



## Sunshine, hard-fought contests and relaxed park action – a perfect summary of the 27th Kaunertal Opening!

*This weekend the Snowpark Kaunertal officially started into the new winter season with festival, contests, sideevents and parties and truly amazed thousands of snow-addicts, jibbers and party animals.*

With blue skies and sunshine the Kaunertal welcomed its visitors already on Friday for the opening of the Snowpark and the start of the winter season 2012/2013. Weather conditions of previous days resulted in an unexpected challenge for the Snowpark-team, which was handled in many nightshifts and loads of working hours. By that they succeeded in putting up a small but very fine park with rails, boxes and a kicker, which was pretty entertaining over the 3 opening days.

The true highlight of the weekend was the KTO Pro Contest on Saturday, where snowboarders and freeskiers were battling for a total of 7,000 USD prize money.

The first ranks in the snowboard division were quite tight, as expected, and last years winner Eric Beauchemin (US) was challenged by riders like Jamie Nicholls (GB) and Nuutti Niemelä (FIN). For sure the judges had a hard time to award this fat lump of prize money, but finally it was again Eric Beauchemin who took the shot followed by David Loibl (AUT) and Ryan Hryckiewicz (US). 15-year-old Rowan Coultas (GB) won the best rookie award. Elena Koenz (CH) who only left rank 2 and 3 for her competitors Anna Gasser (AUT) and Birgit Rofner (AUT) dominated the snowboard ladies division.

Freeski Pro Riders also pulled out hell of a show for judges and spectators. Roy Kittler (GER) already did score the best male rider award the last 2 years and was challenged by riders like Flo Geyer (GER) and Tobi Mangold (GER) this year. At the end of the jam session the inevitable happened and surprise, Roy Kittler remains unbeaten also in 2012 for the 3rd time in a row, with Germany's Jakob Kratzer on 2nd (also scoring best rookie award) and the Austrian Raphael Schweiger on 3rd position. Talking about the freeski ladies, they also had a tough battle going on. Lisa Zimmermann (GER) dominated Sarah Pöppel (GER) and Philo Bair (AUT).

Of course the pro contest was not the only highlight for the shredders.

Friday was full of rail action presented by downdays.eu and Snowboarder MBM at the glacier restaurant, where fame and honour was as rewarding as the countless soft and hardgoods provided by all festival partners. Overall winners were Flo Geyer (freeski) and snowboarder Klaus Lotto.



Saturday continued (again with bluebird conditions) with the Micro Shred session by Skiing Mag, where riders had to handle the picnic table, doing this on shorter skies than usual. A funny session with extraordinary tricks and loads of entertainment. New this year was the KTO Photo competition powered by Sweet Protection, which awarded the best pics of the Kaunertal Opening with a complete Sweet Protection outfit.

Also the amateurs got their fair share of adrenaline on Sunday, who had the chance to share the same battlefield as the pros on Saturday. Spencer Keirnes (US) took the lead over Alex Hall (US) and Alexander Benz (CH) in the amateur freeski division. Amateur snowboarders put a heavy decision on the judges too – finally results placed Thomas Wolf (A) in first position, followed by Benno Postert from Germany and the Austrian Dominik Metzler.

Over 35 Freeski and Snowboard brands were also part of the game: everything from boots to boards to goggles to protection was explained and handed out to the shredders for serious testing. No questions left on what equipment to use for the next winter.

On Friday and Saturday evening an action-loaded program on the mountain was completed by a sensational party in the valley. On Friday night loads of party animals celebrated until early morning with Golden Reef, AG Trio and DJ Dan in the party tent in Feichten.

Lipstick productions and Junkies on a Budget also presented their latest movies. More sick riding action was shown on Saturday by the Pirate Movie Production and Legs of Steel, before the party marathon peaked with quality tunes presented by Yambalaya and the Wax Wreckaz and of course the main act Mono & Nikitaman.

All in all a pretty successful KTO Opening 2012 that only could be commented by Stefan Richter from the Kaunertal Glacier with the following: "With the current snow situation we have succeeded to build a perfect park set-up for the KTO. The weather forecast predicts plenty of snow for the coming days so we will be able to open the big snow park next weekend."

As always, the show must go on, so save the date for the obligatory must attend happening of the 28. KTO 2013 from 11th to 13th October next year.

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