

January 21, 2019

Lausanne, Switzerland

## **Europe's best skaters ready for showdown in Minsk ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019 Preview**

Europe's top figure skaters are ready for the ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019 in Minsk, Belarus (January 21-27). Minsk will host the ISU European Figure Skating Championships for the first time, but has hosted the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships 2012 as well as ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating events.

145 skaters from 34 ISU members have been entered for this 112<sup>th</sup> edition of the European Championships: 37 Men, 36 Ladies, 11 Pair Skating couples and 25 Ice Dance couples.

Skaters/couples need to have obtained a minimum total technical score in Short Program and Free Skating in order to compete at the European Championships. All four reigning European Champions are back and hope to defend their title.

### **Overview of the top contenders**

In the Men's event, Olympic bronze medalist [Javier Fernandez](#) (ESP) has been the uncontested leader in Europe since 2013 and collected six consecutive European titles. The two-time World Champion, who has not yet competed this season, wants to come to the European Championships one more time before ending his illustrious competitive career. However, competition will be tough. Reigning World and European bronze medalist [Mikhail Kolyada](#) (RUS) has the highest season's best score among the European skaters with 274.37 points. [Michal Brezina](#) (CZE) has one of his best seasons of his long career and qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final (SB 257.98). Russian Champion [Maxim Kovtun](#) celebrated a strong comeback this season (SB 247.55). Other contenders include Grand Prix Internationaux de France bronze medalist [Alexander Samarin](#) (RUS), Grand Prix Rostelecom Cup silver medalist [Moris Kvitelashvili](#) (GEO), [Kevin Aymoz](#) (FRA) and [Deniss Vasiljevs](#) (LAT). 2016 European silver medalist [Alexei Bychenko](#) (ISR) hopes to return to form after injury problems earlier this season.

Olympic Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) (RUS) is aiming at defending her European title. Following a successful first half of the season, the 16-year-old holds the highest season's best with 238.43 points, but struggled at Russian Nationals last month. Competition should come from teammates [Sofia Samodurova](#), who qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final (SB 204.33) and [Stanislava Konstantinova](#), who took silver in the Helsinki Grand Prix (SB 197.57). Samodurova and Konstantinova will debut at the ISU European Championships. Others to watch include [Viveca Lindfors](#) (FIN), [Alexia Paganini](#) (SUI) and [Mae Berenice Meite](#) (FRA).

In the Pairs, two-time and reigning European Champions [Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov](#) (RUS) will face ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final Champions [Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres](#) (FRA). The Pairs prepare for an exciting showdown. James/Cipres come with a season's best of 221.81 points to Minsk and have won each event they entered this season while Tarasova/Morozov scored 220.25 points. Several other teams will fight for the podium including ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Finalists [Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#) (ITA/SB 203.83), Grand Prix France bronze medalists [Aleksandra Boikova/Dmitri Kozlovskii](#) (RUS/SB 196.54 points), 2018

World Junior Champions [Daria Pavliuchenko/Denis Khodykin](#) (RUS/SB190.01) and [Miriam Ziegler/Severin Kiefer](#) (AUT/SB187.01).

Olympic silver medalists [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) (FRA) are going for a fifth consecutive European title in the Ice Dance event and top the season's best list with 216.78 points. However, the three-time World Champions missed the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final as they competed only in one event. The challenge should come from ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final silver medalists [Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov](#) (RUS/SB 201.37), who made a strong comeback after not qualifying for Europeans last year, as well as from two-time European bronze medalists [Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin](#) (RUS/SB 200.78) and ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final bronze medalists [Charlene Guignard/ Marco Fabbri](#) (ITA/SB 198.55). Other teams to watch include [Marie-Jade Lauriault/Romain LeGac](#) (FRA), [Sara Hurtado/Kirill Khaliavin](#) (ESP), [Olivia Smart/Adrian Diaz](#) (ESP) and [Natalia Kaliszek/Maksym Spodyriev](#) (POL).

Please note that for the seasonal best total scores only the ISU Grand Prix competitions (senior and junior) and ISU Challenger Series events have been taken into consideration, not other international competitions or National Championships.

### Prize Money

The ISU awards a global prize money of US\$ 294, 000 at the ISU European Figure Skating Championships to Single Skaters, Pair Skating and Ice Dance couples placed 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. The prize money is awarded as follows:

#### *Men and Ladies*

1st place US\$ 21,000  
2nd place US\$ 16,000  
3rd place US\$ 11,000  
4th place US\$ 7,000  
5th place US\$ 5,000  
6th place US\$ 3,000

#### *Pairs and Dance (per couple)*

1st place US\$ 30,000  
2nd place US\$ 20,000  
3rd place US\$ 12,000  
4th place US\$ 10,000  
5th place US\$ 7,000  
6th place US\$ 5,000

### Event Schedule

**The schedule of the ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2019 is as follows:**

Wednesday, January 23: Ladies and Pairs Short Program  
Thursday, January 24: Men's Short Program, Pairs Free Skating  
Friday, January 25: Rhythm Dance, Ladies Free Skating  
Saturday, January 26: Men's Free Skating, Free Dance  
Sunday, January 27: Exhibition Gala

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org) and the [official event website](#). Follow the discussion on social media using #EuroFigure and #FigureSkating.

#### **For further information please contact:**

ISU Media Coordinator  
Selina Vanier  
E-Mail: [vanier@isu.ch](mailto:vanier@isu.ch)

ISU European FS Championships  
Natalia Aliokhina, Press Officer  
+375 29 551 78 76 (phone)  
E-Mail: [ntwww@mail.ru](mailto:ntwww@mail.ru)