



Press release

## CHLOE KIM (USA) AND YUTO TOTSUKA (JPN) WIN THE HALFPIPE FINALS AT THE LAAX OPEN 2021

(LAAX, Switzerland – 23 January 2021) – As soon as the sun went down, the floodlights went on over the impressive superpipe at Crap Sogn Gion for the all-time highlight of the LAAX OPEN 2021, the women's and men's night finals. In the first Halfpipe event of the FIS Snowboard Tour 2020/21, Olympic champion Chloe Kim (USA) and US Open Champion 2020 Yuto Totsuka (JPN) were crowned the radiant winners of the most prestigious snowboard contest on European soil and will each go home with CHF 15,750.

The women opened the finals in the 200 metre-long Superpipe. The 2020 Youth Olympic Games gold medalist Mitsuki Ono was in the lead after her first run with plenty of amplitude in front of her 2 Japanese teammates. Both defending champion Queralt Castellet (SPA) and top favourite Chloe Kim (USA) failed to make their runs, promising pure thrills with the two top favourites at the back of the pack. Spaniard Castellet went all-out again, but crashed once more at her 1080 attempt on the second hit. Last but not least, the semi-finals winner, Chloe Kim was at the start of the pipe and, coming in, in 5<sup>th</sup> place, showed nerves of steel, delivering the best run of the evening, which judges awarded with 89.75 points (backside air, frontside 1080 tail, cab 720 weddle, front 900 tail, McTwist indy). This pushed her to the top of the line at the last minute by a clear margin. An incredible performance from Chloe, who celebrated her comeback here with her third LAAX OPEN title after almost two years absence: "I am so grateful that I managed my second run, even though I was totally nervous. I am very happy to be back!" Japan's Mitsuki Ono (76.50 points) and Sena Tomita (75.75 points) completed the podium with young German, Leilani Ettel finishing finals in a strong 4<sup>th</sup> place.

Then came the men's finals, dominated mainly by the duel between Scotty James and Yuto Totsuka, showing probably the highest riding level in the history of Halfpipe snowboarding. But, back to the beginning: First, Ruka Hirano (JAP) showed a phenomenal run, giving him the current lead with 88.25 points until defending champion Scotty James (AUS) took it from him with a technically challenging run (93.75 points). However, the top four of the semi-finals were still up at the start at this point, including Scotty's biggest rival Yuto Totsuka (JAP). The 19-year-old Japanese snowboarder showed a high-calibre run that put him in 2nd place just behind Scotty (90.25 points). In the second run, no other rider had a patch on the two leading scores. However, it was clear that both Scotty and Yuto were going to go all-out to take the title.

Scotty could not top his score. Yuto, on the other hand, stunned the judges with a run, the likes of which the world has never seen. Maybe even the best Halfpipe run ever: frontside 1440 frontside grab on the first hit, followed by a combo that Yuto landed for the first time today – Switch frontside 1260, frontside grab into switch backside 1080 Weddle – and a backside 1260 Weddle and frontside double 1260 frontside on the last two hits.

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Yuto was bursting with pride: "I am so happy that I did that combo for the first time in my life!" After three 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes in a row, Yuto Totsuka finally took his first LAAX OPEN win. Ruka Hirano (JAP) completed the podium in third place and Germany's Andre Höflich surprised with a very strong performance, just missing the podium in 4<sup>th</sup> place. The three Swiss were not able to use their home advantage and their best was David Habluetzel in 6<sup>th</sup> place.

The LAAX OPEN 2021 ended on an exciting and sporty top-notch and, with this third night finals and 17<sup>th</sup> pipe finals of an OPEN Contest at Crap Sogn Gion, will go down in LAAX history.

[Red Bull TV](#) is broadcasting the entire finals at 21:30 on live stream and later on demand.

All information about the even can be found at [laax.com/open](http://laax.com/open).

The complete results can be found [here](#) and in the press [Dropbox](#), where there is further image material and media information for editorial publication.

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