

BOBSLEIGH & SKELETON DOWNHILL ON ICE



Bobsleigh and skeleton make dramatic television coverage. The television audience for the top official events has soared by more than 60% in the last five years, as more countries enter the international competitions.

Speed and charisma

As Olympic disciplines, bobsleigh and skeleton exemplify the speed and charisma of winter sport at their most challenging and dangerous.

Over recent years, bobsleigh has grown from a “niche” sport to an exciting, annual highlight on the winter sports calendar. Its growing diversity is illustrated by the fact that – in the 2008/2009 FIBT World Cup – no fewer than seven nations were placed in the top 10 of the two-man event and six nations in both the four-man and the women’s competition.

During a typical 60-second bobsleigh run, speeds of more than 140 km/h are reached and the crews are subject to more than four times of the force of gravity.

Bobsleigh and skeleton races are usually run on artificial tracks of approx. 1,200 – 1,600 metres in length with up to 14 curves, depending on the track. There are now 16 tracks worldwide, in glamorous locations that have become synonymous with the sport, such as St. Moritz, Lake Placid and Cortina d’Ampezzo. With new tracks, Moscow, Sochi (both RUS) and Vancouver (CAN) will enter the elite.

Skeleton is the world’s first sliding sport and the only one where athletes take a face down position. It has an elite aura through its long identification with the famous Cresta Run in St Moritz, one of the world’s most exclusive spots. Today it is practiced on a competitive level by some 20 countries from all continents and it returned to the Olympic Games in 2002 after a 54-year break.

Growing TV audience

Infront Sports & Media’s successful association with the Fédération Internationale de Bobsleigh et de Tobogganing (FIBT) dates back to 2003. Infront’s role includes the sale of the key marketing packages for bobsleigh and skeleton’s top-tier sponsorship programme as well as worldwide distribution of media rights for the men’s and women’s FIBT World Cup and World Championship events. Working closely with the FIBT, Infront has embarked on a path of expansion, with highly impressive growth in the international television audiences and hours of coverage.

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FIBT's events are amongst the most successful winter sports. In the 2008/2009 season FIBT World Cup competitions (bobsleigh and skeleton) reached a cumulative viewing audience of more than 669.2 million viewers and a total transmission time of more than 1,100 hours, 52% up on the previous year.

Over the last five years, there has been 64% growth in the cumulative audience (across all disciplines) and the hours of coverage have grown five-fold – up a huge 364% from 2004/05.

Infront markets all forms of electronic media rights including TV, radio, internet and mobile communications worldwide, offering specific, segmented packages including live, delayed and highlights coverage.

FIBT's signal production

The FIBT produces its own high quality television coverage of FIBT events – a cutting edge standard that it has pioneered over the past 10 years.

The FIBT offers an upgraded international feed for general distribution and a post-race highlights package for rights holders. This in-house TV production ensures quality pictures that capture the unique drama of the sport and meet the key criteria of fans and broadcasters.

Growing appeal to sponsors

The growing appeal of bobsleigh and skeleton to sponsors - companies like Adidas, Bauhaus, Intersport, Konica Minolta, Omega and Suzuki - are soundly based on components that enhance the commercial appeal of these Olympic disciplines.

For example, greater sponsor exclusivity means there are a limited number of advertising partners, resulting in strong, clear brand visibility.

An online platform for bobsleigh and skeleton

One of the joint projects was the re-launch of the FIBT website (www.fibt.com). Infront and the FIBT have together created an online platform for the sport. This website not only contains information about the federation, it also provides latest results and race statistics to its visitors.

Upcoming Events

The 2009/2010 FIBT World Cup in the upcoming winter Olympic Season will cover eight top venues, as follows:

12 – 14 Nov 2009	Park City	USA
20 – 22 Nov 2009	Lake Placid	USA
4 – 6 Dec 2009	Cesana	Italy
11 – 13 Dec 2009	Winterberg	Germany
18 – 20 Dec 2009	Altenberg	Germany
8 – 10 Jan 2010	Königssee	Germany
15 – 17 Jan 2010	St. Moritz	Switzerland
22 – 24 Jan 2010	Igls	Austria

As 2010 is an Olympic year there will be no FIBT World Championships. After the Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, the next edition of the FIBT's top competition will be the 2011 event held in Berchtesgaden/Königssee (GER).

Infront handles the marketing of key sponsorship packages and the worldwide media rights for the men's and women's FIBT World Cup and World Championship events.