

# Alpine apex

From Sölden to Hafjell, Alpine Ski World Cup gold is up for grabs across Slalom, Giant Slalom, Super-G and Downhill Events in Europe and North America

The Men's Alpine Ski World Cup 2025/26 season opened in October on the glacier slopes of Sölden in Austria, continuing a long standing tradition that marks the seasonal transition from summer training to full winter competition. Sölden's Giant Slalom launch sets the tone early each year, offering athletes a chance to test their form on high altitude ice and giving fans a first glimpse of who may emerge as major contenders.

The season will conclude in March 2026 in Norway, with the technical events staged at Hafjell and the speed disciplines at nearby Kvittjell, bringing the competition to a close on two of Scandinavia's most respected race hills. This year's campaign, composed of 85 races, once again showcases the four cornerstone disciplines of alpine skiing. Slalom emphasises fast footwork and precision as skiers weave through tightly spaced gates in a test of sharp reflexes and resilience. The Giant Slalom

rewards athletes who can carry speed through wide arcing turns while maintaining complete control on longer, undulating tracks. The Super G blends technical challenge with greater velocity, requiring racers to read the terrain at high speed and commit fully to the racing line. Downhill remains the most daring event, defined by steep drops, long gliding sections and speeds that can reach well beyond 100km/h, demanding absolute confidence and concentration.

As the early races unfolded, the season quickly gained momentum. At Beaver Creek in the United States, Swiss star Marco Odermatt captured the Men's Downhill on December fourth, securing his forty-eighth career World Cup victory. His ability to generate speed on the demanding Birds of Prey course confirmed his continued dominance in the speed events.

One day later, Austrian racer Vincent Kriechmayr claimed the Super G at the same venue in a weather-affected race that was completed after just over thirty starters. His win underscored his status as one of the most reliable Super G specialists on the circuit and added another highlight to an already distinguished career.

These confirmed results add clarity to the developing storyline of the season, setting the stage for future battles in both the individual disciplines and the overall standings. While many races remain ahead, the form displayed in Beaver Creek suggests that both Odermatt and Kriechmayr will again be central figures in the pursuit of discipline titles as well as podium finishes throughout the winter. ►

**Below:** Henrik Kristoffersen of Norway in slalom action in Alta Badia, Italy





The World Cup calendar for the current season continues to move through established alpine locations in Europe and North America, with events scheduled across a range of technical and speed venues. Although the specifics of each course vary, the challenge remains consistent: athletes must adapt to shifting snow conditions, abrupt weather changes and the relentless demands of travel throughout the season. Each stop on the tour offers its own character,

shaped by its terrain, climate and racing heritage.

As the season advances toward the finals in Norway, the competition will tighten. Hafjell provides a fitting arena for the concluding Slalom and Giant Slalom races, with its wide surfaces and natural fall lines that encourage bold skiing. The speed finals at Kvittjell carry similar prestige; the course has long been recognised for its smooth yet demanding layout, rewarding those who can blend finesse with

**Above:** Mikaela Shiffrin (USA), Alice Robinson (New Zealand) and Petra Vlhova (Slovakia) Podium in women's Giant Slalom race of the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup Finals at Soldeu-El Tarter in Andorra in 2019 **Left:** Soelden Rettenbachferner glacier, Austria **Below:** Alpine Ski World Cup in Sölden in 2020



fearlessness. With many points still in play, the closing weeks will likely determine not only discipline trophies but also the coveted Overall World Cup title, awarded to the athlete who performs consistently across the season.

For enthusiasts, the World Cup offers more than athletic spectacle. These events unfold in some of the world's most scenic winter destinations, where alpine culture merges with fine dining, luxury accommodation and exceptional hospitality. Watching racers carve down steep, snow covered slopes provides an exhilarating contrast to the calm of mountain villages and high altitude lodges.

The current season is shaping into a compelling chapter in the sport's history, defined so far by confirmed victories from leading athletes and by the enduring spirit of competition that defines alpine skiing. As racers push through the winter months and fans follow the shifting momentum, the World Cup continues to celebrate the fusion of speed, technique and the dramatic beauty of the mountains. [fis-ski.com/alpine-skiing](http://fis-ski.com/alpine-skiing) ■