

Nordic Masters France season report year 2023-2024

The 2023-24 Nordic ski season will be remembered as a year of great contrasts in France:

little snow in mid-mountains, and massifs very impacted by the lack of snow;

the season almost ended in mid-December in the Vosges, and it was barely better in the Jura, where only the Massacre and Risoux forests offered decent conditions from mid-December until the end of February.

In contrast, the Scandinavian countries will have offered superb conditions from October until the end of March, conditions which we will have benefited from during the 2024 Masters World Championships which took place in February, in extreme cold conditions. .

The activity of the MNF association and its (nearly) 180 members (all Masters) has nevertheless been rich, both in terms of participation and results.

The season will have started with the cancellation of the Ramsau traineeship (scheduled for early October 2023), due to the state of the Dachstein glacier: certainly a sign for the rest of the season.

Fortunately, the course planned for Bessans at the end of November was able to take place completely normally, thanks to “Snowfarming” and the nearly 3km (in very good conditions) prepared by the grooming team at the Bessans station, located more than 1700m altitude:



A part of the « Masters Nordique France » team, near the Bessans Biathlon stadium

41 people took part in this course over 3 or 4 days, brilliantly supervised by 3 local instructors, also members of the association.

They will have alternated work in classique technique and work in skating, each morning, the afternoon being reserved for those who wanted to “do miles”, or put into practice the morning’s advice. The weather conditions were good: cold but not too much, the sun was very present (when it was not hidden behind the mountains).

A real success for everyone given the general satisfaction at the end of the course.

After the Bessans Marathon (early January), a popular race in which many Masters will have participated, we head to Italy, and more precisely to Lombardy for the World Games, in Vermiglio. These games take place every 4 years, in a different country each time.

Vermiglio is a small resort near Madonna di Campiglio, located at an altitude of 1200m, and not very snowy during our competitions; the tracks, very short (a little more than 3km tracked!), and the general organization, not very up to date, will have offered, during this meeting, competitions that are a bit disappointing.



A good French participation (nearly 45 competitors, in long distance or biathlon), and very good results will nevertheless leave good memories for our entire delegation:

46 medals in cross-country skiing (plus 8 in Biathlon), including 8 (+1) in gold, will leave the French delegation in 2nd place in the medal rankings, behind Italy, the host country.



After numerous cancellations for popular races, such as the Transjurassienne, it was in Finland, in Vuokatti, that the next stage of our season took place in mid-February:

the Masters World Cross-Country Skiing Championships (MWC) from February 8 to 16.

And there, a change of scenery: more than a meter of snow, and a real winter with temperatures regularly below -20°C in the middle of the day.



Sunrise on Lake Vuokatti

And in fact, the competitions of the first two days will be canceled due to the cold: several parts of the 10km track had temperatures below -30°C !

And if on the 3rd day, the “short distance” competitions took place (almost) normally (over 5km instead of 10km), the temperatures had barely changed!



22 French competitors made up our delegation, which had to be satisfied with 6 medals (2 Gold by our veteran André Grob), including one in relay: remarkably organized competitions, and of a very high level, often dominated by the local Finns. .

The last major meeting of the season was the French Masters championship in Champagny en Vanoise, on the beautiful site of Champagny-le-Haut at almost 1500m altitude.

Very good snow cover, and despite changing weather conditions (rain on Saturday morning, the day of the skating races), these competitions will remain a very good moment of the season.

More than 100 participants will have appreciated the perfect organization of the Bozel Nordic ski club, and the quality of the tracking of the grooming services at the Champagny resort.



Start of the classic 20km



Start of the free 20km

All results and reports are online on the association's website:
<https://masterskinordique.fr/>

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