

44th Masters World Cup 2026 in Sappada & Forni Avoltri / Italy between January 30 and February 6, 2026

Sappada and Forni Avoltri – two wonderful mountain villages in the Dolomites – provided the impressive scenery for the 44th Masters World Cup 2026.

Sappada, with around 1,400 inhabitants, was the main venue. The village is located in the province of Udine (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy) at an altitude of 1,250 metres above sea level. With Olympic medallists such as Silvio Fauner, Pietro Piller Cottler and Lisa Vittozzi, Sappada has achieved an extraordinary number of international successes relative to its population. This was one of the reasons why The World Master Cross-Country Ski Association (WMA) awarded the 44th Masters World Cup to Sappada.



With a total of 813 participants from 26 nations, the Masters World Cup was officially opened on 30 January 2026 with the nations entering the marquee.

On the morning of 31 January 2026, 363 athletes competed in the classic technique, followed by 371 in the free technique in the afternoon. The competition courses, which were beautifully integrated into the landscape and covered distances of 2.5 km, 5 km and 7.5 km, had to be completed several times depending on the age group.

For the majority of participants, the courses proved to be well suited: sufficiently wide, safely laid out and with technically challenging but not dangerous descents. The 2.5 km course in

particular was ideally chosen for the oldest competitors (aged over 90). This minimised the risk of accidents while maintaining sporting integrity.

The short-distance races followed on 1 February 2026 with a total of 685 starters, before a well-deserved rest day on 2 February 2026. The first four competitions were held in sunny, wintry conditions.



Throughout the World Cup week, athletes had access to sufficient facilities for waxing and changing in the immediate vicinity of the stadium. In the 'athletes' village' – a large heated tent – participants and accompanying persons were provided with food and drinks. Professional advice on ski equipment and ski waxing was also offered at various industry service stations.

Highlight on the rest day

A very special highlight on the rest day was the 'Waiting for the Olympic Games' ceremony, which referred to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina. Renowned Italian Olympic and world champions took part:

- Gabriella Paruzzi
- Silvio Fauner (OC President MWC 2026)
- Maurilio De Zolt
- Marco Albarello
- Pietro Piller Cottler
- Fulvio Valbusa
- Giorgio Vanzetta
- Giuseppe Pütie (former coach)

This initiative added extra value and international prestige to the event.



Relay competitions in Forni Avoltri

The relay competitions took place in the biathlon stadium in Forni Avoltri. Despite heavy snowfall, but on excellently prepared tracks, 108 relay teams completed the always exciting team competition with great commitment and sporting fair play.

Conclusion of the competitions

The sporting events of the 44th Masters World Cup 2026 in Sappada came to a successful end with the two long-distance races in free and classic technique over 30 km, 20 km and 15 km.

At the closing ceremony, which included the handover of the flag to the representative of the next Masters World Cup, the participants and their companions were treated to various performances and honours.

The World Master Cross-Country Ski Association (WMA) would like to express its sincere thanks to the organising committee and the numerous volunteers for their excellent cooperation and the high sporting standard of the event. The medal table ranking is also worth mentioning. Great credit is due to the Finnish team, which won the nations ranking for the third time in a row with 81 medals (37 gold, 27 silver, 17 bronze). Second place went to the host country Italy with 76

medals (30 gold, 22 silver, 24 bronze), ahead of the USA with 62 medals (17 gold, 20 silver, 25 bronze).

We would also like to thank all international participants for registering and for their fair and friendly conduct during the competitions.

May sport continue to bring us together peacefully in the future.

45th Masters World Cup 2027

The next Masters World Cup will take place from 25 February to 5 March 2027 in Tromsø, Norway.