

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

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ISU European Speed Skating Championships

#EuroSpeed

Karolina Erbanova (CZE) was crowned the first Ladies' European Sprint Champion in speed skating history, and Sven Kramer (NED) took his career ninth European Allround title on the final day of the ISU European Speed Skating Championships in Heerenveen on Sunday.

Four times two is one for Erbanova

Four second places handed Karolina Erbanova one gold medal at Thialf stadium on Saturday and Sunday. Jorien ter Mors (NED) took silver and Olga Fatkulina (RUS) bronze. Erbanova won her first major international title with a sprint tournament track record of 152.180. She broke Christine Nesbitt's 2011 Heerenveen best of 152,220.

Erbanova came a long way to become a speed skating champion. "When I first saw speed skating on television at the age of fourteen in 2006, I was laughing about the suits. What a crazy sport. I was playing ice hockey at the time. Then my gym teacher took me to a training camp with Martina (Sáblíková), because there were two Czech girls in speed skating and they needed a third for the team pursuit. I did not want to go speed skating in the beginning, because I had my future planned in ice hockey. But speed skating went well and at the age of sixteen I went to World Cups with Martina. To qualify for the Czech Olympic team is very hard. I felt that in speed skating I had a better chance", she said.

Speed skating is not very big in the Czech Republic, but with Sáblíková and Erbanova the country won silver and gold at the 2017 European Championships. "We have no ice rink and we only have four or five skaters in the World Cups, so I'm proud that we are among the big countries like the Netherlands, Russia and Norway", Erbanova said.

The 24-year-old Czech sprinter went into the final day as leader in the classification, but she was never sure to win the title until the very last moment. Fatkulina was only 0.16 seconds adrift after Day 1 and the Russian lady had won the first 500m. Fatkulina won back a small margin, when she also won the second 500m in 38.07. Erbanova managed to keep the damage limited with 38.19 in second place. Ter Mors was third in 38.29, thus climbing to third place in the ranking.

Ter Mors had to make up 1.13 in the 1000m to win gold. "I had to skate 1:14.7 or 1:14.8", she said. "I never managed a time like that here in Thialf." This time she managed 1:14.88, enough to win the final distance, but 0.18 seconds short to win the title. "I'm satisfied with my races today, but yesterday was not good. I had to fight for speed yesterday. Today's races cost me less energy, but I went faster."

Ter Mors' 1000m exploit was enough to push Fatkulina to third place. The Russian 1000m World Champion from 2013 finished fourth with 1:16.46 in the final distance, behind Dutch Marrit Leenstra (1:16.35), who also had finished third in Saturday's 1000m. Fatkulina was not happy. "My plan was to skate under 38 seconds in the 500m, but I did not succeed. I did not have the right feeling at the start of the final 1000m. At the Russian championships last December I changed my skating shoes and this was my first international tournament with the

Official Series Hashtag: #EuroSpeed

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new ones. I still need time to adapt,” she said.

Kramer takes ninth European crown in style

Sven Kramer took his ninth European Allround title in style, winning his beloved 10,000m in front of an enthralled crowd in his home town of Heerenveen. Compatriot Jan Blokhuijsen took silver and Belgian Bart Swings won bronze.

Kramer was happy with his title, but also with the new tournament format, which combined the traditional European Allround Championships with the inaugural European Sprint Championships. “I really like this new format. It’s for the good of the sport. Speed Skating is a time-trial sport and this new format really suits the beauty of speed skating, in contrast with other new events like the Mass Start or pursuit events.”

To start the second day of the Men’s Allround competition, Denis Yuskov (RUS) won the 1500m. The Russian set 1:46.54, just one hundredth of a second ahead of Kramer. Norwegian Sindre Henriksen, who won the 500m on Saturday, clocked 1:47.82 to finish third in the 1500m.

Kramer, who had already won the 5000m on Saturday, beat Blokhuijsen in the final 1500m pair. “It’s a pity to finish one hundredth behind Yuskov, but I was too busy racing Blokhuijsen and I forgot that Yuskov also set a fantastic 1500m,” he said. The Dutch allrounder has outgrown his 1500m struggles of the past: “I just focus on the 5000m and the 10,000m, which is my nature. From there I skate a good 1500m as well.”

The good 1500m handed Kramer a 16.70 point gap over second-ranked Blokhuijsen. Skating in the final pair versus his compatriot, Kramer kept up with Blokhuijsen until the last five laps. The two Dutchmen took turns in the lead, both skating about 31.5 laps from the start. Blokhuijsen had to let go, when Kramer accelerated to 31.1, 30.6, 29.7 and 29.9, to conclude with 28.4 in the final lap. The reigning champion won the 10,000m in 13:06.30 and his challenger came second in 13:11.95.

Despite coming second in the 10,000m, as well as in the final classification, Blokhuijsen was satisfied. “I know I’m in good shape. It’s not super yet, and I know that Sven is in top shape, but the gap is smaller than last year and that’s an indication we’re on the right track,” he said. Blokhuijsen sometimes regrets to skate in the same era as Kramer: “He is the best speed skater of all time. It might have been easier for me to have been born in a different era, but skating against him takes me to a higher level too and I enjoy the battle.”

Behind the two Dutchmen, Sverre Lunde Pedersen seemed on his way to win the bronze medal. The Norwegian easily skated away from third ranked Yuskov, and he held a 14-second advantage over Swings, who was in fifth place before the final distance. But Pedersen collapsed in the last four laps of his 10,000m race. He finished with a 38.1 lap, still far ahead of Yuskov, but 27 seconds behind Swings, who to his own surprise finished third in the 10,000m (13:15.54), also to end up third in the final classification.

“I did not expect to be on the podium,” said Swings. “But when I saw his (Pedersen’s) times going up towards the end, I knew it was going to be tight. I just hoped that I did not have wasted the bronze opportunity in my own last two laps. I did not really hold back, but I didn’t know it was going to be this close and it’s different when you know that you’re still skating for a medal. But I skated a good 10,000m and I’m happy to finish like this.”

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For full results of the ISU European Speed Skating Championships 2017 please refer to <http://www.isureults.eu/>

About ISU European Speed Skating Championships 2017

The ISU European Speed Skating Championships 2017 combines for the first time a Sprint and Allround formats. Unlike the World Cup, in which Skaters race for single distance titles, at the European Sprint and Allround Championships performances in four distances add up to the final ranking. In both formats times are calculated based on the 500m, for example the 1500m time will be divided by 3. In the Allround tournament the Men will skate 500m, 5000m, 1500m and 10,000m. The Ladies Allround competition features 500m, 3000m, 1500m, 5000m races. In the Sprint competition both the Men and the Ladies race the 500m and the 1000m twice.

ISU European Speed Skating Championships Heerenveen (NED)

Sprint Ladies, Day 2

2nd 500m Ladies' Sprint

1	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	38.07
2	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	38.19
3	Jorien ter Mors	NED	38.29

2nd 1000m Ladies' Sprint

1	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:14.88
2	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	1:15.83
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:16.35

Final Classification Ladies' Sprint

1	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	38.23 (2), 1:15.69 (2), 38.19 (2), 1:15.83 (2), 152.180 TR
2	Jorien ter Mors	NED	38.75 (4), 1:15.58 (1), 38.29 (3), 1:14.88 (1), 152.270
3	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	38.16 (1), 1:16.15 (4), 38.07 (1), 1:16.46 (4), 152.535

Allround Men, Day 2

1500m Men's Allround

1	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:46.54
2	Sven Kramer	NED	1:46.55
3	Sindre Henriksen	NOR	1:47.82

10,000m Men's Allround

1	Sven Kramer	NED	13:06.30
2	Jan Blokhuijsen	NED	13:11.95
3	Bart Swings	BEL	13:15.54

Final Classification Men's Allround

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1	Sven Kramer	NED	36.81 (8), 6:10.58 (1), 1:46.55 (2), 13:06.30 (1), 148.699
2	Jan Blokhuijsen	NED	36.43 (2), 6:16.86 (2), 1:48.31 (7), 13:11.95 (2), 149.816
3	Bart Swings	BEL	37.33 (15), 6:21.80 (5), 1:48.02 (5), 13:15.54 (3), 151.293