

## Felix Gottwald: Zell celebrates its Olympic hero / Two gold medals and a silver one in Turin

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'It is quite unbelievable - I am proud to be at home here': The double Olympic champion Felix Gottwald could hardly believe his eyes last weekend when several thousand people had come together in 'Stadtplatz' in his native town of Zell am See to celebrate 'their Felix'. Not only had Gottwald been one of the most attractive sportsmen in the Austrian delegation, but also their most successful one in the recently finished Winter Games: in his fourth Olympics he showed what he is able to achieve. While the country's high expectations proved to be too much for some of the other top athletes, 30-year-old Gottwald was really successful and managed to secure as many as three medals for himself. Gold in the sprint, gold with the team, and silver in the individual Gundersen: that is the impressive balance of achievements shown by the man who comes from the beautiful holiday region around Lake Zell.

Now Felix Gottwald has reached the objective of his dreams. Before the start of the twentieth Winter Olympics his greatest wish had been to return from there with some kind of precious metal. But nobody was more surprised than he himself that he was now able to show off even three trophies on the occasion of his visit to Zell am See: 'Thank God, it has happened. And I simply let it happen', he said. The joy at this success was written all over his face. The Olympic hero of the year 2006 also received congratulations from his fellow citizens and sporting companions Doris Günther and Hans Peter Steinacher. Steinacher, double Olympic champion in Tornado sailing, expressed his admiration for 'Felix'. 'In my sport, you do not have to struggle so hard to the finish and you do not really have to go to the limits of your body's capability.' Snowboarder Doris Günther also thought that Gottwald might well serve as a shining example. She only just missed a place on the victory podium with her performance in the Olympic giant parallel slalom. But she is not giving up and will go for a medal again in the next Winter Games in Vancouver.

Like Günther and Steinacher, Felix Gottwald also has his roots in the 'Europa-Sportregion'. He was born here on 13th January, 1976, and for that reason, his passion for winter sports is probably automatically inborn. He made his very first attempts at sliding on skis on Kitzsteinhorn and Schmittenhöhe. And when he later discovered cross-country skiing for himself, his home region offered ideal conditions for that discipline, too: a 40-kilometre network of paths, linked with the entire network of cross-country tracks of Pinzgau, makes cross-country skiing a real treat here. When Gottwald also proved to be a great talent at ski jumping, his future as a Nordic Combined athlete was quite clear. In 2002 he already won three bronze medals in Salt Lake City.

You can find more information on the 'Europa-Sportregion' on the Internet at [www.europasportregion.info](http://www.europasportregion.info).

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**General Information:**

With 13,500 beds and two million overnight stays per year, the 'Europa-Sportregion Zell am See - Kaprun' is one of the most important tourism centres in Austria. In winter as in summer, guests find all kinds of leisure activities to choose from. For ski fans there are 130 kilometres of finest pistes in thick powder snow. In the summer months Zell am See and Kaprun captivate with ideal conditions for more than 40 different kinds of sports - from hiking and golfing, cycling and all water sports to extreme sports like canyoning and, last not least, summer skiing on the glacier of Kitzsteinhorn. In recent years the region has also hosted many races of the Mountain Bike World Cup. In 2002 it was the venue of the UCI World Championships of Mountain Biking.

[You can find this press release here](#)