

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17 CH 1006 LAUSANNE SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77 E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

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ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2017

Day Four – Men Free Skating

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2017 continued in Ostrava, Czech Republic, Saturday with the Men's Free Skating.

Javier Fernandez (ESP) strikes gold

Javier Fernandez of Spain struck gold and claimed his fifth consecutive title at the ISU European Figure Skating Championships. Russia's Maxim Kovtun and Mikhail Kolyada picked up the silver and bronze medals.

Fernandez opened his Elvis Presley routine with a quad toe followed by a somewhat shaky quad Salchow-double toe combination and a triple Axel-triple toe. The two-time and reigning World Champion crashed on the next quad Salchow, but recovered to hit five more triples, but put down his hand on the last one, a loop. The Spaniard got a level four for his step sequence and two spins and scored 190.59 points, which added up to 294.84 points. "Yesterday I said I want to do a personal best. I didn't do that, but I still fought from the beginning to the end even after the fall. I tried to keep my mind and brain in the same place, but of course it hard right after you fall and you hurt yourself. Overall it still was a good performance. I'm saving it for Worlds, I guess. I'll keep training hard to deliver a better performance", the now five-time European Champion said. Fernandez is the first skater since Ondrej Nepela to win five consecutive European titles. The Slovak Nepela won his titles from 1969 to 1974.

Kovtun's program to "Iron Sky" included a quad Salchow, quad toe, two triple Axels as well as three more triples and three level-four spins. The Russian posted a new personal best with 172.27 points and accumulated 266.80 points to win his third consecutive medal at Europeans. "I am glad that I was able to break through that barrier that stood between the two programs. Many times I did one good program and one very bad program. Now I know I can do it and I can do it again", the 21-year-old commented.

Skating to music from Cirque du Soleil, Kolyada landed five clean triples including a triple Axel-triple toe, but he fell on his quad Lutz and stumbled on the quad toe. The Russian Champion still achieved a seasons best of 166.22 points and totaled 250.18 points to win his first ISU Championship medal. "The free skating didn't go as planned. The fall on the quad Lutz had to be expected, but popping the Axel really threw me off and it was hard for me to pull myself together after that. Overall I think emotionally it was a good performance and I was able to entertain the crowd", Kolyada told the press.

Jorik Hendrickx (BEL) ranked fourth at 242.56 points. Alexei Bychenko (ISR) dropped from third to fifth at 239.24 points and Moris Kvitelashvili (GEO) pulled up from tenth to sixth place at 238.20 points.

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships conclude Sunday with the Exhibition Gala. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and the official event website <http://ostrava2017.eu/en/>. #EuroFigure