

## ZERMATT BERGBAHNEN IS RETHINKING ITS SUMMER SKIING STRATEGY

Zermatt, 16 April 2024

In connection with its strategy of providing skiing facilities all year round, Zermatt Bergbahnen intends to concentrate its summer skiing operations on visitors from Switzerland and abroad. An improved offering will address the issue of high levels of demand. At the same time, Zermatt Bergbahnen will make a number of glacier training slopes available exclusively for the use of young talent from the ski clubs, regional associations and National Performance Centres from summer 2024. The training provision for elite athletes in all winter sports will be discontinued and reassessed for summer 2025, in line with the decisions of the FIS and the two national federations Swiss-Ski and FISI regarding the World Cup races in Zermatt/Cervinia.

**Summer skiing** is as popular as ever. Climate change and generally rising temperatures are leading visitors to seek out cooler destinations in the summer. This is illustrated by the pleasing number of ski tourists coming from northern Italy to enjoy summer skiing here in recent years, a positive trend confirmed by increasing numbers of skiers from other international markets. The new “SnowXperience Plateau Rosa” beginners’ park operating on Testa Grigia gives visitors a chance to get their first taste of skiing or snowboarding alongside a range of other activities on the snow and ice in the summer ski area.

The **promotion of young talent** is a key pillar of Zermatt Bergbahnen’s strategy. Ski clubs, regional associations represented by their junior teams, and the National Performance Centres (NPC West, Central and East) provide important foundations for youngsters participating in winter sports. The large number of children and young people actively committed to skiing produces many good athletes destined for a career as a professional skier. For the resorts, these ski fans go on to form a vitally important pool from which to recruit instructors, mountain guides and promoters of winter sports. Zermatt Bergbahnen has a key role to play in supporting young enthusiasts and contributing to the development of skiing and snow sports generally. For example, free travel in Zermatt for children up to the age of nine.

Zermatt Bergbahnen has been investing money and human resources to provide **skiers from Switzerland and abroad** with the perfect infrastructure for training during the summer months in preparation for the World and European Cup seasons. If World Cup races had been staged in Zermatt/Cervinia, Zermatt Bergbahnen and its partners in Cervinia, across the border in Italy, would have offered the skiing elite innovative downhill runs with no equal, as well as training facilities to prepare for the races. This was not how the associations and athletes viewed the provision, however, with the result that the four World Cup races were removed from the Alpine Ski World Cup calendar for 2024/25 – despite the five-year contract with the FIS. The annual investment in preparing pistes for top-level athletes will immediately be diverted to supporting junior skiers, who enjoy the training conditions in Zermatt. At the same time, the resort waives any claim to federal funding related to the national sports facility programme. Elite athletes will be able to use Zermatt’s summer ski slopes (21 km) for free skiing in the same way as other visitors.

**Decision effective as of summer 2024**

Franz Julen, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and Markus Hasler, CEO Zermatt Bergbahnen AG, say: “Starting this summer, there will be no training pistes in Zermatt for elite ski teams. The situation will be reviewed in a year’s time. This strategic decision means that young teams from ski clubs, the regional associations and NPCs will be provided with a generous, specially adapted infrastructure with training times throughout the summer months. The decision is effective immediately and ensures that Zermatt Bergbahnen will continue to play its part in the development of the next generation of winter sports talent. Furthermore, visitors will be able to enjoy an expanded offering and greater variety during their summer ski breaks in Zermatt. Free skiing on natural snow in the summer is set to become even more attractive.”

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