

## Press release

14 January 2018

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### ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships 2018 – Dresden

#### Day 2

**The European Short Track Speed Skating 2018 concluded in Dresden on Sunday with two action-packed relays. The Russian ladies team had a nervous wait before being confirmed as champions by the judges, and Dutchman Sjinkie Knegt completed a glorious weekend by leading his team to victory in the men's event.**

#### **[Ariana Fontana](#) sneaks photo finish win in 1000m final**

[Ariana Fontana](#) won the Ladies 1000m after a thrilling duel with [Suzanne Schulting](#) (NED).

Six-time European champion Fontana prevailed in a photo finish after a fast and tactical contest.

The race also generated the best atmosphere of the weekend at the EnergieVerbund Arena, thanks to the presence in the final of Dresden-born [Anna Seidel](#) (GER) who learned her craft on this ice. She took the bronze medal, much to the crowd's delight.

Fontana's win was some compensation for Saturday's races: she had crashed in the 1500m final, and only just stayed on her feet over cracked ice to take silver in the 500m.

"I didn't fall over, so that was a good step!" she said afterwards. "This weekend has been a good test as to how I was feeling on the ice as we get close to the Olympics. I'm not at 100 per cent yet.

"I wasn't disappointed yesterday. The 1500m I thought I was going to win but then I crashed - but I wasn't upset because I'd done a good race.

"In the 500m I was trying to pass, but the ice cracked. I just stayed on my feet and I was happy with silver. And I was pleased with this race."

[Lara van Ruijven](#) won the B final.

#### **[Sjinkie Knegt](#) (NED) continues dominance at Euros with third gold of weekend**

[Sjinkie Knegt](#) won the men's 1000m, adding to his 500m and 1500m gold medals from Saturday.

With [Victor An](#) (RUS) coming last in his quarter-final, one of the early favourites did not line up. Instead, a five-man field of Knegt, [Semion Elistratov](#) (RUS) [Tommaso Dotti](#) (ITA) and [Roberto Pukitis](#) (LAT) took to the ice at the EnergieVerbund Arena.

Knegt was completely dominant, winning by a couple of metres, allowing himself time to look around and celebrate wildly at the finish.

He almost did not make the final, however, after finishing third in his semi-final, and only advancing after the judges decided he had been blocked.



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Elistratov took silver, while Pukitis secured bronze.

"It was the perfect race today," said Knegt. "In the semi and quarter, I was feeling a little bit tired, but the final went very well.

"For me that's great because it is confirmation that I'm on the right route as PyeongChang is approaching. I'm really happy."

[Sébastien Lepape](#) (FRA) won the B final.

## **[Sofia Prosvirnova](#) (RUS) wins 3000m superfinal by edge from Fontana**

[Sofia Prosvirnova](#) (RUS) won the ladies 3000m superfinal. In the exciting 27-lap race at the EnergieVerbund Arena, she just beat [Ariana Fontana](#) (ITA) to silver, with [Suzanne Schulting](#) (NED) taking bronze.

The Russian had been frustrated by her performances in the weekend's other races and admitted that she went into this final without really thinking about a win.

"I messed up in the 1000m earlier today and was very upset about it," she said. "I was hoping to get in final but I fell on the last lap of the semi and that was tough for me.

"Going into the superfinal I thought I'd probably save energy for the relay because that was a priority for our team. So I didn't go too hard and because I was thinking, 'this doesn't matter so much,' I calmed down.

"I was relaxed and then I just raced well at the end. I'm very happy to get a win."

## **Vladislav Bykanov (ISR) wins men's 3000m superfinal to clinch overall silver**

Vladislav Bykanov (ISR) won the men's 3000m superfinal – and in the process secured the silver medal in the overall classification.

He broke away with French duo [Thibaut Fauconnet](#) and [Sébastien Lepape](#), lapping the field, before winning a tight sprint between the three.

"I'm so pleased, it's my best ever performance in a European Championships," he said.

"I love skating in Dresden, it's amazing. I'm a heavy guy and the ice suits me here because it's got very good grip. When the ice is soft, I break away too easily.

"Tactically, I had to win the race to finish on the overall podium, and keep [Semion Elistratov](#) (RUS) out of the top three to do that. So it was perfect that I went away with the two French guys.

"I feel great and I am in my best shape ever going into the Olympics."

[Fauconnet](#) took silver and [Lepape](#) the bronze.

## **Russia narrowly beat Hungary in controversial ladies final as [Sjinkie Knegt](#) caps perfect weekend by leading Netherlands to gold in men's event**

Russia won the Ladies 3000m relay, while Netherlands took the Men's 5000m title.



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The Russian team had to wait nervously on the judges' verdict after a close tussle with Hungary. [Sofia Prosvirnova](#)(RUS) had been first over the finish line, but would an earlier clash between racers from the two teams count against them?

The officials decided not. Russia took gold, Hungary silver and France bronze.

"I'm so happy," said [Prosvirnova](#) afterwards. "This race was a priority for our team and I was thinking about our girls. I was nervous about my skate edge before the race – but I calmed down and we did well.

"I thought the judges might give the penalty and we'd come second, but thank god they didn't."

The Men's 5000m was equally exciting and crowned one of [Sjinkie Knegt](#)'s best weekends as a racer. Having been triumphant over 500m, 1000m and 1500m, the Netherlands star overtook Russia's [Victor An](#) brilliantly on the final corner to add relay gold to his haul.

Russia took silver, Hungary the bronze.

"It was really cool to win here," said the Netherlands' [Dennis Visser](#). "This is our last relay before the Olympics. It was a very exciting last couple of laps for us, just perfect.

"Sjinkie is in really good form. He's won three distances this weekend and I don't think he's ever done that before. He will do well at the Olympics for sure."