

# Clément Noël takes the first slalom

## World Cup Chamonix Mont-Blanc / Les Houches

Press release - Saturday 30th January, 2021

The organisers and racers had to face hellish conditions today on La Verte in Les Houches. The rain, which had fallen steadily over the last few days, decided to pour down just as the first run was about to start, making it even more challenging. This was a marked contrast between the 2020 competition with its electric atmosphere and bright sunshine, and this first slalom of the weekend which was closed to the public and besieged by rain. But that didn't stop the 69 contenders doing battle in a race that was every bit as nail-biting as this season's other slaloms.

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The tight turns of course, set by the Austrian Paul Schwarzacher, proved difficult for the athletes, who found it hard going. At the end of the first run, only three hundredths of a second separated Marco Schwarz, who led with a time of 50.70, and Clément Noël winner of the 2020 race. The Swiss giant Ramon Zenhausern finished between the two just 2 hundredths of a second behind the leader.

The specially iced piste was unable to resist the weather conditions and the second run was always going to be tricky for the later starters. Conversely the first to race could expect to improve their ranking. First through the gate was Jean-Baptiste Grange who, due to a minor mistake, was unable to exploit this advantage. It was the complete opposite for Luca Aerni who flew up the rankings spectacularly from 29th to 4th place, with the fastest time of the second run.

The three frontrunners who enjoyed a comfortable lead, were engaged in a thrilling battle for the top spot. In the end victory went to Clément Noël, winner of the same race last year, who outstripped the Swiss Ramon Zenhausern by 16 hundredths of a second and Austrian Marco Schwarz, the current leader of the Slalom World Cup, by 19 hundredths of a second.

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### Clément Noël (FRA), 1st :

*"I don't know if it's me that loves Chamonix or if Chamonix loves me. In any case it's certainly true I won here as a youngster and this is my second World Cup victory on these slopes so..... I always feel good when I'm in Chamonix, even in the rain! I took as many risks as I could, which meant my second run wasn't perfect, but I didn't really have a choice as I'm not generally very good in these kinds of conditions. Today has boosted my confidence and I'm going to enjoy it for now, without thinking about tomorrow. Once I get back to the hotel it will be time to calm down, refocus and prepare for the second day of competition."*

### Ramon Zenhausern (SUI), 2nd :

*"I set off in full attack mode, I didn't have a choice! Today I took a few more risks than I did in other races and I'm really proud to be on the podium. The conditions weren't easy but skiing is an outdoor sport and we're used to training and competing in difficult conditions. Personally, I'd rather it was raining than -30°C! And I also love water skiing ! I'm really excited to be finishing this month of slalom races here in Chamonix tomorrow!"*

### Marco Schwarz (AUT), 3rd :

*"For me the second run was one of the hardest this year. I knew that I had to give it my all as the other two were just a few hundredths of a second behind me. I really went for it and despite a small mistake in the middle it went pretty well overall. I'm happy to be on the podium."*

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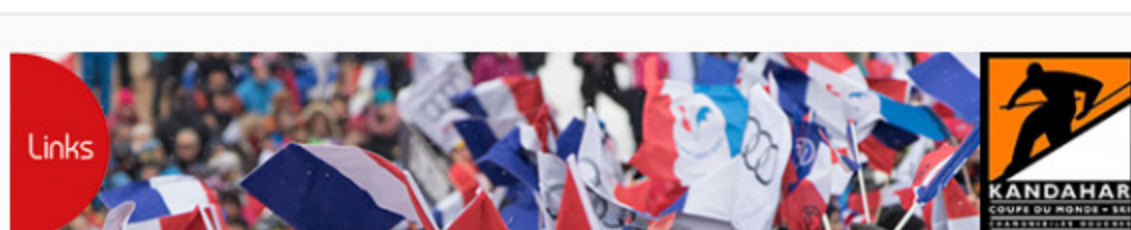
### Fred Comte, director Chamonix Club des Sports :

*"Today was the fruition of over a month of hard work by our team who produced a really decent piste. Despite the weather conditions not being in our favour, we reacted quickly and made some good decisions over the last two days. Following last night's temperatures, we were back at 6am to rework the piste. Whilst the rain might have been inconvenient for the racers we still managed to witness some impressive comebacks such as the amazing rise of Luca Aerni who took full advantage of the great conditions for his run. I'd like to say an enormous thank you to all the professionals and the 600 volunteers who worked on the piste and who have supported all weekend long to make sure the races ran smoothly."*

### Michel Vion, president of the French Ski Federation :

*"Despite the pandemic and the weather, it's always a beautiful day when a Frenchman wins, even if it's raining! It's been very rewarding for everyone involved and particularly for the Chamonix Mont-Blanc valley who were fully committed and worked enormously hard. Chamonix has once again produced an unmissable event and we knew we could count on them. The only thing missing was 15,000 spectators...."*

[See all the photos and videos on the Kandahar website](#)



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