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# Cresta Run: 140 km/h in a channel of natural ice

Cresta is a type of sled race down an ice channel, similar to the skeleton. The world's only natural ice channel for this sport, the Cresta Run, is located in St. Moritz, Switzerland. To ensure that the riders remain safe, the course was fitted with a number of surveillance cameras in autumn 2012 – and connected using fiber optic cables from HUBER+SUHNER.

[IMAGES]

Cresta, the predecessor to skeleton racing, involves the rider lying on a sled head first. In contrast to skeleton, however, this purely amateur sport is contested in a natural ice channel rather than a bobsled run, and riders use rakes on the toes of their boots to steer and brake. The first Cresta races were held in St. Moritz in 1885. The St. Moritz Tobogganing Club (SMTC) was established three years later by a group of mostly British and American riders and continues to hold cresta races to this day. Traditionally, only English is spoken on the course. Around 1,300 men from around the world are members of this private club.

## Unique in the world

The Cresta Run from St. Moritz to Celerina is the only example of its kind to be found worldwide. The natural ice channel is prepared anew each year, based on hollows and banks in the ground against which snow piles up and freezes. The course is 1.2 kilometres long, has a total drop of 157 metres and includes ten bends, some of which are particularly treacherous. The cresta riders reach speeds of up to 140 km/h.

## Fiber optics improve safety

The SMTC holds over 30 Cresta races between Christmas and the end of February. In autumn 2012, five cameras were installed along the course to broadcast the races live and, more importantly, keep a close eye on rider safety. The images are transmitted to a monitor in the speaker tower located in the club house alongside the upper third of the course. Fiber optic cables from HUBER+SUHNER were used to install the system. These come together in the club house cellar where they fan out within a 19" cabinet. Installation required around 33,000 metres of fiber and over 60 fiber optic connectors, which were assembled in the field. The SMTC chose fiber optic cables from HUBER+SUHNER based on their resistance to cold and snow and immunity to disruptive influences such as lightning strikes. Other benefits include the rapid image transfer and quick and easy installation in the field. These products have also been successfully installed in the bobsled run at St. Moritz for many years and have certainly proved their worth.