

Press release

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Russian double, Dutch and Italian surprises

Russia's Yekaterina Shikhova and Pavel Kulizhnikov handed the home crowd victories in the ladies' and men's 1000m at the ISU European Single Distance Speed Skating Championships in Kolomna on Saturday. Dutch surprise Esmee Visser took the ladies' 3000m gold and Italy's Nicola Tumolero won the men's 5000m.

Shikhova lives up to expectations

Yekaterina Shikhova won the ladies' 1000m convincingly. Vanessa Herzog (AUT) came second and Marrit Leenstra (NED) third.

Shikhova lived up to the expectations on home ice. The 32-year-old Russian is the highest ranked European skater in the current World Cup standings, behind Japan's Nao Kodaira, Miho Takagi and America's Heather Bergsma.

Lotte van Beek (NED) set the bar in Saturday's 1000m. Friday's 1500m champion clocked 1 minute and 15.74 seconds, after another superb final lap in 28,9 seconds.

None of the other skaters managed to skate a sub-29 second final lap, but Shikhova, Herzog and Leenstra all started a lot faster.

Leenstra was 0.63 ahead of Van Beek at the 600m split. She equaled Van Beek's 1:15.74 at the finish line, but edged out her compatriot by eight thousandths of a second.

Shikhova and Herzog faced each other in the penultimate pair and Herzog was the only one to clock a sub-18 opener at the 200m split. Shikhova took the initiative after the first cross-over and kept the Austrian at bay in the final lap, finishing in 1:15.34. Herzog stopped the clock at 1:15.44.

Last year's European sprint champion Karolina Erbanova (CZE), who took bronze in Friday's 500m, withdrew because of illness.

Kulizhnikov edges out Yuskov

After Shikhova's gold in the ladies' 1000m, Pavel Kulizhnikov handed the crowd another home victory in the men's 1000m. Denis Yuskov (RUS) and Nico Ihle (GER) took silver and bronze.

Ihle, who came fourth in the Olympic 1000m four years ago in Sochi, was the first to break the 1:09 barrier with 1:08.95. Only eight out of 21 skaters managed to skate under 1:10 and only the top three managed a sub-1:09 1000m.



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Kulizhnikov, who had to settle for bronze in Friday's 500m, was paired with Mika Poutala (FIN). Both skaters clocked a fast 25.2 first full lap and the Russian was able to follow-up with a 27.2 final lap, whereas Poutala 27.7 in the final lap.

Kulizhnikov crossed the line in 1:08.84 and pushed Ihle to second place. Poutala clocked 1:09.41 to end up in fifth place.

Friday's 1500m winner Yuskov again faced Thomas Krol (NED) in the 1000m. This time around there were no problems at the cross-over. Krol was faster at the 200m and the 600m split, but could not maintain his pace in the final lap and had to bow his head for Yuskov, who finished in 1:08.92. Krol clocked 1:09.28 to end up fourth.

Dutchmen Koen Verweij (1:09.87) and Hein Otterspeer (1:09.91) were not able to challenge the podium in the final pairing and finished seventh and eighth.

Visser leads Dutch double

Esmee Visser surprised herself and the rest of Europe when she took gold in the 3000m. Carlijn Achtereekte (NED) grabbed silver and Natalia Voronina (RUS) bronze.

Visser, who surprisingly qualified for the Olympic 5000m in PyeonChang at the Dutch trials last week, started in the third pairing versus Camilla Lund (NOR). The 21-year-old Dutch prodigy was the only one to set a personal best in Kolomna. She almost crashed on the final straight, but managed to stay on her feet to finish in 4 minutes and 5.31 seconds.

Olga Graf (RUS), who took 3000m bronze at the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games, was the first who had to bow her head for Visser, finishing in 4:11.28 for sixth place.

One after the other started faster than Visser, but no one was able to maintain the pace throughout the race. Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA) also challenged Visser's time, but the Italian mass start specialist paid the price for a fast start in the second part. She finished in 4:08.77 to end up fourth.

Voronina also chased gold in the final pairing versus Achtereekte. She was faster than Visser until the 1800m split, but bit in the dust like everyone else.

Achtereekte was more than a second behind Voronina halfway the race, but she waited patiently and slowly chased her prey in the second part of the race to finish in 4:06.81. Voronina clocked 4:07.62.

Maiden title for Tumolero

Tumolero won his first major international title when he took gold in the men's 5000m. Alexander Rumyantsev (RUS) took silver and Marcel Bosker (NED) grabbed the bronze medal.

Italy's Davide Ghiotto set the fastest time with 6 minutes and 29.08 seconds before the ice-cleaning break, despite not pulling through on the final straight.

After the break Rumyantsev raised the bar significantly with 6:18.13 in the sixth pairing.



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Tumolero, who had the fastest personal best of the field beforehand, clocked 6:16.85 with ten sub-30 second laps in the seventh pairing.

In the penultimate pairing Bosker managed to maintain a steady pace with 11 sub-31 laps, but it was just a little too slow to challenge Tumolero's mark. He stopped the clock at 6:20.45.

Bosker's compatriot Jan Blokhuijsen, the 2014 Olympic silver medalist from Sochi, could not match Tumolero's lap times in the final pairing either. Battling for gold he had to pay a high prize in the last two laps and Blokhuijsen eventually even lost the fight for a podium spot. He ended up fourth in 6:21.97.

Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#EuroSpeed** and **#SpeedSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

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