

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Media Advisory

Lausanne, January 21, 2003

2003 European Figure Skating Championships Malmö, Sweden

Day 2

The 2003 European Championships in Malmö, Sweden, continued Tuesday with the Compulsory Dance and the Ladies' Short Program.

Compulsory Dance

For the first time, only one Compulsory Dance was skated in an ISU Championship. Following a decision of the ISU congress in 2002, one Compulsory Dance of four is drawn for the event. The dance drawn for the 2003 European Championships was the Tango Romantica. This dance was created by 1976 Olympic Ice Dancing Champions Liudmilla Pakhomova/Alexander Gorshkov (RUS) and their coach Elena Tchaikovskaya. It was first performed in 1976.

The competition was of a high level, and it was close between the top ranked couples. Reigning World Champions Irina Lobacheva/Ilia Averbukh (RUS) took the lead ahead of Bulgaria's Albena Denkova/Maxim Staviyski and Tatiana Navka/Roman Kostomarov (RUS). Lobacheva/Averbukh skated first and put out a very clean dance, showing off their deep edges. The couple received marks ranging from 5.5 to 5.7 for technique and from 5.3 to 5.8 for timing/expression. "It was tough to skate first. It had never happened to us before to skate first in European or World Championships", Averbukh commented. "Some of our marks were a bit low, because we skated early. We hope for the first place in this event, but there are many other strong couples. But this is what competition is about."

Denkova/Staviski performed an excellent Tango as well, dancing close together and right on the beat. Their marks went up to 5.6 for technique and up to 5.7 for timing/expression. "We are very pleased with our skating. We were afraid as the ice is very hard, and we had to skate after ten couples", Denkova explained. "So we tried to skate a different pattern and to make bigger curves. We like difficult Compulsories, therefore the Tango is one of our favorites. Our coach is paying special attention to Compulsory Dances."

Navka/Kostomarov conveyed the lyrical mood of the dance very well and looked confident throughout the performance. Their marks ranged from 5.1 to 5.5 for technique and from 5.4 to 5.7 for timing/expression. "We're excited about our skating. It was better than in all our practices and competitions before", Kostomarov told the press happily.

The ice dancers appreciated the fact that there is only one Compulsory Dance to be skated in ISU Championships, but they stressed the importance of the Compulsories. "To have one Compulsory is good, but we don't want to get rid of the Compulsories entirely", Denkova said. "They show the technical level of the couples. It is easier for the judges to compare if everyone does the same steps."

Elena Grushina/Ruslan Goncharov of the Ukraine are currently sitting in fourth place, followed by Kati Winkler/Rene Lohse (GER). World bronze medalists Galit Chait/Sergei Sakhnovski of Israel made a timing mistake and were ranked 6th in the first part of the ice dance event.

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Ladies Short Program

In what was an exciting event, Russia's Elena Sokolova captured the Ladies' Short Program with teammate Irina Slutskaya finishing second. Julia Sebestyen of Hungary came in third.

Sokolova, who had won Qualifying Group A ahead of Slutskaya, was on, the second she stepped on to the ice. Performing to "Bacchanale" from "Samson and Delilah", the 23-year-old hit a spectacular triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination in the first seconds and went on to complete a triple flip, a double Axel, and dynamic spins. Her marks ranged from 5.6 to 5.9 for required elements and from 5.6 to 5.8 for presentation. Slutskaya skated last in the final flight. The audience supported her right away and the reigning World Champion nailed a high triple Lutz-double loop combination followed by a double Axel, a triple Flip and a combination spin with many changes of position. Her footwork was executed mostly on one foot. At the end of the program, Slutskaya jumped up and down happily. Her marks were very close to Sokolova's, ranging from 5.6 to 5.8 for required elements and from 5.5 to 5.9 for presentation.

Sebestyen, who stood in 4th place after the Qualifying, skated in the penultimate flight. The Hungarian pulled out a strong performance that featured a triple flip, an excellent triple Lutz-double toeloop combination, a high double Axel and fast spins. Her marks went up to 5.6 for both required elements and presentation.

"I was prepared to skate as well as I did today. My coach told me not to leave the ice without a triple-triple combination! I was sure that I would do it", Sokolova said. "I hope that my performance (of the Free Skating) in the Qualifying wasn't yet the best I can do, I want to do more. For a long time I couldn't believe that I had won Nationals, but I think this victory instilled confidence in me."

Slutskaya was pleased with her performance: "This was my best Short Program of the season, it was very good for me. I did all my jumps, spins, steps, everything was clean", she told the press.

"I'm suprised to be in third", Sebestyen commented. "It was the first clean Short Program at a European Championship for me. I train in Sweden during the summer, therefore the people know me and are clapping for me. I'm training in Landskrona, which is just 40 km from Malmö. A lot of friends were here tonight to support me. My coach worked there a few years ago."

Ukraine's Elena Liashenko also skated a strong program and is currently in fourth place. Four-time European bronze medalist Viktoria Volchkova (RUS) popped her planned triple flip and was ranked sixth in the Short Program. She stands in 5th place overall.

The 2003 European Championships will continue tomorrow with the Pairs Free Program. Full results are also directly available on the ISU Internet site on www.isu.org

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2003 European Figure Skating Championships

Ice Dancing

| FPl. | Name | Nat. | Points | CD | OD | FD |
|------|---|------|--------|----|----|----|
| 1 | Irina LOBACHEVA / Ilia AVERBUKH | RUS | 0.4 | 1 | | |
| 2 | Albena DENKOVA / Maxim STAVIYSKI | BUL | 0.8 | 2 | | |
| 3 | Tatiana NAVKA / Roman KOSTOMAROV | RUS | 1.2 | 3 | | |
| 4 | Elena GRUSHINA / Ruslan GONCHAROV | UKR | 1.6 | 4 | | |
| 5 | Kati WINKLER / Rene LOHSE | GER | 2.0 | 5 | | |
| 6 | Galit CHAIT / Sergei SAKHNOVSKI | ISR | 2.4 | 6 | | |
| 7 | Isabelle DELOBEL / Olivier SCHOENFELDER | FRA | 2.8 | 7 | | |
| 8 | Federica FAIELLA / Massimo SCALI | ITA | 3.2 | 8 | | |
| 9 | Sylwia NOWAK / Sebastian KOLASINSKI | POL | 3.6 | 9 | | |
| 10 | Kristin FRASER / Igor LUKANIN | AZE | 4.0 | 10 | | |
| 11 | Natalia GUDINA / Alexei BELETSKI | ISR | 4.4 | 11 | | |
| 12 | Oksana DOMNINA / Maxim SHABALIN | RUS | 4.8 | 12 | | |
| 13 | Veronika MORAVKOVA / Jiri PROCHAZKA | CZE | 5.2 | 13 | | |
| 14 | Nora HOFFMANN / Attila ELEK | HUN | 5.6 | 14 | | |
| 15 | Julia GOLOVINA / Oleg VOIKO | UKR | 6.0 | 15 | | |
| 16 | Pamela O'CONNOR / Jonathan O'DOUGHERTY | GBR | 6.4 | 16 | | |
| 17 | Roxane PETETIN / Mathieu JOST | FRA | 6.8 | 17 | | |
| 18 | Marta PAOLETTI / Fabrizio PEDRAZZINI | ITA | 7.2 | 18 | | |
| 19 | Tatiana SINIAVER / Tornike TUKVADZE | GEO | 7.6 | 19 | | |
| 20 | Jessica HUOT / Juha VALKAMA | FIN | 8.0 | 20 | | |
| 21 | Marina TIMOFEIEVA / Evgeni STRIGANOV | EST | 8.4 | 21 | | |
| 22 | Agnieszka DULEJ / Slawonir JANICKI | POL | 8.8 | 22 | | |

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Ladies

| FPL. | Name | Nat. | Points | QB | QA | SP | FS |
|------|--------------------|------|--------|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Elena SOKOLOVA | RUS | 1.0 | | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 | Irina SLUTSKAYA | RUS | 2.0 | | 2 | 2 | |
| 3 | Julia SEBESTYEN | HUN | 3.4 | | 4 | 3 | |
| 4 | Elena LIASHENKO | UKR | 3.6 | 3 | | 4 | |
| 5 | Viktoria VOLCHKOVA | RUS | 4.0 | 1 | | 6 | |
| 6 | Galina MANIACHENKO | UKR | 5.4 | | 6 | 5 | |
| 7 | Carolina KOSTNER | ITA | 5.4 | | 3 | 7 | |
| 8 | Elina KETTUNEN | FIN | 6.2 | 2 | | 9 | |
| 9 | Susanna POYKIO | FIN | 7.6 | | 7 | 8 | |
| 10 | Alisa DREI | FIN | 8.0 | | 5 | 10 | |
| 11 | Anne Sophie CALVEZ | FRA | 8.2 | 4 | | 11 | |
| 12 | Zuzana BABIAKOVA | SVK | 10.2 | 6 | | 13 | |
| 13 | Daria TIMOSHENKO | AZE | 10.8 | 9 | | 12 | |
| 14 | Olga VASSILJEVA | EST | 11.2 | 7 | | 14 | |
| 15 | Idora HEGEL | CRO | 12.2 | 8 | | 15 | |
| 16 | Diana POTH | HUN | 12.2 | 5 | | 17 | |
| 17 | Lucie KRAUSOVA | CZE | 12.8 | | 8 | 16 | |
| 18 | Mojca KOPAC | SLO | 15.4 | | 10 | 19 | |
| 19 | Sabina WOJTALA | POL | 15.6 | 12 | | 18 | |
| 20 | Vanessa GIUNCHI | ITA | 16.2 | | 9 | 21 | |
| 21 | Annette DYTRT | GER | 16.4 | | 11 | 20 | |
| 22 | Sara FALOTICO | BEL | 18.4 | | 13 | 22 | |
| 23 | Jenna McCORKELL | GBR | 18.4 | 10 | | 24 | |
| 24 | Kimena BROG MEIER | SUI | 18.6 | | 12 | 23 | |
| 25 | Julia LAUTOWA | AUT | 19.4 | 11 | | 25 | |
| 26 | Tugba KARADEMIR | TUR | 20.8 | 13 | | 26 | |
| 27 | Hristina VASSILEVA | BUL | 21.8 | | 14 | 27 | |
| 28 | Asa PERSSON | SWE | 22.4 | 14 | | 28 | |
| 29 | Karen VENHUIZEN | NED | 23.4 | | 15 | 29 | |
| 30 | Roxana LUCA | ROM | 24.0 | 15 | | 30 | |