**2,500 climbing fans celebrate international bouldering elite**

**Stuttgart. 14. September 2013 – This weekend, the who’s who of the international sports climbing community gathered for a veritable climbing rock show in Stuttgart’s Porsche-Arena. Around 70 athletes from 20 different countries, including several World champions, European champions and overall World Cup winners competed in the adidas ROCKSTARS boulder invitational on a giant stage accompanied by intoxicating music performances. Jernej Kruder (23) from Slovenia and the multiple German Boulder Champion Juliane Wurm (23) claimed the coveted title.**

22h44. Jernej Kruder jumps on the super boulder and activates the buzzer with his forehead. Then he gives rein to his emotions. He screams and clenches his fists in a victory pose. For the first time ever, the Slovenian competition climber has won an international contest, outpacing the world’s best bouldering athletes. He has attended many World Cup finals and had a few 4th-place finishes, but he has never won. Until today. And what a setting for a victory it is. Kruder faces a living wall of 2,500 spectators that are cheering for him. They have been pushing him as well as the other finalists for several hours with rhythmic applause and cheers. Together with Stuttgart’s punkrock band *Badasstics*, the current European Beatbox Champion *Robeat* and the extreme sports DJs *Chainsaw* und *Sungod* the crowd contributed to the fact that the twelve finalists from eight different countries excelled themselves and activated extra power, when there was none left.

In return they are rewarded with an awesome bouldering show arranged by the international route setting team, that has prepared a total of 40 different routes since Monday. With very selective boulders the field of 70 athletes is cut down in a qualification and semifinal round until 12 finalists, 6 men and women, are left. The spectacular, powerful and dynamic moves of the pros enthuse the crowds.

As the twelve finalists step into the limelight for the athlete presentation they can hardly see how packed the grandstands are, but they can feel the audience. Motivated by the impressive setting Alex Puccio (USA), Akiyo Noguchi (JPN), Petra Klingler (SUI), Mina Markovic (SLO), Shauna Coxsey (GBR) and Juliane Wurm (GER) give everything for a place in the superfinal. In the men’s category last year’s winner Sean McColl (CAN) wants to defend his title against contenders Jernej Kruder (SLO), Rustam Gelmanov (RUS), Gabriele Moroni (ITA), Jorg Verhoeven (NED) and Dmitrii Sharafutdinov (RUS).

Lead specialist and two-time overall World Cup Champion Mina Markovic suprises herself with her performance. After flashing all four boulders in the semis, she also masters final boulder 1 in first attempt. However, the Slovenian needs 14 tries to do the second boulder, that means she’s out. Even Alex Puccio, who’s been in the super final twice before, last time defeating Akiyo Noguchi, struggles. But not on boulder 2, which she can top in her second attempt. Puccio runs out of time on boulder 1. “The pressure of having to go out last messes a bit with your head and I didn’t do so good on the first boulder, but that happens, nothing to do about it. When you have so many people watching you live, it gives you a lot of energy, but at the same time it’s a bit frustrating when your performance is not at your best“, she says. Petra Klingler also has to bow out after the first round, but she is stoked to have reached the finals. “I’m really satisfied with my climbing, except that I would have liked to have less tries, because then I would have passed on to the next round, but I’m happy with the whole competition, it was really fun to climb here. Right now I’m all smiles, because it’s so nice to see that all these people have come just to see us climb, it’s amazing!”

The first boulder of the men is a walkover. Five flashes. Only Jorg Verhoeven’s top in second attempt is invalidated, because he touched the black tape marks. However, the 28-year old Dutchman can keep on trying and gets a time bonus for the interruption. He can also top the first boulder in his third attempt. Now all eyes are on boulder 2. But no matter how hard the six finalists try, they cannot solve the crux. To determine the top 3 for the next round the jury has to include the semi final results and due to their slightly lower ranking in the semis Gabriele Moroni, triple World Champion and overall World Cup winner Dmitrii Sharafutdinov and the two-time overall Lead World Cup Champion Jorg Verhoeven are out. Gabriele Moroni, who had his best competition season to date back in 2009, is not disappointed. “This is a great competition in a beautiful place and I climbed well; I didn’t expect to get to the finals, but I made it so I’m very glad. The amount of audience made me feel so tiny on the stage - so many people are cheering on you - it’s a lot of pressure, but also very motivating.”

The performance on boulder 3 determines who advances to the super final. Shauna Coxsey is the only one who can top the tricky problem with the backward entry in her third attempt. Jule Wurm reaches at least the bonus, securing her chances for victory. Last year’s runner-up, Akiyo Noguchi is a little disappointed, but by defeating Dmitrii Sharafutdinov in the overall ranking, Akiyo wins the newly established “best couple award” together with her boyfriend Sachi Amma and gets a great consolation gift: they can spend the night in the biggest hotel suite with breakfast in bed.

With Sean McColl, Jernej Kruder and Rustam Gelmanov all flashing the third boulder problem, there is another tie in the men’s competition. Time for a tiebreak. While Robeat is heating up the Porsche-Arena with his intoxicating beatbox performance, the route setters whip up a fourth boulder. This time the athletes get only one attempt at a time with five attempts in total. However, neither of them can top the route. Sean impresses the spectators with his body control, but cannot reach the bonus hold, unlike Rustam and Jernej. Both advance to the next round, while the defending champion bows out. “adidas ROCKSTARS has grown so much from last year - the position of the wall makes it more exciting for the audience, it’s a free entry and the media attention makes sure that lot of people get to know about it.“

The duels for the super finals are set. Germany battles Great Britain – Juliane Wurm vs. Shauna Coxsey, a strange situation for the two friends, who train a lot together. Both fixtures must climb simultaneously an identical route on the same boulder, without seeing each other. In the last two years, the female champions were able to flash the super boulder within a few seconds. This time there is a bit more drama involved, because neither Jule nor Shauna get to the top. Therefore the two get a recovery period while the men prepare for the final showdown. Russia vs. Slovenia – Rustam Gelmanov vs. Jernej Kruder. In the decisive moment the Slovenian athlete has the right power reserve and takes the lead, “The moment I did the hardest move, I looked to my left and I couldn’t see Rustam... That was such a nice feeling!“ And Jernej, who has never been on top of a podium enjoys the cheers of the crowd as he stands on top of the 4 meter high super boulder.

The route setters have modified the women’s super boulder. One more time the announcers build up the suspense and the Badasstics prepare the audience for the last duel of the evening. On more time the band plays the event’s theme song ‚No Borders’.

Shauna or Jule – who will be adidas ROCKSTAR 2013? Shauna takes the lead, but in her two final moves Juliane catches up and hits the buzzer first. The crowd goes wild. „I’m so happy for her! I couldn’t have wanted anyone else to win more“, Shauna says. „Juliane and me are very good friends, we normally spend a lot of time together both during and between competitions The atmosphere was absolutely incredible, totally electric. On the third boulder, when we were climbing alone, I was pretty nervous and it was really hard, but the crowd got behind me and I think that was what enabled me to do it.“ And Jule agrees. ”It felt so good to have such a great audience here in Stuttgart. It pushes me a lot when the crowds are as loud as they were today. I didn’t expect to win, I just wanted to give my best and have fun, but now I am very happy to have won.“

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