

## 26th Inferno Triathlon

**This year's Inferno Triathlon featured the full range of hellish challenges: from hot temperatures to wind, rain and even hail. For safety reasons, the mountain run from Mürren had to be cancelled at 5:40 p.m. due to a severe thunderstorm cell over the Schilthorn. However, the athletes were able to make a legendary start. With a pleasant swimming temperature of 23°C, the swim start in Thun went ahead on time at 6:30 a.m. as the first rays of sunshine appeared.**

**Samuel Hürzeler secured his ninth Inferno victory with a 15-minute lead over Benjamin Ueltschi in second place. Andreas Lenz secured third place. Petra Eggenschwiler won the women's race for the fifth time. Alexandra Zürcher and Barbara Bracher completed the podium.**

### Suspense until the end

It became clear early on which three athletes would be fighting for the podium places. After Benjamin Ueltschi overtook Samuel Hürzeler on the road bike, Andreas Lenz unexpectedly became the first athlete to reach the Stechelberg transition zone. Hürzeler was able to fight his way back to the first place with his 'bluff' and even gain a 15-minute lead. At the finish line, he admitted in an interview with our partner newspaper Plattform J that he had very hot and had cooled his head in a fountain. In the meantime, Ueltschi was able to overtake Lenz and ended on the second place.

### Duel between regular podium guests

It's hard to believe what a duel Petra Eggenschwiler and Alexandra Zürcher had on the route from Thun to the Schilthorn. After Zürcher overtook her rival on the mountain bike route, Eggenschwiler really stepped up her pace on the running route. She overtook Zürcher and crossed the finish line for the fifth time as the winner with a comfortable lead. Eggenschwiler told Plattform J about the many challenges on the course: the waves while swimming, the red lights, the bike course in general and the changeable weather at the end of the run. Barbara Bracher came in third, shortly before the race was stopped due to the weather, crossing the finish line for the tenth time as a single runner.

### Couples

#### Women

Ladina Perret and Linda Gerber, with the couple name 'LiLa Physioform', took first place

with a time of 9:01:08. Carried by the motivating rhythm of their couple name 'Disco Inferno', Camilla Sefanini and Josephine Pratiwi crossed the finish line in second place. The 'Scotty Girls' came in third.

### **Men**

'Höhenkranke Holländer' – a name that sticks in the memory. Felix and Florian Den Hollander already claimed victory in 2023. Does altitude sickness motivate to achieve your best sporting performance and fly across the finish line in 7:21:08? 'Imboden Bike' came in second. Contrary to what their name suggests, the couple 'Gürbeschnägg' crossed the finish line in third place.

### **Mixed**

After 7:35:59, the couple 'Samuel Fuerzeler', consisting of Anna Indergand and Daniel Raimundo – matching Samuel Hürzeler's ranking – crossed the finish line as the first couple. "AchtungAero" and 'Zogg'n'Roll' came in second and third.

## **Teams**

### **Women**

Right from the start, the Squadra Negroni team established itself in first place and defended its lead until the end. The team, consisting of Simone Nussbaum (swim), Carole Zurbriggen (road bike), Christa Joder (mountain bike) and Carole Glauser (run), finished in 9:43:43. Second place went to the 'Spice Girls' (Swim: Amélie Zellweger – Road Bike: Pascale Schürch – Mountain Bike: Lisa Gerber – Run: Nadja Müller) and third place to 'let's fetz All Blacks' (Swim: Nicole Wyss – Road Bike: Felicia Liechti-Odermatt – Mountain Bike: Christina Zumbrunn – Run: Yvonne Kohli).

### **Men**

The 'Grindelwald' team lived up to its name. From Grindelwald onwards, the men were able to ride their way into first place and secure victory. After 7:13:28, Julien Bovin (Swim), Florian Ulrich (road bike), Tobias Donnet (mountain bike) and Werner Mart (run) celebrated their victory. The 'Imboden Bike' team (swim: Sandro Christinet – road bike: Simon Wüthrich – mountain bike: Thomas Isch – run: Marcel Seiler) fought their way to second place with a time of 8:04:36. In third place was the 'SC Wetterhorn 1.0' team, which crossed the finish line in Mürren after 8:10:12 (Swim: Simon Haldemann - Road Bike: Jakob Bernhard - Road Bike: Sven Reber - Mountain Bike: Brian Brog - Run: Fabian Fahner).

### **Mixed**

If express means fast, then the Oberland Express team definitely chose the right name. After 6:59:36, Cherelle Oestinger (swim), Nicolas Wyler (road bike), Michael Buser (mountain bike) and Marco Fasel (run) crossed the finish line as the first team. Team 'Spiez plus' came in second (Swim: Stephan Wälti – Road Bike: Ursin Wohler – Mountain

Bike: Christian Fuhrer – Run: Gianna Wohler). Team ‘Hauenstein connected’, provided by our hotspot sponsor ‘Hauenstein Immobilien’, came in third, ensuring that the event will be remembered for a long time to come.

## Regional roots, international field of participants

Unlike many other triathlons, the diverse competition formats of the Inferno weekend are not organised by a large international event organiser, but by a local organising committee with regional sponsors and countless hard-working helpers from the region. As a result, the field of participants is traditionally regional to national. However, thanks to social media, the spectacular images of the athletes against the magnificent backdrop of the Jungfrau region are gaining increasing resonance abroad. The proportion of international athletes is growing, and each of these athletes returns home full of emotional memories of an incomparable competition. This year, we welcomed athletes from Germany, Austria, France and Great Britain to the starting line, as well as a relay team from the USA and two Inferno triathletes from Taiwan.

## Impressive figures surrounding the event

In addition to the athletes' sporting achievements, the figures surrounding the event are also impressive. Around 800 volunteers are putting their heart and soul into the Inferno weekend. Without the volunteers, Inferno could not take place. Safety is also taken care of: 36 manned first-aid stations, 3 helicopter bases and 4 ambulance services on call, 2 teams from the lake police and 4 from the traffic police.

## The calm before the storm

In the morning, everything still looked harmless, or even cheesy. Due to the change in weather, it was not possible to enjoy the event in all its diversity this year either. However, the rain ensured that the festival restaurant was full and stimulated interesting conversations before and after the award ceremony. After such an eventful day, not only some of the guests but also the organising committee is exhausted.

### Image caption

Image 1: Schwimmstart, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 2: Barbara Bracher, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 3: Helfer:innen, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 4: Samuel Hürzeler, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 5: Kopf-an-Kopf-Rennen, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 6: Alexandra Zürcher, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 7: Petra Eggenschwiler, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 8: Benjamin Ueltschi, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 9: Andreas Lenz, © by Manuel Lopez

Image 10: Hauenstein connected, © by Damiano Moser