

Red Bull X-Alps 2017 kicks off with one-day Leatherman Prologue

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RED BULL X-ALPS 2017 KICKS OFF WITH ONE-DAY LEATHERMAN PROLOGUE

Durogati and Huber cross the finish line together to win the Leatherman Prologue as bad weather forces athletes to fight on foot.

For immediate release

June 29, 2017

Aaron Durogati (ITA1) and Sebastian Huber (GER1) proved they are the athletes to watch on the ground as they took a joint win at the Leatherman Prologue, which marks the start of the eighth edition of the Red Bull X-Alps.

The pair crossed the finish line in just under two hours after a lightning ascent and descent of the Zwölferhorn mountain.

"We had more or less the same speed so we finished together," Durogati said afterwards. "In the end Aaron had a bit more air than me, he's very fit," added Huber.



Aaron Durogati (ITA1) and Sebastian Huber (GER1) cross the finish line together © zoom / Honza Zak



Benoît Outters (FRA4) coming in at third place © zoom / Honza Zak

The pair, along with Benoît Outters (FRA4), who came third a few minutes behind them, each receive an additional Ledlenser Night Pass, which allows them to hike through the night. In a new rule this year, the Leatherman Prologue results also directly affect the start times of day 2 which will have a staggered start: every athlete will be delayed by the time they finished behind the Prologue winner.

"I didn't start with the idea that I had to get an extra Night Pass," added Durogati. "But if it comes, because I'm feeling good, then I go for it – so I did! I think it's always better to have something more than the others. If it doesn't kill you to get it, why not?"



Toma Cocone (ROU) preparing for the start of the Leatherman Prologue © zoom / Honza Zak



Tom de Dorlodot (BEL) and Michal Gierlach (POL) © zoom / Honza Zak

Athletes were due to compete in a 36km hike and fly battle around mountains and lakes of SalzburgerLand, starting and finishing in the picturesque village of Fuschl am See, Austria. But due to strong south-westerly winds, organizers shortened the course of the route, removing the Schafberg Turnpoint to make it into an out-and-back run up the 1,552m Zwölferhorn. Initially it was hoped athletes would still be able to take to the air. But race director Christoph Weber took the decision to prevent flying due to heavy turbulences at the launch, forcing athletes to fight on foot back to the finish in Fuschl – turning the race into a gripping battle between the best mountain runners.

"When I was driving up it didn't look so strong, but on the takeoff it was lee side and very dangerous. The true wind was something like 50km/h," Christoph Weber said.

"It was the right decision," Huber said.



Pal Takats (HUN) and Ferdinand van Schelven (NLD)© zoom / Honza Zak



Manuel Nübel (GER2) and Stephan Gruber (AUT2) © zoom / Honza Zak

The day began with the bombshell news that four-time winner Christian Maurer (SUI1) was sick having picked up a cold from his children, and not able to run. He was prevented from taking part by the race doctor who diagnosed that Maurer was suffering from inflamed sinuses. He'll have to undergo another examination by the race doctor on Saturday July 1st to decide whether he is healthy enough to take part in the race.

However, Maurer himself was feeling optimistic he'd still start. "These things normally last a week but I will be there on the start line on Sunday. I'm here and ready and looking forward to competing." Because the Prologue is mandatory, Maurer will suffer an automatic penalty and start last on day 2, one hour after the last athlete has set off.

With the reigning champion below optimum performance and with challenging weather forecast, it adds a thrilling possibility that the 2017 Red Bull X-Alps could favor the mountain runners.



Christian Maurer (SUI1) was not able to run at the Leatherman Prologue © zoom / Vitek Ludvik



Spectators at the start of the Leatherman Prologue in Fuschl am See © zoom / Leo Rosas

Starting July 2, there will be two Facebook Live broadcasts per day until the race finish. The morning broadcast will happen at 08:30 CEST, with the afternoon broadcast planned for 17:30 CEST. Please note that on July 2, the first broadcast will take place 30 minutes before the race start at 11:00am.

We will update you every day in the early afternoon with a summary of the day, as well as image galleries and highlight videos.

Stay tuned to redbullxalps.com for all your race updates, from quick race news and videos to the athletes' Social Hub. If you're looking for the best visual content, you definitely have to follow Red Bull X-Alps on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#). Up to the minute race-news will be available on our [Twitter](#).

Can't make it to the Red Bull X-Alps, but still want to fly like one of the athletes? Head over to redbull.com/vr for the Red Bull X-Alps VR Experience and get your first air miles!

To meet the athletes and learn more about the race, head over to redbullxalps.com and facebook.com/redbullxalps - or follow the action live from June 29 on redbullxalps.com/live-tracking.
