

2 x Maier and a German surprise

This year, two Downhill races and one Super-G race took place in Kvitfjell. Hermann Maier was the top racer this season, and this event was no exception. But as always, there were a few surprises in Kvitfjell.

By Stein B. Olsen and Svein Mundal



The winners of DH on Saturday. (DH2)

And the surprise turned out to be German. Florian Eckert came in second in both Downhill races, while Hermann Maier won the race on Friday, and Stephan Eberharter the classic Downhill on Saturday.

This was Hermann Maier's first Downhill victory in Kvitfjell, which delighted him. And with a third place on Friday, Lasse Kjus achieved yet another place on the podium. During the press conference after the race Lasse was in a great mood, directing most of his attention and comments towards the German surprise.

- I am an old man, and thus I need all the top placements I can get. Quite rude of you to beat me by four hundredths on my home ground, Lasse said. The German didn't show any remorse for cheating Lasse of the second place.

It was cold in Kvitfjell this year, almost down to minus 20 degrees. In other words, not unlike the weather in 1994. Several skiers wore face masks. Hermann Maier was struggling during the training before the race on Friday, chose a different pair of skis, and won. For Maier, who experienced a disappointing World Championship on home ground in St. Anton, Kvitfjell became a tremendous boost.

- The number of spectators and other people in Kvitfjell is lower

than at a WC race in Austria. But after a stressful season, it is lovely to come here and find some peace. And up there at the Middle Station I live in a wonderful hotel, completely without any fuss. Lovely, Maier smiles looking up from the finish area towards GudbrandsGard Hotel.

And there was no doubt that Maier was able to gather his thoughts and charge his batteries. He also won the Super-G on Sunday.

Lasse Kjus's achievement on Friday would be the only podium place for the Norwegian guys. Kjetil André Aamodt was out of shape and didn't make it to the finish in the races on Saturday and Sunday.

- I feel burned out, Kjetil André explained. Thus, the Norwegian team with Atle Skårdal in charge left Kvitfjell with a lot to think about.

Another person worth mentioning from 2001 is one of the forerunners. He was only 15 years old and claimed in the local newspaper GD that he was a little nervous before start. But as soon as he was in the slope everything went by itself. The 15-year-old in question is Kjetil Jansrud, and as we all know this was not the last time his name would come up in Kvitfjell. 11 years later he won his first WC race, which would be in the Super-G on a Sunday in Kvitfjell.

Results:

DH1: Hermann Maier (AUT), Florian Eckert (GER), Lasse Kjus (NOR)

DH2: Stephan Eberharter (AUT), Florian Eckert (GER), Fritz Strobl (AUT)

SG: Hermann Maier (AUT), Hannes Trinkl (AUT), Stephan Eberharter (AUT)