

## PREVIEW MEN'S EVENTS OTEPÄÄ (9-11 Jan 2026)

### Johannes Lamparter

- **Johannes Lamparter (AUT)** has won 20 individual World Cup events, the most among active men. **Akito Watabe (JPN)**, 19 wins), **Vinzenz Geiger (GER)**, 18 wins) and **Johannes Rydzek (GER)**, 18 wins) are just behind him.
- **Johannes Lamparter's (AUT)** 20 individual victories rank him joint-ninth on the men's all-time list alongside **Samppa Lajunen (FIN)**.
- Only **Felix Gottwald (AUT)** has won more individual World Cup events for Austria than **Johannes Lamparter** (20). Gottwald is ranked eighth overall with 23 victories.
- One of **Johannes Lamparter's (AUT)** 20 individual victories came in Otepää. On 7 January 2023, he won a Mass Start.

### Rettenegger brothers

- **Thomas Rettenegger (AUT)** won the Mass Start in front of a home crowd in Ramsau on 19 December. His younger brother **Stefan Rettenegger (AUT)** finished third that day. It marked the first time the brothers shared a podium in a World Cup event.
- **Thomas Rettenegger (AUT)** won both men's Mass Start events this season, in Trondheim, Norway, and Ramsau - his first two World Cup victories.
- **Thomas Rettenegger (AUT)** claimed his first career World Cup podium finish in Otepää. On 7 January 2023, he finished third in a Mass Start.
- **Stefan Rettenegger (AUT)** has claimed 12 podium finishes in individual World Cup events, but has yet to record his first win (5 second places, 7 third places). He also has two World Cup podium finishes (both seconds) in team events.

### Akito Watabe

- **Akito Watabe (JPN)** has competed in 294 individual World Cup events. In Otepää, he can break the record for most individual World Cup starts. **Wilhelm Denifl (AUT)** currently holds the record with 295.
- **Akito Watabe (JPN)** made his World Cup debut almost 20 years ago. Aged 17, he competed in two World Cup events in Sapporo (Japan) in March 2006. Watabe, now 37, will retire at the end of this season.
- **Akito Watabe (JPN)** has won 19 individual World Cup events. His first victory came on 5 February 2012 in Val di Fiemme (Italy), the venue of the Olympic Winter Games next month.
- **Akito Watabe (JPN)** took part in the first ever men's World Cup events that were held in Otepää (in January 2019), recording a second and a third place.

## Other contenders

- **Vinzenz Geiger (GER)** won the final men's World Cup event of 2025, the Gundersen in Ramsau, his first victory of the season and 19th overall.
- **Vinzenz Geiger (GER)** won the last two men's World Cup events held in Otepää, in February 2025. After a third place behind **Jarl Magnus Riiber (NOR)** in a Mass Start on the Friday, Geiger took victory in a Gundersen the following day and again in a Compact on the Sunday.
- **Julian Schmid's (GER)** most recent individual victory in a World Cup event was on 5 February 2023, when he won in Oberstdorf (Germany). He has since recorded 13 individual podium finishes (7 second places, 6 third places).
- **Julian Schmid (GER)** recorded his first podium finish in the World Cup in Otepää. On 12 December 2021, he took third place in a Gundersen. In January 2023, **Schmid** won a Gundersen in Otepää.

## Kristjan Ilves

- **Kristjan Ilves (EST)** can become the first athlete representing Estonia to win a World Cup event in Nordic Combined. **Ilves** has already claimed 12 podium finishes in individual World Cup events (6 second places and 6 third places).
- The most recent nation to achieve its first World Cup victory in Nordic Combined was Italy, when **Alessandro Pittin** won three Large Hill Gundersens on successive days in Chaux-Neuve (France) in January 2012.
- **Kristjan Ilves (EST)** has claimed two World Cup podium finishes in Otepää. In February 2024, he took second place on successive days behind **Jarl Magnus Riiber (NOR)** in first a Mass Start and then a Gundersen.

## PREVIEW WOMEN'S EVENTS OTEPÄÄ (9-11 Jan 2026)

### Ida Marie Hagen

- **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** has won 20 individual World Cup events. She needs three more to equal the women's all-time record held by **Gyda Westvold Hansen (NOR)**, 23 wins.
- Coming into Otepää, **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** and **Johannes Lamparter (AUT)** are the active Nordic Combined athletes with the most individual World Cup victories (both 20).
- **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** has won three of the four women's World Cup events this season. Last season, she won each of the first seven.
- **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** has finished on the podium in 32 of the last 35 women's individual World Cup events. The exceptions occurred between 1 and 7 February 2025: a DSQ in Seefeld (Austria), which also ruled her out of the final event of the 'Triple', and a 15th place in Otepää (Estonia) after a fall.
- In total, **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** has finished on the podium in 36 individual World Cup events, four shy of the women's record held by **Gyda Westvold Hansen (NOR)**, 40 podium places).
- **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** recorded her first World Cup podium finish in Otepää. In December 2021, she placed second in a Mass Start and second in a Gundersen, in just her third and fourth World Cup competitions. Her first World Cup victory also came in Otepää: a mixed team event in January 2023.
- **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)** has won three women's individual World Cup events in Otepää, two in 2023-24 and one in 2024-25. Only **Gyda Westvold Hansen (NOR, 4)** has won more.

### Alexa Brabec

- **Alexa Brabec (USA)** finished in the top four in all four women's World Cup events this season, including three podium places (2 second places, 1 third).
- **Alexa Brabec** can become the second woman representing United States to win a World Cup event, after **Tara Geraghty-Moats**, who won the first-ever women's event, in Ramsau (Austria) in December 2020.
- Five men won at least one World Cup event for USA: **Bill Demong** (9), **Todd Lodwick** (6), **Kerry Lynch** (1), **Johnny Spillane** (1) and **Bryan Fletcher** (1).

### Nathalie Armbruster

- **Nathalie Armbruster (GER)** has won three women's World Cup events, all during last season. Armbruster won twice in Seefeld (Austria) before she took the victory in the Individual Compact in Otepää, where she beat **Ida Marie Hagen (NOR)**, who came second.
- Otepää will stage the first women's Individual Compact of the season. **Nathalie Armbruster (GER)** has won two of the last three Compacts in the World Cup, with **Gyda Westvold Hansen (NOR)** winning the other.

### Other contenders

- **Katharina Gruber (AUT)** will compete in World Cup events outside Austria for

the second time in her career. Last season, she competed in Ramsau (Austria) and Seefeld (Austria); this season she competed in Trondheim (Norway) and Ramsau. Her only podium finish was a victory in the Mass Start in Trondheim, becoming, at 17, the youngest-ever woman to win a World Cup event.

- **Minja Korhonen (FIN)** recorded her third podium finish in the World Cup with third place in a Mass Start in Ramsau on 19 December. Her first two podiums were also third places in Ramsau, in 2023 (when she became the youngest-ever woman, aged 16, to reach a World Cup podium) and 2024.
- **Minja Korhonen and Heta Hirvonen** are aiming to become the first Finnish woman to win a World Cup event.
- **Yuna Kasai (JPN)** has won one World Cup event: a Mass Start in Otepää (Estonia) on 7 February 2025. Her twin sister **Haruka Kasai (JPN)** finished second that day.
- **Only Haruka Kasai (JPN, 13 podium finishes)** has claimed as many podium finishes in women's World Cup events without a victory as **Lisa Hirner (AUT, 3 second places and 6 third places)**.