

Orage European Freeski Open Laax  
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**Orage European Freeski Open Laax**  
**March 22 – 26, 2006**  
Summary Reports Day 1 – 4

**Impressive freeski action at the Crap Sogn Gion in Laax/Switzerland – USD 50.000 doted open contest in Slopestyle & Halfpipe: Virginie Faivre from Switzerland and Simon Dumont from USA , Marie Martinod and Candide Thovex, both from France, are the winners and first title holders of the European Freeski Open!**

### **March 22, 2006: Orage European Freeski Open Laax Day 1**

The Orage European Freeski Open Laax 2006 starts! The Slopestyle qualifications went down during a sunny day and spring like conditions. The atmosphere was laid back and fun. About 80 athletes from 18 nations were riding and enjoying the perfect park in Crap Sogn Gion Mountain. 24 men and 6 women made the qualifications and will go on to semi-finals on Friday along the side of the pro invited riders.

### **March 23, 2006: Orage European Freeski Open Laax Day 2**

It's Superpipe qualifications and the new up and comers from Europe are totally pushing. The weather was crazy: fog and wet snow was alternating with sudden brief moments of sunshine. This made for a reduced visibility for both the riders and the judges. The wet snow made for a slower pace and so it was hard to really go for amplitude but we had a good demonstration of spins. The men and women that qualified today will be competing against the cream of the crop on Saturday for the Superpipe finals. We are hoping for blue skys and sunshine for tomorrow for the Slopestyle finals.

### **March 24, 2006: Orage European Freeski Open Laax Day 3: Slopestyle finals.**

Today is semi-finals and finals in Crap Sogn Gion Slopestyle course of the first ever Orage European Freeski Open Laax. Everyone was gathered at the Slopestyle Park. The Park was impressive, starting with the train station rail with an off wit landing, followed by two kickers, a box, rails and on wall at the end.

Still no sun, but the 24 men and 6 women that qualified on Wednesday are still totally stocked to take on the invited riders. JF Houle winner of the semi-finals, was solid and smooth but unfortunately he fell on both runs in the finals. The caliber of skiing in the finals simply got insane. The guys were really battling it out for the win, throwing unnatural 9's and 10' s setting the bar high. Simon Dumont from USA was the ultimate rider of the day



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and the first winner of this first edition of the Orage European Freeski Open Laax. Dumont performed amazing switch tens getting high and far and making it look effortless. TJ Schiller followed closely by placing second and so did Charley Ager who 3rd place. They all clearly demonstrated their talents today and it definitely was a close comp. The Canadian X-Games Champion TJ Schiller said: "We are here in Switzerland and they probably have the best Slopestyle course of the year, perfect jumps, perfect rails and it's bringing everyone from worldwide to check it out."

On the women's side, Virginie Faivre from Switzerland, completely blew away the competition; making it clear to everyone she was going to be the winner of this event. She was throwing down like crazy, getting speed and height on all her tricks. She was so confident and solid it was amazing. The runner up, Naomie Edmondson from the UK, did a massive five on the 2nd kicker and was smooth all through the comp putting her into 2nd place.

In all, 23 000 US dollars in prize money was handed-out to the winners of the Slopestyle discipline of this first Orage European Freeski Open Laax. A big thank you to the Park shapers who did an amazing job, all the riders agreed upon the fact that the Slopestyle course was one of the best they had the chance to ride.

### **Orage European Freeski Open Laax 2006 - Results SLOPESTYLE, March 24, 2006**

#### Men

1. Simon Dumont/USA
2. TJ Schiller/CAN
3. Charley Ager/CAN

#### Women

1. Virginie Faivre/SUI
2. Naomi Edmondson/GBR
3. Victoria Beattie/AUS

Tomorrow, Halfpipe finals...maybe under a sunny sky...

### **March 25, 2006: Orage European Freeski Open Laax Day 4: Halfpipe finals.**

Good day sunshine on this final day of the 1st Orage European Freeski Open Laax and we kept the best for last: the Halfpipe finals. The Halfpipe discipline is always a spectacular show, but when you have riders like Candide Thovex, TJ Schiller and Simon Dumont, it becomes insane.

Let's just say it: Candide Thovex of France simply dominated the event. He was pulling off huge tricks landing them so smoothly you did not even hear him. Candide went so high, you could see moviemakers and photographers completely change their camera angle and aim



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for the sky. Candide started his runs with a huge flare mute, onto a tale grab, a cork 9 and an alley oop spin 7. He was so high up; he could just lean back, relax and give style to all his moves. Thovex is THE winner of the Halfpipe final in this first edition of the Orage European Freeski Open Laax period.

From this event emerged a new name: Iisko Heiskanen. This Finland rider was amazing. He was getting amazing amplitude that you could here whispers: "wooo, this guy could actually take Thovex." For the North Americans a new talent has arisen from this European Open Laax and that's what it's all about. Simon Dumont from the USA got third place and actually insisted on getting the mike to introduce and congratulate the winner for his obvious win.

Marie Martinod from France took the win in the women category. She went for amplitude even though she had fallen really bad in practice: "That fall was brutal, I'm just so high on adrenaline that I go numb and don't feel the pain, but in about 2 hours, I won't be able to move" said Marie just before going on the podium! The other great women who got onto the podiums: Anaïs Caradeux 2nd also from France and Virginie Faivre from Switzerland, who won first place in the Slopestyle finals the day before, got 3rd.

### **Orage European Freeski Open Laax 2006 - Results HALFPIPE, March 25, 2006**

#### Men

1. Candide Thovex/FRA
2. Iisko Heiskanen/FIN
3. Simon Dumont/USA

#### Women

1. Marie Martinod/FRA
2. Anaïs Caradeux/FRA
3. Virginie Faivre/SUI

This concludes the 1st edition of the Orage European Freeski Open Laax. Thank you to all the athletes, team managers, park shapers, judges, medias, photographers and the smiley bar. Thank you to the MTC team and the incredible team of Laax.

Jamie Brandon Marketing Manager of Orage said: "The Orage European Freeski Open Laax was a tremendous success in the eyes of Orage and I believe, all who witnessed the event. The professionalism, attention to detail, and overall dedication was remarkable. We are excited to continue on with the event for years to come and proud of our great partnership!"

**See you all next year, at the 2nd edition of the Orage European Freeski Open Laax!**



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