**World Snow Day: The Snowsports Association of Ireland in partnership with the Ski Club of Ireland**

The First World Snow Day represented a challenge for Ireland as a Lowland or Non-Snow country, but we were determined to rise to the occasion. The Snowsports Association of Ireland together with the Ski Club of Ireland, organised a festival at their artificial slope at Kilternan, Dublin. The Ski Club is an entirely voluntary club that provides tuition for all levels of skiers and snowboarders at their slopes where we celebrated Snow Day and the completion of their new Snowflex slope.

The Festival was preceded by a promotion in the Dundrum Town Centre in partnership with the Ice rink on Saturday 21st January, while the festival was promoted during the week on a local Dublin radio station, with a prize sponsored by a local travel agent of a family holiday including lift pass and ski hire in Norway.

The Festival exceeded all our best expectations, and provided a wonderful day for all, particularly families and children with a cool fresh breeze and the sun shining. The Olympic Flag was flying in honour of the Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck and celebrating Ireland’s participation in the event. The squad to represent Ireland for the first time at the World School Championships in Italy was announced and the festival began.

Kindergarten classes, snowboard classes and ski classes from beginner to expert were soon in full flow and a series of ‘Taster’ classes were held to introduce visitors to the delights of Snowsports. All the children attending the Kindergarten were presented with World Snow Day T shirts, and happy faces abounded.

In a first for the Ski Club a Big Air Bag allowed freestyle skiers full range, and provided a wonderful spectacle to compliment all the other activities from a climbing wall to tubing.

Tubing provided great fun for all, adults and children keeping a steady flow of shrieks and yells proving there is a child in us all.

The local Dublin Radio Station broadcast directly across the city of Dublin from their ‘Roadcaster’ which was based at the slope all day, providing commentary and music which helped to create a great atmosphere, and encouraging citizens of Dublin to come and join the party. A local member (TD) of the Irish Parliament (Dáil) came up to give her support, and recognised the significant contribution to blind skiing the club provides, and spoke amongst others, to the family of one of the blind skiers.

Refreshments including bratwurst sausages, sweets, with soft drinks and hot chocolate were available to keep energy levels up, and the Festive atmosphere was aided by colourful balloons.

As darkness fell the floodlights lit up the slopes, and actvities continued.

To bring the festival to a close the floodlights were turned off and in total darkness a spectacular Firework display, coinciding with the start of the Closing ceremony in Innsbruck, lit up the night sky.

All in all a highly successful day, with over 2,000 visitors, and over 400 taking the opportunity to be introduced to the experience and delight of participating in snow sport activities. There was also a free draw for all who registered with two prizes of €150 vouchers for classes at the club.

The festival certainly brought the joy of Snowsports to Ireland , and we hope that many more kids from Ireland will encourage their families to join in.

This was truly a day of ‘Firsts’ for FIS and Ireland.

First FIS World Snowday

First Snowday Festival at the Ski Club of Ireland

First World Youth Olympic Games

First Irish Team to represent Ireland at the World School Championships

First season of Snowflex at the Ski Club of Ireland