



Dominik Kowalski vs Henrik Wadsten on the special course. Photo: Benoit Mothes•photomatz@free.fr

# THE BRIXLEGG BLITZ

## THREE INCREDIBLE DAYS OF SKATEBOARDING

BY JASON MITCHELL

In Austria, lies the small town of Brixlegg, sandwiched between the foothills of the incredible Alps. Spectacular grasslands are part of what makes these slopes so amazing, while clear running water for drinking and swimming are what the locals are accustomed to. This cool town made us feel right at home with schnitzel, beer, and yodeling to celebrate each passing day.

The Austrian people opened their streets, their hearts, and shared their culture with us. It was an honor and privilege to spend time, and enjoy the stoke of life together in Austria.

Many nations were represented and many languages were spoken. Despite the cultural differences, we all had at least one thing in common: skateboarding. In particu-

lar, slalom skateboard racing. These racing events drew skaters of all disciplines and styles, who share the same desire to go fast, while surfing the streets, on a skateboard.

Upon arrival at the Cradle skatepark, jaws were dropping at the sight of a magnificent creation. This park has something for every skater from novice to master. The cradle, big vert bowls, hips, and snake runs would soon be utilized in the upcoming park events. Additionally, there was a huge, epic street section with all kinds of crazy fun stuff on the other side of the park. Meeting all the racers while riding the skate park and having fun was the only plan for Thursday, the day before the tight slalom event. This park is consuming and everybody was having a blast until their legs could take no more.

Friday's tight slalom event kicked off the weekend of racing and the competition was heavy. There were some serious workhorses with finely tuned skills in this event. Strong rhythmic arm swings and fast reactions were playing a big roll for the successful racer. Competitors battled through the elimination rounds to the semi and final races. Only the strongest,

most determined riders will make it to the final rounds. Some notable races were the pro finals between Ramon Koenigshausen and Luca Gianmarco. Incredibly fast and clean, this race was determined by a few hundredths of a second. Ramon proved to the world he has what it takes to be a champion. Luca clinched the second place spot followed by Marcus Seyffarth and Heiko Schoeller in third and fourth. Lynn Kramer also was on her way to show that she was the force to be reckoned with as she secured the TS title with Eveline Eisenring and Kathrin Sehl joining her on the podium. In the Open division Henrik Wadsten took top honors for the day with Dominik Kowalski, Hans Goethberg and Patrick Allan rounding out the top four.

Saturday's special slalom was held on a freshly paved road right in the center of town. There were cool shops all along this course and spectator attendance was high. This hill was sweet and a great course was set. It was fast with heavy offsets, a true hybrid course that challenged every rider. Saturday was full of very exciting races, some upsets and some underdogs. It was cool to see people hanging over balconies cheering racers on. The Woman's event was exciting with top honors going to another Swiss rider, Noemi Reichel. Kathrin Sehl of Germany held fast and secured herself the silver placing. Lynn Kramer and Eveline battled it out in the consi round, with Lynn taking third. The Open division was won by Henrik again followed by Dominik again, Patrick Allan and Max Moehlmann. Moving on to the Pro division, Luca once again proved why he is a true champion, taking the special slalom win, but it was Christoph Baumaun who stole the show by advancing into the finals



Kathrin Sehl GS brixlegg



Kathrin Sehl vs Lienite Sakrainis on the special course. Kathrin advanced.



Steve Hinzen

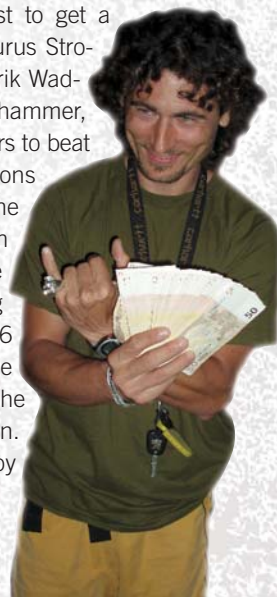


Janis Kuzmins losing against Christoph Baumann in the tight slalom (Baumann is in the back of pic)

and taking home the second place spot. I wound up taking third and Marcus Seyffarth held fast to round out the final four. While everybody pitched in to clean up the streets, we also celebrated our day's victories, agonies of defeat, personal bests and so on.

Later that evening after a short intermission, we all met at the Cradle skate park for some park racing. The local rippers and park supervisors were among the coolest on the planet making their incredible Dreamland skate park available for our event. This skate park race was to be more of a high-speed banked slalom event for the slalom racers, where as the upcoming Sunday evening death race would include more vertical/aerial and transfer skills. After the course was set, the racing began. Riders dropped in from the seven-foot bowl and flew through the course gaining speed while pumping every transition. A twenty or so second course can seem like an eternity, when your legs want to buckle under the pressure. However, the racers persevered, and after times and placings were determined, it was Wadsten, Harms, Hart, Goethberg and myself who were left as the top five racers of the night. Everybody was left sharing the stoke and celebrated another successful day of racing.

Sunday's events included the giant slalom and the park death race. The GS took place just outside of Brixlegg, in the small town of Reith. Here is where the roads head up into the mountains, and the steepest grades can be found. An awesome section of road was acquired for the day's racing. It included everything that you would expect in a world class GS. It was a fast, twisty mountain road, with a lightly polished smooth surface. The wide offsets at speed and long cone spacing made for a very challenging, technical high-speed course. Racers charged out of the single lane start ramp, trying to throw down the single fastest time. With two runs each, some racers would do a safety run just to get a time, while others like Maurus Strobel, Lynn Kramer and Henrik Wadsten opted to drop the hammer, leaving themselves the riders to beat in their respective divisions after the first runs. In the woman's division, Lynn Kramer proved just why she is the "ruler" by crushing her competitors by nearly 6 seconds. In fact, her time would have landed her in the second spot for men's open. Noemi Reichel and Joy



Luca Gianmarco

Photo: Benoit Mothes•photomatz@free.fr



Photo: Benoit Mothes • photomatz@free.fr

Spearing took second and third. The open division was again dominated by Henrik Wadsten, securing him the all-around title for the weekend as well. Mikael Hadestrand and Frank Beste held on to the second and third spots with their impressive runs. The day wound down and the course was cooling off as the PRO riders prepared for their final runs. Chris Hart of Switzerland stepped up and laid down a smoking run, moving him up to the # 1 position.

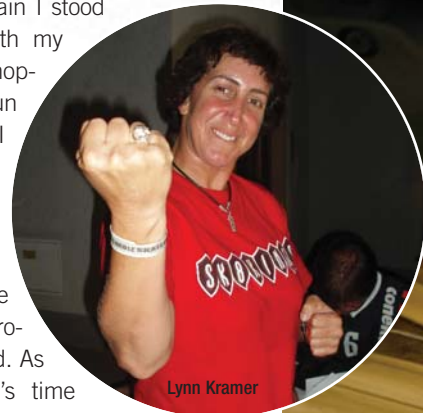
When I was called again I stood on the start ramp with my nerves rattling. I was hoping to get my best run possible, knowing that I could not ask for more than that. Somehow, I was able to hold it together and it was enough to secure the win, with Hart and Strobel in second and third. As with all riders, Luca's time improved during his second run securing the fourth place spot as well, earning him enough points to win the "ring" and prove once again just who the weekend's ruler would be. The GS final times were very close, and racing on a world class hill like this is always a pleasure. Even with loss of skin riders still had huge smiles on their faces, having managed to survive a very tough GS.

After dinner and re-grouping, we met at the Cradle skate park to prepare for the death race, the final party, and the award's ceremony. The whole place was laid out in a deluxe fashion with lights, a band, a beverage garden, you name it. At the warm-up practice for the death race you could see riders boosting 5 to 6' air over the hips, spine, and 13' capsule bowl. Big oververt practice was going off in the cradle, while locals showed off the lines through the park. Everybody was so excited to charge...but oops, so was the rain. The rain was the winner of the death race dumping so hard that we were getting soaked even under the tents. We were forced to take drier shelter at a fine local brew house for food, drink, laughter, and the awards ceremony.

Awards ceremonies are a time to relax, celebrate, and thank the town, sponsors, organizers, and all the people who helped out. This one added a surreal twist that will be hard to describe. Imagine tables of swag, magnificent hand-made brick trophies and wads of cash lining tables placed on the silent cobble stone streets in front of the brauhaus. Now imagine about 100 or so rowdy skaters with a flood light



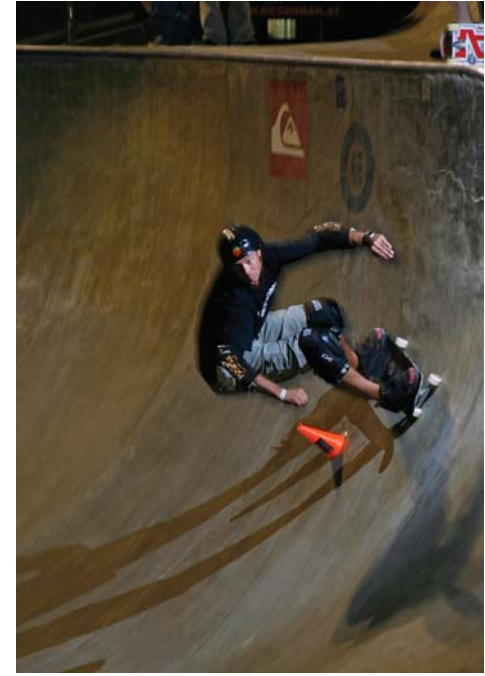
Silas Schiestl fs air over the corner into bank



Lynn Kramer



Richey Carrasco



Henrik Wadsten death race in Brixlegg

glaring through the otherwise darkened street silently gathered in front of the tables while the neighborhood's residents were fast asleep. Loud hoots and hollers had to be replaced with snaps and shhhhh's as names and honors were called up to receive their prizes. The "rulers" Lynn and Luca were also presented with rings as a symbol of domination.

Then it was time to say goodbye to the slalom community that has become a family of sorts. Reflecting back on this world-class event, I raise my glass. To Donald Campbell and the crew of race organizers at the Brixlegg World Championships of 2006, to the international field of competitors, to the champions who won in their fields and proved their excellence, and to the countless sponsors lead by Carhartt and Pavel-Proost! (cheers). I feel that we are all winners to have made this incredible dream come true. After all, it's all about the love/stoke that keeps us coming back for more. [CW](#)

## RESULTS

### GS Amateurs

- 1 Henrik Wadsten (SWE)
- 2 Mikael Hadestrand (SWE)
- 3 Frank Beste (GER)

### GS Pros

- 1 Jason Mitchell (USA)
- 2 Chris Hart (SUI)
- 3 Maurus Strobel (SUI)

### Gs women

- 1 Lynn Kramer (USA)
- 2 Noemi Reichel (SUI)
- 3 Joy Spearing (SUI)

### Special pros - Men

- 1 Luca Giammarco (ITA)
- 2 Christoph Baumann (GER)
- 3 Jason Mitchell (USA)

### Special Pros - Women

- 1 Noemi Reichel (SUI)
- 2 Kathrin Sehl (GER)
- 3 Lynn Kramer (USA)

### Tight Slalom Pro

- 1 Ramón Königshausen (SUI)
- 2 Luca Giammarco (ITA)
- 2 Marcus Seyffarth (SWE)

### Tight Slalom Women

- 1 Lynn Kramer (USA)
- 2 Eveline Eisenring (SUI)
- 3 Kathrin Sehl (GER)