Media Information – for immediate release

ORAGE EUROPEAN FREESKI OPEN BY SWATCH 2008:
SWISS VIRGINIE FAIVRE MAKES THE HAT-TRICK IN LAAX & TAKES THE SLOPESTYLE VICTORY – RUSSELL HENSHAW FROM AUSTRALIA TRIUMPHES IN THE MEN`S COMPETITION

LAAX, SUI – March 15th 2008 – The 3rd Orage European Freeski Open by Swatch 2008 with a total prizemoney of US$ 60.000 ended with a masterpiece of Virginie Faivre in LAAX: the 25 year old Swiss girl won the slopestyle contest on the Crap Sogn Gion mountain for the 3rd time in a row. The 17 year old Australian Russell Henshaw celebrated the victory in the men´s competition.

After the high-class halfpipe finals on Friday the last day of the European freeski season highlight was dedicated to the park-riders. The upper section of the 450 meter long slopestyle course consisted of a steep start, the innovative new obstacle, which looked like a big rice-bowl, and two rails. The following kicker-line made 3 jumps up to 25m airs possible. Surrounded by hundreds of cheering spectators the best 6 female and 12 male skiers dropped in for their final runs.
Virginie Faivre did a unique thing: the small swiss lady from Montreux was able to win the 3rd time in a row in LAAX. Nobody could beat her 2nd run showing a huge kork 5, a mute switch 3 and a kork 3 mute over the kickers, that brought an amazing score of 85.40 points. Australian Anna Segal earned 83.80 points and landed on the podium as well as Kristi Leiskanen/USA. The 2 halfpipe queens from Canada, Sarah Burke and Rosalind Groenewoud, failed already in the semifinals.
The men´s competition showed a very high level of skiing, some of the invited riders could not make it to the final. The 3rd European Freeski Open in LAAX was offering the 3rd winner: youngster Russel Henshaw from Australia did a great second run with difficult slides on the rails and a 9, a switch rightside 10 mute and another switch 10 over the kickers, which was honored with the highest score of the day (91.40 points). The well experienced skier Charles Gagnier got 2nd (90.80) followed by Orage rider Philip Casabon, also from Canada, in 3rd position (87.60). The best European riders are from the north of the continent: Anders Backe/NOR in 4th position followed by AJ Kemppainen (5.) from Finland and Henrik Harlaut (6.) from Sweden.
This final day was the end of a perfect event at the Crap Sogn Gion mountain enjoyed by 150 riders from 19 countries and 80 journalists from all over the world. LAAX will be host of the Freeski season highlight in the Alpes also in 2009, when the 4. Orage European Freeski Open by Swatch will take place.

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