



Interview



Carles Visa

Manager of the Andorran Ski Federation

«I'm sure we'll have a great end to the season»

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After the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Andorra, we spoke to Carles Visa (manager of the Andorran Ski Federation, FAE) about the organization of top-level competitions, budgets,

the development of skiing, in general, and the perspectives of Andorran skiers, in particular.

-The budget of the FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Andorra is estimated at 2 million euros, of which Andorra spent about 25%. How is this budget divided?

-The Andorran government covers most of it. There are also several local and international

sponsors. This is what creates a certain balance.

-It would be interesting to know how much the winners of such competitions earn.

-About one hundred and fifty thousand euros for each day of the competition. This amount is distributed among the ten best skiers. The first prize is about 30,000 euros; the second prize about 20,000 euros; etc.

-Could you please explain what exactly is the co-operation between the Andorran Ski Federation and the FIS?

-We are members of the FIS, and we have the right to be part of this big family and to be able to organise races, prepare courses and participate in existing disciplines. Our joint mission is to promote skiing!

-We can't help but ask what

difficulties the organizers had to face because of Andorra's unusually warm winter and the almost complete absence of snow. Last year, there was a similar situation, and the organizers, in their own words, had to pour about three tonnes of salt on the slope to prepare it for the competition. Did they have to mix artificial snow with salt this year, too?

-Fatal is never fatal. The competitions finally took place,

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so all the hard work of the organizers was a success. Skiing is a sport that depends very much on meteorological conditions: sometimes it's hot, sometimes it's cold, sometimes it's snowing and sometimes there is almost no snow.... Professionalism is about adapting to the conditions and preparing everything required. Last year, we used salt; this year, we didn't have to do that.

Besides, the salt we have to use sometimes is ecological salt, which does nothing bad to the earth - even animals eat it in summer.

-However, on Sunday we saw many skiers falling. Saturday's competition winner Lara Gut also complained that the snow was very hard...

-The slope is definitely very demanding. It is very difficult, and these are the conditions that the FIS requires from us. Before the start of the competition, the FIS inspected the slope and confirmed that it was in good condition.

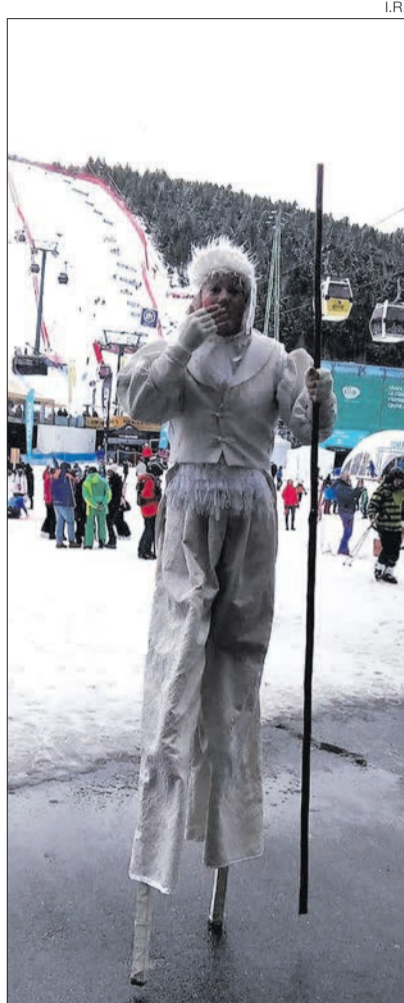
Not all skiers can adapt. Lara is a great champion, and the other skiers are also great professionals. But as I've already said, this slope is very long, very challenging and the runners finish very tired if they get to the end and don't fall.

-Let's talk about the FAE. What is the annual funding of the federation?

-It's 2.8 million euros. The main sponsor is Creand Bank. Then, each branch has its own sponsor. Andbank is the main sponsor of cross-country skiing and Creand Assegurances Vida is the sponsor of the new freestyle section.

-Where do Andorran skiers train?

-From May to November, they



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train outside Andorra. We look for snow wherever there is snow. In July, we go to the mountains in Central Europe, where there are glaciers, and in August, we move to South America (Chile or Argentina) where we stay for long preparatory training sessions. By November, we come back here and hold our first competitions. During the competition period, we travel all over the world.

-This year we saw only one skier representing Andorra. Unfortunately, she was not able

to finish. How do you assess her prospects?

-Carla Mijares is a young skier with great potential for the future. It is great that she was able to participate and get this experience.

-And what are the prospects of Andorra's most famous skier, Joan Verdu?

-It's going great so far. I think this guy has everything he needs to establish himself in the top five. We hope that Joan will do well. He has every opportunity to perform well, and he will do it. He's been

on the podium this year. I'm sure we'll have a great end to the season.

-Here in Andorra, we have seen the best female skiers in the world! Has it become more technical, more difficult, faster?

-It's a very technical and difficult sport, linked to the natural conditions. This combination makes it so special. We prepare nine months a year for these thirteen downhill descents, eight super-G descents, eleven GS descents and thirteen slalom descents.

-What can you say about the development of the FIS? Is it true that freeride may be included in the list of disciplines for the Olympic Games in the coming years?

-Yes, in recent news, the International Olympic Committee is working on making freeride an Olympic discipline. The sport has a lot of fans and is very popular in the media. It would be very positive if freeride athletes participated in the Olympic Games.

-Are you a freeride fan, too?
-Yes, but I prefer easier slopes (laughing)...



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