



## THE ENGADIN SKIMARATHON

### Its origins and development

The idea of staging a major cross-country ski event in the Engadin was first embraced in the late sixties. At the time, cross-country skiing was a relatively new sport, but people were beginning to realise it had an exciting future ahead of it. However, the path from the initial idea to the actual running of the first race proved to be a long uphill climb, with all kinds of obstacles having to be overcome along the way. Initiator and 'spiritual father' of the Engadin Skimarathon was St. Moritz sporting goods dealer and former ski racer Albert Scheuing.

Some 945 men and women registered for the first Engadin Skimarathon in March 1969, a high and unprecedented number. After the success of the first race, it became clear that the event was set to become a tradition and that the organisers could expect a steady increase in the number of competitors. Even the greatest optimist could not have dreamed that one day over 12,000 skiers would be lining up for the Engadin Skimarathon.

The attachment contains the following sets of statistics, reflecting the Marathon's impressive development over the years:

- Number of competitors
- Records
- Nationalities of the competitors
- Number of returning competitors

### Organisation

Since its inception, the Engadine Skimarathon has been organised by the nine Upper Engadine ski clubs of Maloja, Sils, Corvatsch/Silvaplana, Suvretta/Champfèr, Alpina/St. Moritz, Trais Fluors/Celerina, Bernina/ Pontresina, Piz Ot/Samedan and Zuoz/S-chanf. In 2002 the ski club Sarsura/Zernez joined the organisation.

Until 1978 the Marathon was run by an organising committee representing between one and three ski clubs. The committee was responsible for the actual organisation as well as the election of a president and a sub-committee for a term from one to two years. This meant the Marathon secretariat had to switch to a new location at least every two years. Since September 1979, however, the office has been located in Pontresina and the organising committee is now made up of members representing all of the participating ski clubs. In autumn 2000 the secretariat of the Engadin Skimarathon moved to a new bigger and modern office in Samedan, Haus Swisscom.

Until 1999, the Engadin Skimarathon employed a full-time secretary for nine months of the year, from September to May. Since then, however, the office has been occupied the whole year round. The preliminary work begins in August: setting up the programme, ordering the starting numbers and reserving accommodation, etc. From the end of October and over the course of the winter, some 25,000 programmes are sent out to competitors. Over the years the workload in the secretariat has steadily increased. Telephone, postage and other fees now amount to over CHF 50,000.

The organising committee convenes two to three times a year to discuss any pending problems in the individual sections. Considering the scale of the event, the number of issues that need addressing are few. Thanks to experience, routine and low staff turnover within the individual sections, the organising committee is able to keep the number of meetings down to a minimum. Naturally the individual sections also organise their own separate meetings, since, after all, if an event of this size is to run smoothly and efficiently, meticulous planning and preparation are essential. The event itself involves

- Transporting over 12,000 persons to Maloja
- Transporting over 11,000 items of baggage from the starting line to the finishing line
- Transporting over 12,000 persons back from the finishing line in Zuoz/S-chanf
- Setting up medical, waxing, repair and refreshment posts
- Dealing with over 150 media representatives (from radio, TV, press, film and photo agencies)
- Ensuring the efficient flow of traffic

Due to the sheer size of the event, it is impossible to describe in detail all the organisational tasks that are required to be carried out before, during and after. For this reason, the focus is laid on 'refreshments' to give you an idea of the logistics involved in setting up and equipping seven refreshments posts.

Some 50 employees from Rivella and Knorr, together with around **500** volunteers (!), are on hand to provide competitors with refreshments along the route. Preparations for this task alone commence some four to five months before the event. In the last few years one Engadin Skimarathon provided the following foods and beverages:

3'800 litres RIVELLA  
9'600 litres RIVELLA Marathon  
3'000 litres Tee  
12'000 special rice cakes  
4'500 litres Bouillon  
7'000 Bananas  
210 kg CHAMPION PowerPacks

## A brief note on the financial aspect

A false notion persists that the nine participating ski clubs reap enormous profits from the Engadin Marathon. In fact, 1999 was the first year in the history of the Marathon that each of the nine clubs received a modest sum of CHF 2,000 from the proceeds. Moreover, the income from registration fees would by no means cover the overall cost of over CHF 1 million. In the year 2000, for the first time in many years, the starting fee is being raised from CHF 70 to CHF 80. It is thanks to our sponsors like Coop, Interdiscount, Rivella, Helvetia, Craft, FIT for LIFE, Gesundheit Sprechstunde, Toko, Rossignol, Swisscom, Perskindol, Valser, Auto Pfister AG, CWK, Exel, Hartmann-Bau, Unilever Switzerland as well as further partners like RhB, Engadin Bus, Telecomm Sportservice, Datasport, Radio Rumantsch, Flablager among others, that we are able to stage an event of this scale and keep on top of the growing cost of preparing the trails, printing, transportation, etc.

We should just like to mention at this point that all organising committee members as well as all the officials helping out on the day (over 1,000) offer their services for the Engadin Skimarathon on a voluntary, unpaid basis.

## Changes and improvements over the years

- **Starting procedure:** The organising committee tries always to bring in improvements for the participants. For this reason the mass start, which was very appealing for the media and the public, was replaced by a block start in 1993. Today there are four waves with different starting times. The allocation of the competitors to their block is made on the basis of their results from the previous two years. Since this change the start is a lot more untroubled.
- **Transportation of competitors' belongings:** In 1999 the transport of the personal belongings has been reorganised. Since then the participants can get their bags very quickly in the finishing area from the same truck to which they had handed them in at the start.
- **Distribution of the starting numbers:** In 1999 the procedure to get the starting number was improved. The waiting time could be reduced considerably and with the new system there are no more storage costs for the equipment which were very high in the past.
- **Additional programme:** In the week before the marathon, there is a special programme for cross-country ski enthusiasts in St. Moritz-Bad, health spa centre. Competitors and spectators have the possibility to attend presentations, to try new equipment, to get tips on how to prepare for such events and to cultivate new friendships.
- **RhB (Rhätische Bahn):** Concerning the transportation there was an important change in 2000. Since then the entry fee includes a second class return ticket from a Rhaetian railway station to St. Moritz, valid on all Rhaetian railway routes.
- **Women's race:** In 2000 the women's race of the Engadin Skimarathon took place for the first time. The race, which leads over 17 km from Samedan to S-chanf, was a big success with 728 ranked women. Every year more and more women registered, in the last three years over 1'000.
- **Online registration:** for the 34<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon the participants had for the first time the possibility to register online on our homepage [www.engadin-skimarathon.ch](http://www.engadin-skimarathon.ch)
- **New staggered starts:** Since the 35<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon there is a new qualification mode for women. Competitors (men and women together) are divided up

into percentage groups according to their ranking (until then men and women were separate).

- **Ski and pole deposit:** Since 2003 participants have the possibility to deposit their skis and sticks at an indicated stand in the finishing area if they wish to remain there for some time before taking the train back.
- **Closing time for the finish:** Since 2004 the finish is closed at 4 p.m. in any case, even if the conditions are bad, this means 40 minutes later than before. Participants who arrive at the finishing line after 4 p.m. are not ranked.
- **Last passing times:** Pontresina 12.45 pm, La Punt 2.15 pm and Zuoz 3 pm
- **Printed starting list:** Since 2005 there are for ecological reasons no printed starting lists anymore. The starting list, which is updated every day, can be checked at any time on the internet at [www.engadin-skimarathon.ch](http://www.engadin-skimarathon.ch).
- **Chip timing system:** In 2006 the chip timing system was used for the first time.
- **Limited starts:** The number of participants has been limited to 13'000 since 2006.
- **Start control:** Since the 39<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon there is an electronic start control. Every participant is registered when he enters the start field by means of the electronic chip which is integrated in the starting bib.
- **Half Marathon:** With the anniversary race in 2008 a half marathon was initiated. It is held on the first 21 kilometres of the original race course from Maloja to Pontresina. Half marathon participants start together with the marathon participants. The half marathon is mainly aimed at newcomers to cross-country skiing, less trained persons, very young skiers who are not allowed to start in the main race yet and elderly people for whom the marathon distance is too long.

### Other information of interest

- A milestone in the history of the Engadin Skimarathon was undoubtedly the decision to switch the finishing post in 1998 to S-chanf where there is much more open space and buildings with the requisite infrastructure. Furthermore, in a joint agreement between the cantonal authorities, the Rhätische Bahn and the organisers of the Marathon, a new station – S-chanf–Marathon – has been built just a few metres from the finishing line. For competitors and spectators alike, this is a great improvement.
- Since its inception in 1979, the Engadin Skimarathon has been a member of 'Worldloppet', an association representing the world's largest cross-country skiing events. FIS and Worldloppet staged the FIS Marathon Cup for the first time in 1999/2000. Ever since 7 to 10 Worldloppet races have participated every year in this series, including the Engadin Skimarathon. The cup has the official status of a world cup for long-distance competitions. Each race assures the attractive prize money.
- The 40th anniversary was celebrated with many attractions. „40 years Engadin Skimarathon“ was the theme of a big exhibition in the MARATHON-Village, including a competition. For the occasion the marathon song "Uf em Weg is Ziel" was composed and presented by Claudia Schäfli. Every finisher received a special anniversary medal directly at the finishing line. A book on the 40<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon was produced by Peter Wirz.

## Statistics on the competitors

| Race                                | Year | Competitors | Rank                          |
|-------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Engadin Skimarathon | 1969 | 945         | 805                           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>                     | 1970 | 2,124       | 2'005                         |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>                     | 1971 | 4,010       | 3'546                         |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1972 | 4,737       | 4'630                         |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1973 | 6,032       | 5'567                         |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1974 | 7,406       | 6'999                         |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1975 | 9,735       | 9'241                         |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1976 | 10,126      | 9'229                         |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>                     | 1977 | 10,248      | 9'576                         |
| 10 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1978 | 12,032      | 11'085                        |
| 11 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1979 | 12,191      | 10'686                        |
| 12 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1980 | 12,536      | 11'457                        |
| 13 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1981 | 11,685      | 9'523                         |
| 14 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1982 | 10,638      | 9'884                         |
| 15 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1983 | 10,238      | 9'445                         |
| 16 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1984 | 11,056      | 10'242                        |
| 17 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1985 | 11,439      | 10'393                        |
| 18 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1986 | 11,613      | 10'281                        |
| 19 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1987 | 11,140      | 10'440                        |
| 20 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1988 | 11,758      | 10'906                        |
| 21 <sup>st</sup>                    | 1989 | 11,673      | 10'749                        |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup>                    | 1990 | 11,502      | 10'516                        |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup>                    | 1991 | 12,787      | Cancelled due to warm weather |
| 24 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1992 | 11,962      | 11'235                        |
| 25 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1993 | 12,019      | 11'049                        |
| 26 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1994 | 12,571      | 11'823                        |
| 27 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1995 | 12,295      | 11'358                        |
| 28 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1996 | 12,263      | 11'639                        |
| 29 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1997 | 12,687      | 12'043                        |
| 30 <sup>th</sup>                    | 1998 | 13,527      | 13,527                        |
| 31 <sup>st</sup>                    | 1999 | 12'640      | 11'737                        |
| 32 <sup>nd</sup>                    | 2000 | 12'711      | 11'843                        |
| 33 <sup>rd</sup>                    | 2001 | 11'862      | 11'235                        |
| 34 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2002 | 11'967      | 10'741                        |
| 35 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2003 | 12'222      | 11'194                        |
| 36 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2004 | 12'794      | 11'582                        |
| 37 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2005 | 11'689      | 10'689                        |
| 38 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2006 | 12'254      | 10'261                        |
| 39 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2007 | 10'441      | 9'088                         |
| 40 <sup>th</sup>                    | 2008 | 11'512      | 10'406                        |

A grim day for skiers and organisers in the history of the Engadin Skimarathon was the 23<sup>rd</sup> race in 1991. A sudden spell of warm weather led to the race being cancelled at short notice. This raised all kinds of new questions for the organisers, such as who is liable towards the sponsors, or towards the competitors as regards reimbursement of starting fees, etc. This new development prompted the organisation to change its status to that of a club, which meant entering it in the commercial register.

## Records

*Record times for the 42 km course finishing in Zuoz:*

Men: 1:16.10 by Hervé BALLAND, France, in 1994

Women: 1:22.8 by Silvia HONEGGER, Switzerland, in 1994

*Following the change of finishing post to S-chanf:*

Men: 1:23.44 by Christian HOFFMANN Austria, in 1998

Women: 1:28.19 by Julija TSCHEPALOVA, Russia, in 2000

*Following the adjustment of the course in the Staz Forest (since 2004):*

Men: 1:24.30, by Tor Arne HETLAND, Norway, in 2008

Women: 1:33.27, by Katrin ZELLER, Germany, in 2008

### ***Nationalities of the competitors***

The Engadin Skimarathon has become a major international sporting event, attracting a wide range of nationalities. The figures below are taken from the 40<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon in 2008:

|                | <b>Total</b>  | <b>%</b>   | <b>Marathon</b> |              | <b>Half Marathon</b> |              |
|----------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
|                |               |            | <b>Men</b>      | <b>Women</b> | <b>Men</b>           | <b>Women</b> |
| Switzerland    | 8193          | 71.2       | 6'282           | 1484         | 232                  | 195          |
| Germany        | 1'665         | 15.5       | 1'298           | 250          | 62                   | 55           |
| Italy          | 524           | 4.6        | 434             | 52           | 19                   | 19           |
| Austria        | 164           | 1.4        | 135             | 23           | 4                    | 2            |
| France         | 129           | 1.1        | 101             | 24           | 2                    | 2            |
| Czech Republic | 94            | 0.8        | 74              | 10           | 3                    | 7            |
| United Kingdom | 92            | 0.8        | 67              | 21           | 2                    | 2            |
| Finland        | 86            | 0.7        | 67              | 18           | -                    | 1            |
| Norway         | 80            | 0.7        | 60              | 18           | 2                    | -            |
| Liechtenstein  | 71            | 0.6        | 61              | 6            | 1                    | 3            |
| USA            | 59            | 0.5        | 45              | 12           | 1                    | 1            |
| Slovakia       | 51            | 0.4        | 46              | 5            | -                    | -            |
| Spain          | 47            | 0.4        | 36              | 7            | 1                    | 3            |
| Russia         | 44            | 0.4        | 31              | 8            | 1                    | 4            |
| Sweden         | 40            | 0.3        | 29              | 10           | -                    | 1            |
| Estonia        | 35            | 0.3        | 27              | 7            | 1                    | -            |
| Slovenia       | 24            | 0.2        | 21              | 3            | -                    | -            |
| Netherlands    | 23            | 0.2        | 20              | 2            | -                    | 1            |
| Luxembourg     | 20            | 0.2        | 17              | 2            | -                    | 1            |
| Canada         | 17            | 0.1        | 12              | 4            | -                    | 1            |
| Belgium        | 15            | 0.1        | 12              | 2            | -                    | 1            |
| Australia      | 10            | 0.1        | 7               | 3            | -                    | -            |
| Poland         | 8             | 0.1        | 7               | 1            | -                    | -            |
| Japan          | 4             | 0.0        | 3               | -            | 1                    | -            |
| China          | 2             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | 1                    | -            |
| Denmark        | 2             | 0.0        | 2               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Hungary        | 2             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | 1            |
| Ireland        | 2             | 0.0        | 2               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Iceland        | 2             | 0.0        | 2               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Brazil         | 1             | 0.0        | -               | 1            | -                    | -            |
| Bulgaria       | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Israel         | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Latvia         | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Monaco         | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Portugal       | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
| Turkey         | 1             | 0.0        | 1               | -            | -                    | -            |
|                | <b>11'512</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>8'906</b>    | <b>1'973</b> | <b>333</b>           | <b>300</b>   |

Of the 945 competitors in 1969, 21 were still taking part in 2008, which is testimony to the continuing popularity of this sporting event. But the Engadin Skimarathon also attracts lots of newcomers. Many simply want to experience the thrill of taking part in such an event at least once in their lives.

| <b><i>Number of returning competitors<br/>at the 40<sup>th</sup> Engadin Skimarathon 2008</i></b> | <b><i>Men</i></b> | <b><i>Women</i></b> | <b><i>Total</i></b> |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Taking part for the 1st time in 2008  | 2'311             | 1'555               | 751                 |
| Taking part for the 5 <sup>th</sup> time  | 601               | 495                 | 106                 |
| Taking part for the 10 <sup>th</sup> time   | 333               | 287                 | 46                  |
| Taking part for the 15 <sup>th</sup> time   | 218               | 197                 | 21                  |
| Taking part for the 20 <sup>th</sup> time   | 98                | 90                  | 8                   |
| Taking part for the 25 <sup>th</sup> time   | 70                | 65                  | 5                   |
| Taking part for the 30 <sup>th</sup> time   | 66                | 61                  | 5                   |
| Taking part for the 35 <sup>th</sup> time   | 20                | 20                  | -                   |