



Wrap-up press release
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Banked Slalom LAAX: The Zeitgeist Snowboard Contest

Who was the fastest in 2024?

Siria Poltera and Harry Kearney

The 9th Banked Slalom LAAX is history. This snowboard contest is a testament to the spirit of the times: sustainably designed, fun on the board for everyone, no matter your hailing, how good or how young. Almost 300 riders from 6-60 years of age mastered the banked course, shoveled entirely by hand. The fastest were 18-year-old local Siria Poltera and US pro rider Harry Kearney.

Reto Poltera from the management in Laax and himself a participant in the race was delighted: “I’m absolutely happy! I feel the happiness and satisfaction of the riders here. The family feeling of snow surfers is something you only get with snowboarders. It’s really cool.”

The course

Peter Bauer, expert on the scene as well as multiple winner in Laax, third this time, sums up the uniqueness of the course: “You come to Laax and don’t know where the Banked will take place this year. It’s somewhere different each time. Surprise, surprise. The terrain is always changed and the shapers really adapt the course to the terrain. The natural topography has a huge influence on the course, which makes it super interesting. This year it was mega intelligently built. Because it’s rather steep, there are little tricks built in that regulate the speed in a natural way. So you can always go on the attack and don’t have to check your speed. That’s great. And a big shout out to the shapers, because the course is organic.”

Naturally and in the spirit of Greenstyle LAAX, the snowpark LAAX team built the 19 banked turns with up to 12 shapers. Poltera is delighted with his team: “The entire course is handmade. That’s fantastic! Not a single machine hour was invested in the construction.” Neither was a single drop of diesel used to transport the materials; rescue sledges were utilized, and a power unit charged with renewable energy was used for the timekeeping.



The fastest

The Banked Slalom LAAX titles in the adults' category were won by Thomas Scherrer as the new Grand Master, Ueli Kestenholz also won for the first time in the Masters' category (40-49 years), while Fabienne Dirksen-Reuteler took the women's Masters title. Both entitled with Olympic bronze, the two come from different snowboarding backgrounds – Kestenholz was an Alpine and BX specialist, Reuteler was successful in the halfpipe — but both bring their board feeling to the Banked, the most original snowboard discipline. Thomas Wolf, Snowpark LAAX shaper and winner of the Open Men's category 2024, can also do this.

A day after her 18th birthday, Siria Poltera — a multiple winner in the kids' category — raced to the top of the Open Women's podium: "I didn't expect this at all. But of course I'm absolutely delighted!" She also set the fastest time of all female participants, which put her in the beaming event picture with the winner of the Pro Men's category, Harry Kearney. Although this is his first time in the Alps, he has already won the world's most famous Banked Slalom in Mount Baker. "This one is awesome too. I love the course here. It was perfect, cause it was just challenging enough, but it was also like a good time. This reminds me at Mount Baker. That's where I met Reto, in Washington."

Valentino Guseli won the "Fakie Race". He was only 2 seconds slower backwards than forwards, which underlines his class as an all-round snowboarder. The current overall Park'n'Pipe World Cup winner was delighted to finally be at the Banked in Laax, as he calls Laax his 'happy place.' Together with the 2nd placed LAAX rider Dave Hablützel, he presented the hand-carved medals to the kids at the award ceremony.

The Juniors

The 80 starting places for the kids and juniors were booked up in no time at all. With a mixture of ease, ambition, excitement and coolness, they set off on the course below the monkey rock. Divided into three age groups for boys and girls, they achieved some amazing times! Snowboarding has a future. Teenagers Leni, Theresa and Paula are proof of this. "Podium is always cool. But we mainly come here to have fun." The Bavarian trio will certainly be back in 2025 for the 10th Banked Slalom LAAX. The kids from the LAAX Freestyle Academy will also be back. Bright yellow like a beam of sunshine, "young girl" Olivia brakes after the finish line, laughingly frees her bib number from a load of snow and throws herself happily into a mound of it: "Ah! I've done it all!"

@LAAX @snowparkLAAX #BankedSlalomLAAX

Event website: <https://www.flimslaax.com/events/banked-slalom>

Highlight edit to watch and share: <https://youtu.be/iyQ5l4FcloE>