



Corporate

[Press release](#)

17th November 2017

**The FCEH presents the 2017-18 winter season under the slogan:
“Catalonia, ready for snow”**

On Thursday 16th November, the Catalan Federation of Winter Sports (FCEH), the General Secretariat for Sport (SGE) and the Catalan Association of Ski Resorts and Mountain Sports (ACEM) officially marked the start of the 2017-18 winter sports season. The presentation took place at the National Institute for Physical Education of Catalonia (Barcelona), which was the perfect setting for the occasion and attracted many figures from local government, the world of sport and the winter sport community.

This Thursday’s presentation of the 2017-18 winter season opened with an image of ski slopes where it begins to snow. The Winter Olympics and Paralympics will be held next year, making this an extra-special season, and the event was full of interesting moments with many big names on the stage.

Ski resorts are the key players in winter sports and they were the first to express their desire to build on their economic, social and sporting potential throughout the region. Catalonia is home to 16 ski resorts comprising 529 km of Alpine ski slopes and 203 km of Nordic slopes. This coming season, the resorts will once again be running two programmes for schools. Their aim is to bring children to the snow and introduce them to winter sports. The teacher Roser Pladevall and 6th year student Josep Serrano, both of them from the La Salle Gràcia school, told us about their experiences of a project that is growing year by year.

The notable economic impact of skiing and the way it attracts visitors to the region was also remarked on. The executive director of the Catalan Tourism Agency, Patrick Torrent, announced “This year we will be making a record investment of 750,000€ in the world of winter sports”.

As part of this decisive commitment to winter sports, the people attending also focused on the Barcelona Pyrenees Olympic and Paralympic project. According to the Secretary General for Sport, Gerard Figueras, “an Olympic Games can bring the Pyrenees and the region together and be a winning project. We have to take advantage of the impetus of Barcelona ’92”.

Creating a project with enthusiasm requires different factors, including having local heroes. The CEO of the FCEH, Oscar Cruz, stated that “children must be aware that winter sports are a means of obtaining a new livelihood”.





For yet another season, sportsmen and women will be the true stars of the extensive and demanding calendar of events that lie ahead. As you would expect, some of them attended the event where they told us how they are preparing for classification for the Olympics in Pyeongchang.

Quim Salarich (Alpine skiing), Núria Pau (Alpine skiing), Astrid Fina (para-snowboarding), Ander Mirambell (skeleton) and Adrià Díaz (figure skating) appeared via video link as they are currently at different locations around the world getting ready for the competitions. Maria Hidalgo (snowboarding), Júlia Bargalló (Alpine skiing) and the Paralympian, Gabriel Gorce, (Alpine skiing) were present on stage.

Hidalgo was hopeful about the way his knee was evolving following the severe injury he suffered a few months ago, while Bargalló has just had an excellent pre-season and is currently sharing training sessions with the Italian team. Gabriel Gorce, who won a medal at Sochi, and his guide Arnau Ferrer, told us about their Olympic experience, and called for wider media coverage of the Paralympic Games.

The event, which gets winter sport lovers' adrenaline going, concluded with the virtual switch-on of the season by sportsmen and women and leading figures, white confetti falling onto the audience and music from Txell Sust and Jofre Bargagí. Everything is ready for a winter sports season that, according to TV3 weatherman, Eloi Cordoní, "looks particularly promising for the month of January".

