Press Release

19th March 2016

**Lucas Eguibar, 1st qualified for the FIS Snowboard Wold Cup final race in Baqueira Beret**

**On Saturday 19th, Val d’Aran ski resort has received the 49 male riders who have participated in the qualifying race. In this classification, the RFEDI Basque rider has been the fastest, which let him get through the final race, which will take place tomorrow at midday. The female classification race has been postponed to Sunday.**

**The other components of the Spanish team: Regino Hernández has won a place for the final in the second round and Laro Herrero has been left out.**

The day has started out with quite weather. The organization has worked hard in order to finalize all details of the competition. Early in the morning, the 72 participants (49 men and 23 women) have begun training in the circuit. The first race has started at 1pm, two hours later than expected in order to ensure the track. Because of this delay, the women's classification has been postponed to Sunday 20th, before the big final.

More than 1,500 people have cheered enthusiastically the athletes during the race done in Blanhiblar Beret. They have enjoyed the show while seeing the riders jumping up to 25m. They have tasted traditional products from Val d’Aran in the Village, such as Olla Aranesa (is a typical mountain dish, best enjoyed when it's cold outside) and have fun in all activities carried out near the circuit. Moreover, they have listened to live music.

Fans of this spectacular sport have also gathered in the staring line in order to encourage the riders. On Sunday attendees will vibrate at the finish line and living the closing party, which will be held form 2.30pm in the Village, where there will be a DJ.

**Lucas Eguibar, first qualified**

The Spanish rider from RFEDI, Lucas Eguibar, has a chance to get on the podium of the World Cup circuit, because at the moment he is fourth. He has been the rider becoming the fastest time in the first qualifying round this Saturday, with 53.88. The Austrian Alessandro Haemmerle (54.47) has been the second one in the first round and he is the main rival of the Basque athlete, which occupies the second place in the overall classification. The third position has been for the Russian Aleksandr Guzachev, with a time of 54.55.

After completing the winning downhill Eguibar exclaimed: "the atmosphere is amazing, when I was at the start line everyone started screaming and cheering me up... It was an amazing feeling, so many people encouraging me. Hopefully we can repeat it many times". According to tomorrow's final he explained that "the circuit is very technical and the race can be won at the very start. Starting in the first position can be the key. It is important to do every part whithout wasting time”. If he is able to be the first one tomorrow, Eguibar could be the second one of the SBX circuit.

**Regino Hernández**, also rider from RFEDI, has been qualified in the second round. After both rounds he explained: "in the first race down I found it hard to keep pace and in the second one I knew the snow was softer and the track was slower, so I had to give everything to arrive among the best 32”. The Andalusian rider said: "I am very happy to be in the final. It would be great to get a good result at home."

**Laro Herrero**, who **has been left out,** explained that "in the first run I was pretty good but I made a mistake and I lost the opportunity. After the second run I haven’t go down with the same intensity, the track was slower. Moreover, after the injury I haven’t regained confidence. Now I will concentrate on next season".

**A decisive final**

On Sunday 20th at noon the 32 classified riders from the male category will compete in the final race. In the female category, the 16 runners who will compete in the final will be decided on Sunday. Men will fight in the first run to be in the 1/16th finals and women in the 1/8th. Runners will go down in groups of 4 and the first two of each heat will advance to the next round (second round, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals) until you reach the final and consolation final to decide the positions from 1 to 8.

Pierre Vaultier (France), which mathematically is already the champion, said that "it is a technical and difficult track, a real challenge for all riders competing”. The current Olympic leader stands at 1,200 points above the Austrian occupying the second position, Alessandro Haemmerle (3,440), followed by Nikolay Olyunin (Russia) with 3,060. In the fifth and sixth places are Nick Baumgartner (USA) and Alex Pullin (Austria) with 2,306 and 2,163 points respectively. In the women category, the Crystal Globe will be played until the last second and the leading candidate is the Italian Michela Moioli, with 4,650 points. Eva Samkova Czech Republic, with 4,260 points, and the French Nelly Moenne Loccoz (3,720 points) can also obtain the best results. The riders who complete the Top 6 are Trespeuch Chloe (France) with 3,660 points, Belle Brockhoff (Australia) with 3,460 and Lindsey Jacobellis (USA), with 3,410 points.In total there are 72 snowboarders (49 men and 23 women) from 20 countries (Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, USA, Spain, Finland, France, Holland, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Czech Republic, Russia and Switzerland).

The 2015-2016 World Cup circuit has hosted 7 tests spread over various European and Asian ski resorts. Baqueira Beret will host the big final, which will decide the champions of the highest international SBX circuit. It is a spectacular sport and is one of the few sports in which there is physical contact and where strategy and improvisation are mixed, which means that the downhill is very explosive.

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