



Media Information – for immediate release

**ORAGE EUROPEAN FREESKI OPEN BY SWATCH 2008:  
SARAH BURKE AND MIKE RIDDLE ARE THE HALFPIPE WINNERS OF LAAX.**

LAAX (SUI) – March 14, 2008 – The winners of the halfpipe finals at the US\$ 60.000 donated European Freeski Open can be announced: The Canadians Sarah Burke und Mike Riddle took the first titles on the Crap Sogn Gion mountain.

Right on time the clouds disappeared to present the majestic superpipe in Laax. Blue sky and an impressing view over the Swiss alps were perfect conditions for a spectacular final. The top 6 female and 12 male riders were ready to take off after the semifinals and to show their sickest tricks for titles, trophies and dollars. The final runs were dominated by a high level of riding and huge airs up to 5 meters. Back to back 9 and Alley oop 7 were standard tricks of the men's performance. Canadian Mike Riddle impressed the judges and spectators with a perfectly landed 1080 rotation followed by a switch 900 and was rewarded with the highest score of the day: 94,2 of 100 possible points. The 22 year old took the victory followed by Xavier Bertoni (FRA), the only European rider on the podium, and another Canadian, Justin Dorey. The crowd's darling Kalle Leinonen from Finland showed stylish double nose grabs and slightly missed the podium.

US Open und X-Games winner Sarah Burke confirmed her position as the halfpipe freeski queen. With 900 rotations and perfect spins she earned 91.20 points in her first performance here in Laax and won in superior style. Also Canadian Rosalind Groenewoud got 2nd followed by US Girl Jennifer Hudak. Virginie Faivre from Montreux was the best Swiss rider ranked 5<sup>th</sup>. Tomorrow, final day at the Orage European Freeski Open by Swatch 2008 she will try to land the hattrick by winning the slopestyle for the 3rd time in a row.

Semifinals will take place at 10:00, finals at 14:00. But before the Norwegian band Turbonegro will rock tonight the Riders Palace Club.

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