*22 January 2022*

**Day of silver for the Spanish contestants Núria Castan and Abel Moga at the spectacular start to the 2022 Freeride World Tour at Baqueira Beret**

* **Baqueira Beret makes an unbeatable host for the first test of the Freeride World Tour held in Spain with 4,500 spectators cheering on the riders and celebrating the silver medals for the Catalan Núria Castan in snowboard and the Aranese Abel Maga in ski with an ecstatic crowd.**
* **The wildcard Max Palm won the ski men with the first double backflip in FWT history**

A historic day for freeride as the first stop of the 2022 Freeride World Tour on Saturday, 22 January at the Val d’Aran and Valls d’Àneu ski resort was a great success. With spectacular conditions, more than 4,500 dedicated local supporters and first-class performances by the 44 qualifying riders, the event has left its mark as the first FWT test held in Spain.

The competition ran with a powdery snow layer and anticyclonic, but very cold, weather conditions; -10º C first thing in the morning in Beret. The organisation and skiers and snowboarders certainly found good snow in the Baciver area.

The day started with the snowboard women category. The veteran **Erika Vikander** achieved a brilliant start to the season with a soft line and a sequence of jumps that gave her victory, her first on tour. **Núria Castán Barón** (SP) was placed second, attending as a wildcard, and has shown that she has the level to compete with the best in the world. The Catalan said she was "very grateful for the wildcard I was given to compete at Baqueira and this second place encourages me to keep fighting the rest of the season. Freeride is growing a lot in Spain and what has been experienced here today is good proof of it". Third place went to **Tiphanie Perrotin (FRA)**. At 19 years old, **Max Palm (SWE)** was in the limelight after winning the ski men category with the first double backflip in FWT history This trick was followed by several other freestyle elements, all in a solid, energetic ski from the top to the finish. The limelight was shared, judging by the multitudinous local spectators, with the young Aranese **Abel Moga (SP), at** only 20 years old, who worked up the crowd filling the natural amphitheatre that forms the base of the Baciver.

From Vielha, he said he was "very happy and proud to have been able to compete in my first FWT test here in Baqueira. I think it has been a very complete descent and the best way to give back all the support I'm receiving from the people at home. For me, being here was already a prize, but taking second place was something unthinkable just a few months ago". **Craig Murray (NZL)** completed the podium in ski men.

Also noteworthy was the performance of a local rider, the architect to a great extent of the FWT's arrival in the Lleida Pyrenees, **Aymar Navarro,** who marked an impossible line to surprise judges, although this time the move did not turn out well and he fell on the steep slopes of the northernmost face of the Baciver. After checking that he was unscathed after such a big fall, the rider from Les said that "competing at home with all these spectators supporting is a dream come true. I was confident and eager to do something great because with all these supporters it's hard not to be encouraged. Unfortunately, it didn't go as I wanted, but fortunately I think I'm fine and hopefully the next FWT test will go better".

As respects snowboard men, **Michael Mawn (USA)** took first place thanks to the numerous tricks he completed in a powerful and creative line. Despite losing his place in the Tour in 2021, he was able to recover it through the Freeride World Qualifier that same season, and his victory today clearly demonstrates his rightful place among the best. **Camille Armand (FRA)** and **Cody Bramwell (UK)** completed the podium in snowboard men.

In ski women, **Olivia McNeill (CAN)** marked a spectacular return to the FWT after suffering an injury in 2021. The young Canadian was able to seamlessly connect two major jumps, showing a clean and aggressive technique to convincingly win in her category. **Hedvig Wessel (NOR)** finished in second place, followed in third place by **Zuzanna Witych (POL)**. This event was sponsored by Audi and Catalana Occidente Seguros, in addition to the collaboration of the Conselh Generau d'Aran, the Diputació de Lleida, the Ajuntament del Naut Aran and the Consell Català de l'Esport

With the first event completed and the first general rankings established, athletes now have a brief break before the circuit moves on to Ordino Arcalís, Andorra (30 January - 5 February) for the second stop of 2022.

Video Statements in SP/CAT by Spanish riders: <https://we.tl/t-aKmlj44Ua5>

FWT general videos and photos: <https://bit.ly/3nOa6WD>Photos environment around the event and podiums ©TxemaTrull: <https://bit.ly/3GWtUhO>

Photos opening day 21 ©TxemaTrull: <https://we.tl/t-lmmWNWjW02>

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