PRESS RELEASE

**ALTA BADIA**

**ALEXIS PINTURAULT TAKES VICTORY FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE GRAN RISA**

**The 29-year-old Frenchman adds the Alta Badia race to his records: he has won 15 giant slalom races in his career, as many as Alberto Tomba, who applauded him at the edge of the slope.**

**Alta Badia (South Tyrolean Dolomites/Italy)** - Alexis Pinturault adds his name to the list of winners on the Gran Risa, a slope that is legendary. Here champions the likes of Ingemar Stenmark (who won the first edition in 1985), Alberto Tomba and Marcel Hirscher wrote the history of alpine skiing. Thirty-five years of great emotions on the snow, although it was weird today not to feel and hear the warm welcome of the fans at the finish line, and not to be overwhelmed by the celebrations that every year animate the Ski World Cup event, from dawn until after sunset. And yet, thanks to the protagonists, it was a spectacular day on the Gran Risa, with the breath-taking runs of the strongest skiers on Earth. We also need to praise the incredible work of the volunteers who started working very early in the morning to prepare a perfect slope.

Nobody managed to do better than the 29-year-old Frenchman (2‘27“19), who was leading already at the end of the first run. In the second run, Pinturault was able to defend himself against the attack of a young and bold athlete like Atle Lie McGrath (who was second and who is only 20 years old), edging him out by only 7 hundredths and winning for the second time in this season (the first one in a giant slalom). Thus, the French ace became the third Frenchman who was able to reach the highest step of the podium in the giant slalom in Alta Badia after Joël Chenal (1999) and Frederic Covili (2001). This was Pinturault’s fifteenth victory in World Cup giant slalom events, as many as Tomba during his whole career. Tomba applauded him at the edge of the slope and said: *«It is always exciting to be here because this slope brings back wonderful memories. Congratulations to Pinturault, who really did a great race».*

And the winner of the 2020 event said: *«This year I was always close to the podium in the giant slalom but I did not manage to take the podium for a matter of hundredths. McGrath did an incredible race already in the first run given his bib number (29) and he pushed even more in the second run. It wasn’t easy but I did everything I could to be ahead and I made it. It was great to win in front of Alberto Tomba and to know that I reached his record number of giant slalom victories: I am so proud of this achievement because it brings me closer to a legend like him. I think that the organizers did a great job in grooming and preparing the slope today and this is evidenced by the fact that many athletes with a high bib number managed to finish the first run in the top 30 positions. The slope was really good also in the second run».*

Mc Grath was very excited because he managed to get on the podium for the first time in his career and he commented on his second place: *«Never before have I been as speechless as I am today after the race. At the start I thought that I only wanted to enjoy myself, also because it was the first time that I could do the entire slope of the Gran Risa, since last year we had to start from lower down due to the weather. I really enjoyed it. And if you enjoy what you are doing, it is easier. With my first podium I caught up with my dad, who took a second place in a World Cup slalom (Aare 1988). Now I want to edge him out».*

The podium was completed by the Swiss Justin Murisier (third, 0“24 behind), who showed up at the press conference wearing a mask with a picture of his smile: *«In a period like this, I am happy to bring some joy and smiles because we must hope for better times. Getting on my first podium here is fantastic. I can’t find the right words to describe what I feel. I have been racing in the World Cup since 2010 and I have had to get over so many injuries, including four to my right knee. I am convinced that this slope loves me because I was fourth here in 2017. Anyway, it’s mutual love. I adore it ».*

The trophies given to the top three athletes were made also this year by the artist Daniele Basso, who made the “GIGANT” sculpture, installed at the start of the Gran Risa slope to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the event.

The best Italian was Riccardo Tonetti, eleventh. The 31-year-old athlete from Bolzano overcame the deficit in the second run and managed to improve twelve positions from the 23rd place of the first run. Tonetti said: *«I felt the right sensations in the first run and I am happy because in the second run I did many good turns and attacked from the start to the finish line. I am satisfied because I had to be patient in this season and I was not very confident. Tomorrow I will not participate in the slalom race because I didn’t have the time to prepare it but I would like to do so in 2021 in Adelboden. First I will focus on the fast races in Bormio right after Christmas».*

The race of Luca De Aliprandini’s lasted only a few gates in the first run. There were great expectations for the Italian athlete who was looking for the first podium in his career after the good vibes in Santa Caterina.

In order to send a positive message in this period, which is so hard for all people who live and visit the world of the mountains, IDM and the organizers of the major sports events that will take place during the winter in South Tyrol have chosen a heart of ice, which is the symbol of the campaign launched also on social media with the hashtag #everythingwelove: a sculpture that has stood out at the foot of Gran Risa, very close to the finish line. This is a way to keep in touch with those who will come back to these lands as soon as it is possible.

The focus of this area on the future was also evidenced, a few days ago, by the launch of the new hydrogen-powered electric snow groomer by High Technology Industries: Leitwolf h2Motion. It is produced by the South Tyrolean company Prinoth and it is parked very close to the parterre, at the edge of the slope, both today and tomorrow.

Tomorrow we will move from the large gates to the narrow poles. It is going to be an unusual Monday because, in order to meet the requests by FIS, the final section of the Gran Risa will host a slalom instead of the traditional night-time parallel giant slalom: the first run starts at 10 a.m., the second at 1 p.m. During this strange winter, in which it is not possible to follow alpine skiing events live, people will be able to follow their favorite athletes on TV because the race will be broadcast worldwide by major broadcasters.

**For further information:**

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