legend celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with friends, companions, and fellow winter sports stars from Bad Kleinkirchheim, Carinthia's sportiest ski area. The highlight was the so-called "Ski Legends Race" on 7 December, with more than 50 friends and athletes registered to participate.

Peter Kaiser, provincial governor of Carinthia: "Franz Klammer has made history when he won the Winter Olympics in Innsbruck in 1976. Since then, his popularity has continued to grow, and he is still a popular figure around the world today. Thanks to his background and likeable, down-to-earth personality, he has been THE sporty international ambassador of Carinthia for decades. The enormous media interest and large number of legends who have traveled from afar are testament to his importance and popularity to date!"

Tourism secretary Sebastian Schuschnig, congratulating Franz Klammer on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, was equally enthusiastic: "Franz Klammer shaped the ski scene in Austria and presented his home Carinthia far beyond Austria. I am particularly pleased that the legend race once again showed the beauty and variety of our tourist region to viewers both on site and in front of the television."

Carinthia's sports director Arno Arthofer: "Franz Klammer is Carinthia's athlete of the century and an important ambassador of Carinthia as a sports region, well known for his positive charisma and commitment to local sports."

### **A shining brand ambassador**

Franz Klammer is a brand ambassador with international appeal for Carinthia Tourism, showing in the large media presence in Bad Kleinkirchheim the day of the race and celebrations. "Around 10 TV teams from different countries reported live from the event. In addition, Carinthia Tourism and the tourism region managed to attract more than 50 top journalists from Austria, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, and the United Kingdom, ranging from the renowned 'Telegraph' in London to German TV station ZDF and Italian newspaper 'Gazetta dello Sport'. That's how we ensured extensive media coverage about winter holidays in Carinthia."

30 ski legends – including Michaela Dorfmeister, Jure Kosir, Markus Wasmeier, Armin Assinger, Jimmy Steiner, Annemarie Moser-Pröll, Michael Veith - took part in the race which was broadcast live on Austrian, Bavarian, and Slovenian Television from 11:20 AM. "Unforgettable moments with a World Cup vibe were carried from Bad Kleinkirchheim around the world. After all, nowhere else do as many stars who have written sports history meet for a competition among friends," explains Stefan Brandlehner, CEO of the Bad Millstätter See – Bad Kleinkirchheim – Nockberge tourist region.

The run by Bernhard Russi, Franz Klammer's biggest competitor in the Olympic downhill race on Patscherkofel in 1976, was especially eagerly awaited. "Back then I won gold. Today it's no longer about who gets the best time, but about fun and friendship that have lasted for decades," says Franz Klammer.

"We had more people interested than spots. The turnout was great," confirmed organiser Gerhard Brüggler, who put the event together with Carinthia Tourism, the tourism region, and the Tourism Association.

### **Thousands celebrated their heroes**

The winner of the race in wintery Bad Kleinkirchheim wasn't the fastest one on the piste but the one who came closest to Klammer's time. Patrick Ortlieb, who was only 8 hundredths off, became first, Jurir Kosir and Armin Assinger second and third.

Thousands of ski fans celebrated the legends and left the event with both long-lasting memories and their autographs.

### **In the footsteps of Franz Klammer**

Winter sports fans wanting to ski alongside the "Ski Kaiser" have a chance to do so at the Early Morning Skiing (9 January and 6, 13 and 20 February 2024) in Bad Kleinkirchheim. Franz Klammer is omnipresent in his ski home. "Our guests are walking in the footsteps of the 'Ski Kaiser'. They stop at the huts where he is a regular, and whizz down his favourite slopes," says Jakob Forstnig, chairman of the Tourism Association.

“The Ski Legend Race is the perfect start to a successful winter season in this World Cup location.”

### **Early Morning Skiing with Franz Klammer**

9 January and 6, 13 and 20 February 2024

Information and booking:

[info@badkleinkirchheim.at](mailto:info@badkleinkirchheim.at) or +43 4240 8212

<https://www.badkleinkirchheim.at/en/>

### **Holiday package deal**

“[Skiing in the Footsteps of Franz Klammer](#)” (Website in German only)

Until 1 April 2024

From € 465,- per person

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