



Press Release

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## Janja Garnbret (SLO) and Tomoa Narasaki (JPN) are the adidas ROCKSTARS 2016

The unique combination of World class climbers and live music come together **at Stuttgart's Porsche-Arena.**

**This weekend has seen the World's elite rock climbers descend on Stuttgart for a truly special competition.** adidas ROCKSTARS pairs over 70 invited athletes from over 22 different countries with intense musical performances and a passionate and vocal crowd of over 3500 fans to create an event unlike anything else in the climbing universe.

Even by the high standards of adidas ROCKSTARS, the athlete line-up this year was incredibly strong. Of the 72 athletes who started, the field was narrowed over 2 rounds to just 6 male and 8 female finalists (due to a three-way tie for 6th place in the semi-finals 8 women progressed to the final instead of the usual 6). Amongst those 14 finalists were the reigning male European Boulder Champion, male Boulder World Cup overall winner, male Boulder World Champion, female World Boulder Champion and female Lead World Champion! In addition, there was also at least one previous adidas ROCKSTARS winner in both the men's and women's final, meaning that before a hold had even been touched, observers were predicting one of the most fascinating and tight finals in history.

As the arena filled up on Saturday evening the excitement in the air was extraordinary and the already pumped up crowd was encouraged to make even more noise by punkrockers Orange but Green, the mixing master DJ battle and human beatbox Robeat. By the time the athletes were ready to hit the stage the Porsche-Arena was alive and the crowd was creating a wall of noise to welcome their heroes onto the stage.

The boulders were extremely tough in the semi-finals but it was clear from the first boulder in the final that the climbers were really fired up and that the crowd in the Porsche-Arena would see plenty of tops. Jessica Pilz (AUT) and Janja Garnbret (SLO), both of whom are perhaps better known for their lead climbing, showed that they can handle themselves bouldering too by flashing women's boulder 1 to take an early shared lead. Meanwhile on men's boulder 1 we had no less than 3 flashes, coming from 3 of the strongest climbers in the World - reigning Boulder World Cup overall winner and World Champion Tomoa Narasaki (JAP), reigning European Champion Jan Hojer (GER) and 2015 Boulder World Cup overall winner Jongwon Chon (KOR).

The format of adidas ROCKSTARS, where climbers begin to be eliminated after the second boulder, means that anyone who struggled with boulder 1 is under real pressure by the time they come out for boulder 2. It takes more than a bit of pressure to stress Jessica Pilz though, and she strolled out seemingly without a care in the World and topped the boulder on her third attempt.

Miho Nonaka also topped it in 4 attempts to make it 2 tops on 2 boulders; the big question would be whether the number of attempts she'd required to top those boulders might come



back to haunt her. All she could do was watch and wait as her rivals came out. In the end she held on and progressed to boulder 3 in third place, behind Jessica and 17 year-old Janja Garnbret (SLO) who was crowned Lead World Champion just a week ago and looks in top form.

Boulder 2 in the men's event meanwhile, produced one of the moments of adidas ROCKSTARS 2016 when Jan Hojer caught a massive rightwards jump and swing with one arm, whilst simultaneously egging the crowd on with his spare hand. Considering the calibre of climbers who couldn't even do the move using both hands (all the other male finalists!), Jan's display of power was even more incredible. Jan's extraordinary top of men's boulder 2 meant that he progressed in first place, with Tomoa Narasaki and Jongwon Chon joining him in 2nd and 3rd respectively, both of them no doubt relieved that they had done so well on boulder 1. So, 2 boulders down, 2 to go and at this point the eliminations kick in. Only 3 climbers in each event go to boulder 3; in the men's event it was Jan Hojer, Tomoa Narasaki and Jongwon Chon, the women's was between Janja Garnbret, Miho Nonaka and Jessica Pilz.

On the third boulder the pressure really ramps up because only 2 climbers in each event progress to the super-final, meaning that every attempt and every move on boulder 3 can be vital. Both Miho and Jessica really struggled with the women's boulder and neither of them could top it, meaning that Jessica advanced to the super-final by virtue of her superior performance on boulders 1 and 2. Janja Garnbret meanwhile, showed a maturity and style that belied her age by walking out and flashing the boulder, to make it a clean sweep of 3 flashes from 3 boulders in the final.

In the men's competition, none of the climbers could do boulder 3 (although Jan Hojer did get the bonus) and as a result the rankings stayed as they had been, with Jan going to the superfinal in 1st place, and Tomoa Narasaki following him in 2nd. Jan has had a year to forget in 2016 but as reigning European Champion and 2014 Boulder World Cup overall winner, he is always capable of triumphing in any competition. Tomoa Narasaki, on the other hand, last week completed an extraordinary double by claiming the World Championship to add to his 2016 Boulder World Cup overall win; not a bad year for the 20-year-old! A super-final between the veteran Hojer and the young-gun Narasaki beckoned and the crowd could barely wait!

After percussion band Trommelfeuer had played on stage and pumped the crowd up even more, it was time for the super-finals. Jessica Pilz and Janja Garnbret were out first and it was a tense super-final which swung one way then the other, with both climbers coming close to reaching the buzzer, only to fall at the last move. With 90 seconds left on the clock, both climbers were on the crash mats, tired from their previous efforts but beaming broad smiles as the audience roared them on. Time ran out with both athletes on the wall but someone had to win so they climbed on! Finally, Janja reached up for the crucial top hold and as soon as she touched it, the win was a formality. She flopped onto the top of the wall, took a second to compose herself and pressed the buzzer to claim the adidas ROCKSTARS title, a week after taking the World Championship lead final. She is just 17 years old and her trophy cabinet is already rammed full.

While the route setters quickly swapped the holds from the women's superfinal for the men's ones, Robeat and Trommelfeuer once again took the stage and treated the crowd to some amazing percussion/beatboxing. With the holds ready to go, Jan Hojer and Tomoa Narasaki



made their way onto the stage. In front of a home crowd, Jan inevitably got the bigger cheer but all of Tomoa's victories this year have come away from Japan, so he can cope just fine with or without the crowd supporting him.

Within 30 seconds of the super-final beginning, Tomoa had proved this again. He was already on top of the wall, with the buzzer pressed and his arms in the air having flashed the boulder. Jan also flashed it but just couldn't live with the speed that Tomoa climbed. Jan looked disappointed but after an otherwise poor season (by his standards) he should reflect in the next few weeks that second place to the dominant force in male bouldering in 2016 probably isn't a bad result.

He commented after leaving the stage, "It's always great to climb in front of a home crowd and it's my fifth year here but I've only made finals once and I didn't make it to the super final and that was my goal for this competition. It was amazing here to show myself that I can still climb with some of the best guys."

Tomoa, meanwhile, who has now won every major title available to him this year, put it perfectly when he walked down off the stage and said, "2016 is my season". He's appeared from nowhere this year and already looks like he can dominate male bouldering for the foreseeable future.

Janja Garnbret, having claimed the women's title, was exhausted after a frantic week and was more than happy to be interviewed provided she could slump on one of the couches in the athlete lounge when she spoke to us! Installed on her couch, she commented, "I just came here to enjoy, to have fun...so to get another win is unbelievable. I was super happy (on top of the superfinal boulder) but at the same time so exhausted so I turned to the public, pushed the button, the whole audience stood up and I was just so happy."

adidas ROCKSTARS 2016 - loud, intoxicating, amazing and it would seem, a glimpse of the climbing future.

#### Men's Result

1. Tomoa Narasaki (JPN)
2. Jan Hojer (GER)
3. Jongwon Chon (KOR)
4. Alban Levier (FRA)
5. Rustam Gelmanov (RUS)
6. Jernej Kruder (SLO)

#### Women's Result

1. Janja Garnbret (SLO)
2. Jessica Pilz (AUT)
3. Miho Nonaka (JAP)
4. Stasa Gejo (SER)



5. Petra Klingler (SUI)
6. Leah Crane (GBR)
7. Akiyo Noguchi (JAP)
8. Mina Markovic (SLO)

Complete result lists are available under  
<http://www.adidas-rockstars.com/en/event-info/results/>

High res photos of our event photographers Elias Holzknicht, Christian Waldegger and Bert Willer are available free of charge for editorial use on our download platform

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