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Nendaz Freeride 2023 : an amazing dual victory for Switzerland and some wonderful surprises!

The Nendaz Freeride FWT Challenger took place in glorious sunshine on Saturday the 4th of March 2023 on the Mont-Gond. Both the women's and men's ski categories were won by the Swiss; Sybille Blanjean and Martin Bender. The freeriders offered an amazing performance to the public present on site and to those following the competition via the live broadcast.

Nendaz was the first of three FWT Challenger events. Sixty-five of the best riders on the circuit fought it out for a place on the podium. Their commitment was worthy of what was at stake as admission to the Freeride World Tour (FWT) was the prize to win. The little snow that has fallen in the last few weeks made the choice of the line essential and required the riders to have a very high level of technique in order to succeed. The face gave everyone a chance, as both new talents and experienced riders from the FWT made it onto the podium in Nendaz

MEN'S SKI CATEGORY

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. Martin Bender (SUI) | 90.00 |
| 2. Tenra Katsuno (JPN) | 87.00 |
| 3. Edvin Olsson (SWE) | 80.00 |

The most pleasant surprise of this Nendaz Freeride FWT Challenger came from Martin Bender who won the men's ski category. At 18 years old, he showed impressive control and composure. Junior World Champion in 2022, this is his first season in the Qualifier. He placed a backflip, a double cork and a beautiful double rock bar. The Japanese rider, who was not expected either to take second place did so thanks to a 360, a backflip and the passage of a large rocky bar. Another outsider, the Swede Elvin Olsson climbs onto the third step of the podium with a run featuring many jumps including a backflip

MEN'S SNOWBOARD CATEGORY

- | | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 1. Hugo Serra (FRA) | 80.00 |
| 2. Jakob Weger (ITA) | 70.00 |
| 3. Timm Schröder (GER) | 65.00 |

Although it was necessary to play it safe today, Hugo Serra, in full confidence after his victory in La Rosière, was able to take a lot of risks but in a controlled way, which earned him the first place in men's snowboarding category with two 360s and a very impressive rocky bar. Jakob Weger, who was more of an outsider on paper, put in a great performance by choosing a steep line with a perfectly placed backflip. The leader of the FWT Qualifier ranking, Tim Schröder, who is coming back after an injury, took the third place with a very controlled run and some great grabbed jumps

WOMEN'S SKI CATEGORY

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Sybille Blanjean (SUI) | 80.00 |
| 2. Mia McNab (FRA) | 78.00 |
| 3. Zuzanna Witych (POL) | 75.00 |

The Valaisan Sybille Blanjean is the big winner of this category, linking jumps with great speed of execution. She won the Xtreme in Verbier in 2022, but this year she had a more difficult season. With this result, she has a serious chance of qualifying for the Freeride World Tour again next year. It was a newcomer, Mia McNab, who took the second place. It was a great week in Nendaz for this young 20 year old French rider as she had placed first in both the Nendaz Freeride FWT 2* and the Nendaz Freeride FWT 3* a few days earlier! The experience and solidity of the Polish Zuzanna Witych paid off and allowed her to dare some big jumps



WOMEN'S SNOWBOARD CATEGORY

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. Anna Martinez (FRA) | 77.00 |
| 2. Celina Weber (GER) | 75.00 |
| 3. Mikaela Hollsten (FIN) | 70.00 |

Anna Martinez from France is, at 22 years old, already a leader in the FWT Qualifier (3rd before the Nendaz Freeride). She won this event with an original line in a snowy gully and two big jumps perfectly landed. The surprise was created by the German Celina Weber, currently 8th in the FWT Qualifier. Her second place puts her in the running for the Freeride World Tour. Finally, it was Finland's Mikaela Hollsten, an experienced freerider who is accustomed to the podium in Nendaz (2nd in 2021 and 2019, 1st in 2015), who took third place with a controlled run and two well-placed jumps

PHOTOS AND VIDEOS LINKS

Photos from the 2023 edition of the Nendaz Freeride FTW Challenger :

<https://freerideworldtour.scoreplay.io/link?id=7839&token=26773766-1593-4e91-9944-c709b6b54ee9>

(please mention copyright when using)

Results :

<https://www.freerideworldtour.com/event/2023-nendaz-challenger>

Best of vidéo/ newscut :

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fkf9FKhWiqT5oUSnhA5DYgacxRN46nV6/view?usp=drivesdk>

Replay : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ltczbNd44I>

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