



Media Release

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Ski orienteering now in the Winter Universiade 2021 programme

Even more sport at the Winter Universiade 2021: ski orienteering will be included in the competition programme as the 10th discipline. This was decided today by the International University Sports Federation at the request of the Swiss organisers. The competitions will be held in the Biathlon Arena Lenzerheide.

Ski orienteering will complete the competition programme of the 30th Winter Universiade in Switzerland from 21 to 31 January 2021: this was decided today by the Executive Committee of the International University Sports Federation FISU at the request of the Swiss organisers. Urs Hunkeler, Managing Director of the Winter Universiade 2021, is delighted with the decision: «Under the leadership of Swiss Orienteering, the international orienteering community has worked very hard to achieve a successful outcome and to secure funding. This is a strong commitment to the Winter Universiade.»

«An important milestone in the long-term strategy»

After several student world championships, this year ski orienteering was included for the first time in the programme of the world's largest student winter sports event in Krasnoyarsk (Russia). For the international orienteering community, the inclusion in the programme of the 30th Winter Universiade in 2021 is an important milestone in the long-term strategy, as Swiss Orienteering President Jürg Hellmüller explains: «Our goal is to be part of the Winter Universiade mandatory programme. It is therefore of central importance to participate again in two years' time after our first appearance in Krasnoyarsk.»

High proportion of students in ski orienteering

Ski orienteering, abbreviated to Ski-O, combines the sports of orienteering and cross-country skiing. It will be the tenth discipline in the 30th Winter Universiade programme, after biathlon, cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, freestyle skiing, snowboarding, curling, ice hockey, short track and figure skating. For Mike Kurt, the President of Swiss University Sports, it is an ideal addition: «Hardly any other sport so clearly exemplifies the motto of the international association 'Excellence in Mind and Body'.» According to Swiss Orienteering, about three-quarters of orienteers are students, including orienteers on foot, bikes and skis.



Ski orienteers will compete at Lenzerheide

The Ski-O competitions will be held in parallel to the biathlon races at Lenzerheide. This venue has hosted numerous world-class events such as the Tour de Ski, and already has experience of Ski-O international title competitions: in 2015 the Elite European Championships and the Masters World Championships were held at this winter sports resort in Grisons. Local Organising Committee President Hannes Parpan explains: «We are very pleased that Lenzerheide will be the venue for a second discipline, which will offer spectators an even more attractive programme. I am convinced that the Biathlon Arena offers optimal conditions to master the challenges presented by two parallel disciplines.» The successful sports event manager is also enthusiastic about the sustainability of the inclusion of Ski-O: the legacy of the Winter Universiade at Lenzerheide is expected to be increased promotion of young talent and intensified training schedules.

Die Winteruniversiade

The Winter Universiade is the largest winter multisport event after the Olympic Games. In 2021 the 30th occasion of this unique event will take place in Central Switzerland. The organisation is a joint project of the six cantons of Central Switzerland Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Obwalden, Nidwalden and Zug, and the City of Lucerne. The programme from the 21st to the 31st January 2021 comprises ten sporting disciplines, to be contested at seven event venues. Students aged between 17 and 25 from more than 540 universities in 50 countries are expected to attend. A total of over 2500 individuals will take part.

Pictures and more information about the Winter Universiade Lucerne 2021 may be found at www.winteruniversiade2021.ch

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