

January 8, 2022

Heerenveen, Netherlands

## **Dutch men sweep 1000m podium as Schouten reigns supreme in 3000m**

Dutch skaters dominated the men's competition on the first day of the European Championships in Heerenveen as [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) won his first international title in the 1000m while [Sven Kramer](#), [Marcel Bosker](#) and [Patrick Roest](#) gave Netherlands their third consecutive European Team Pursuit title.

In the women's races, Poland's [Andzelika Wójcik](#), [Kaja Ziomek](#) and [Karolina Bosiek](#) won gold in the women's Team Sprint while [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) maintained her unbeaten record in the 3000m this season, seizing yet another gold medal.

### **Netherlands dominant in men's races**

[Thomas Krol](#) (NED) won his first international title in the 1000m, edging out arch-rival [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) by 0.09s at the European Championships on Friday. [Kai Verbij](#) completed the all-Dutch podium at 0.17s from the winner. Earlier on Friday, [Sven Kramer](#), [Marcel Bosker](#) and [Patrick Roest](#) handed the Netherlands their third consecutive European Team Pursuit title.

### **Nuis bouncing back from disappointment**

Nuis missed out on qualification for the Beijing Olympic Games 1000m at the Dutch trials last week, but was handed a slot in the European Championships because [Hein Otterspeer](#) (NED) withdrew with a minor injury. The 2018 Olympic champion beat countryman Verbij, who did qualify for the Olympic 1000m last week, in the penultimate pairing to set the fastest time so far.

"I don't think I can look at any race without thinking about the trials at the moment," Nuis said. "Of course you can write that with today's result I would have gotten a ticket for the Olympic 1000m, but that's just a little too late now. This was a new race, I don't want to look back constantly, although it still hurts of course."

Nuis will still be at the Olympic Games defending his 1500m title, and taking silver in one minute and 7.86 seconds gave him a boost ahead of Beijing.

"I skated well today, I have to be happy with that. It's a pity I did not win, but Thomas (Krol) is definitely the man to beat in the 1000m at the moment. Look at his 1:07.2 last week at the trials, that's a real boss time, and for me to come this close just tells me that I'm good."

### **Relaxed Krol takes first 1000m title**

In the final pairing Krol clocked 1:07.77, taking advantage of the draft behind [Ignat Golovatsiuk](#) (BLR) on the final backstretch.

"He had a nice chase at Golovatsiuk on that last crossing," Nuis said. "But on the other hand, I had a good draft behind Kai (Verbij) at the first back stretch."

For Krol it was a first international 1000m title after already having two 1500m World titles under his belt. He had been relaxed going into the European Championships, with Olympic tickets for the 1000m and the 1500m already secured.

"It's funny, last week (at the Dutch Olympic trials) skating was terrible, nerve-wracking. This week it was a bit less tense. I was able to enjoy skating more. Sunday I'll have my last race (before the Olympics) and then it's back to training again. I'm really looking forward to that."

Training will be necessary, because while the Dutch may have swept the European podium on Friday, at the Olympic Games, they can take nothing for granted. [Jordan Stolz](#) (USA) won the 1000m at the US Olympic trials in Milwaukee in 1:07.61 on Thursday.

"I've watched that race on YouTube," Krol said. "Very impressive. It's difficult to compare times from different tracks, but he definitely is a man to take into account. He's only 17 years old, that's bizarre. I did not skate a time like that when I was 17. It's going to be a great race with him in the mix (at the Olympic Games)."

### **Title and track record for Dutch in Team Pursuit**

Before the sprinters took to the ice for the 1000m, the men's competition had begun with the Team Pursuit. Olympic champions Norway ([Allan Dahl Johansson](#), [Hallgeir Engebråten](#), [Sverre Lunde Pedersen](#)) set a high bar in the second heat, beating their own track record by 0.16, when they finished in three minutes and 38.92 seconds.

"We had kind of expected that (a good time from Norway)," Dutchman Marcel Bosker said. "But we had not expected them to skate a track record. We aimed at a track record ourselves, around 3.38, and that's exactly what we did, even just under 3.38."

Kramer, Bosker and Roest, who skated in the same line-up two years ago when they also won the title, finished in 3:37.97. For Bosker it meant confirmation of his spot in the Dutch Olympic team. After failing to qualify for an individual distance, he was chosen for the Team Pursuit together with Kramer, at the expense of [Dai Dai N'tab](#) and [Tijmen Snel](#), who did qualify individually.

"It's been awkward, everything that happened over the past week," Bosker said. "I understand all the frustrations. Dai Dai and Tijmen are teammates and friends and I feel the pain. But I think it's a fair choice, looking at the medal chances we have in the Team Pursuit, and I'm glad we were able to show it today."

"The Americans are very strong too. I think we are the top favorites, but we shouldn't think about that too much, because it would only lead to extra pressure, which doesn't help."

Behind the Netherlands and Norway, Italy ([Andrea Giovannini](#), [Davide Ghiotto](#), [Michele Malfatti](#)) took bronze in 3:43.41.

### **Schouten sublime as Poland take Team Sprint**

[Irene Schouten](#) (NED) started the European Championships with yet another victory to maintain her unbeaten record in the 3000m this season. Finishing in three minutes and 56.62 seconds, the 29-year-old endurance specialist kept silver medalist [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED) 3.17s behind. Earlier on Friday, Poland's [Andzelika Wójcik](#), [Kaja Ziomek](#) and [Karolina Bosiek](#) kicked off the tournament by winning gold in the Women's Team Sprint.

### **Schouten confident**

"I just want to win, and then this is what automatically happens," Schouten said about her unbeaten record this season.

The Dutch skater was paired with [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) in the third-last heat and her Italian rival was off to a blistering start.

"I knew she would start off fast .... I saw the opener, 19.0 or something ... and I thought my opener was fast already."

Schouten opened in 19.42 versus Lollobrigida's 19.02, and two laps into the race she was 1.67s behind, but she did not panic.

"I'm not afraid (to fall behind at the start). I've skated so many races with other girls taking a lead and I always catch up. I just feel a bit bad about my second lap, that was not good. I went from 29.8 to 31.1, but I managed to recover. I want to skate the perfect race of course. Let's hope to get it at the (Olympic) Games."

### **Lollobrigida fades to third**

Lollobrigida eventually finished in 4:00.61 to take bronze. "I'm happy, even if my coach said I started too fast," she said. "It's always nice to skate here (in Heerenveen) and I was happy to skate against Irene because she's the best."

Although her tactics did not lead to gold, the Italian had no regrets about her race plan.

"It was good like that (the race plan). I don't want to change. I wanted to start fast, not as fast as I did, but I couldn't control the ice. I just blew up in the last two laps. I need to focus on that, I know how to work now (leading up to the Olympic Games in Beijing).

### **World versus Olympic Champion**

After Schouten and Lollobrigida had set their times, 3000m World Champion [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED) took to the ice alongside Olympic Champion [Carlijn Achtereekte](#) (NED). De Jong left her pair-mate behind easily, and her split times were faster than Schouten's in the first part of the race. But in the end she could not match Schouten's incredible stamina, finishing in 3:59.79 to take silver.

"I'm happy for now, but I wanted to skate well technically and that didn't work out. My opener was fine, but the first corner, I don't know what I did... The corners just did not work out. I was stiff and couldn't make the right angles. I had to take up the battle, while I felt as if I was only getting slower. It was a fight against everything. In the end I have to be happy that I can skate this bad technically and still finish under four minutes."

Achtereekte eventually ended up fifth in 4:04.79, behind fourth-ranked [Ragne Wiklund](#) (NOR), who clocked 4:01.86 in the final pairing.

### **Polish women hope to see Team Sprint at Olympics**

Earlier in the evening, Poland's women easily won the Team Sprint competition. As first booster in the three-stage missile, [Andzelika Wójcik](#) launched second engine [Kaja Ziomek](#) and finisher [Karolina Bosiek](#) to one minute and 27.26 seconds.

Belarus ([Anna Nifontova](#), [Ekaterina Sloeva](#), [Marina Zueva](#)) came second in 1:31.18, and Norway ([Julie Nistad Samsonsen](#), [Martine Ripsrud](#), [Ane By Farstad](#)) took bronze in 1:31.43.

The Polish team were happy to win but expressed their hope that the discipline one day features in the Olympic Games.

“It (the Team Sprint title) doesn’t mean much because it’s not an Olympic discipline. This was more like a warm-up for the individual races,” Ziomek said.

“We would love to see the Team sprint in the Olympic programme,” Wójcik said. “This is sad for us, because we are sprinters and we don’t have a Team race at the Games.”

All three Polish Team Sprint women will start in the individual 500m at the European Championships on Saturday.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU European Speed Skating Championships please visit: [isu.org/speed-skating](https://isu.org/speed-skating). Results are available [here](#) and you can follow the discussion on social media by using #SpeedSkating.

### Where to Watch

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