



ON SUNDAY SANTA CATERINA WILL HOST THE LAST DOWNHILL RACE OF THE YEAR

The first training run on the Deborah Compagnoni is planned for tomorrow at 11.30am - The track is amazing, hard and icy, just what the "Azzurri" like - Christof Innerhofer: he's been suffering from flu for the last three days

SANTA CATERINA VALFURVA, DECEMBER 26TH - At least here you don't have to look at the sky and "feel" the air so often to understand if sooner or later snow will come. There's plenty of snow on the track named after Deborah Compagnoni: the Santa Caterina Valfurva snow guns have been working hard at the bottom of the pist and in the woods. Day and night. While on the top part, among the rocks of Mount Sobretta, snow has always been there. What an amazing track. Icy and hard, just what the Italians like and what Hannes Trinkl liked too. The former Austrian champion is now the FIS director for fast World Cup races and he was the one who created the race track on Wednesday - with very good taste and great satisfaction. In short, the organizers couldn't do better.

Now it's the DH racers' turn, starting from tomorrow - on Boxing day - with the first official training at 11.30am. On Christmas night the temperatures dropped in the village too and went below zero. And a snow fall is forecasted on Saturday night: they say twenty cm of snow, but that shouldn't compromise the performance of the much awaited for DH World Cup race, the one that regularly takes place on the last Sunday of December in Alta Valtellina. And this year it takes place in the ambitious Santa Caterina Valfurva. You get to the heart of the town square and guess who's the one who welcomes you with the first smile?

It's Deborah Compagnoni, obviously. The one who - to remind it to the youngest - was absolutely the greatest champion in the history of Italian skiing. We were writing of her track: perfect, just like the race director Omar Galli proudly defined it. And it's quite difficult, especially at the beginning where it is very sinuous, just like the DH lords will realize tomorrow. The Italians have already tried it when back from their North America tour and for what the first minute of the track is concerned - that is, from the start (2750 m) at Cresta Sobretta, to the entry in the woods (more or less between the ski lift curve and the Gimondi curve. That's where Christof Innerhofer had very good feelings and was the fastest of all. Yes, even faster than Dominik Paris. Maybe because his back pains gave him a little peace, maybe because the track turns between walls and jumps just like he likes. Unfortunately, the silver medal in the Olympic downhill in Sochi has been suffering from a mild flu for 2 or 3 days. That's why he is in his hotel room and tomorrow could decide not to take part in the first training.

Dominik Paris keeps representing the leading figure of our national team: he's now going strong even in super-G and has got a series of impressive results in the six speed races of this season. He was fourth and third in Lake Louise, third and fifth in Beaver Creek, third and second in Val Gardena. What's missing is the first place. But Kjetil Jansrud is there. "But sooner or later he could do something wrong too" sighed the South Tyroler. Maybe on Sunday.



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