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Collalbo, Italy

Kramer takes 10th European Allround title; Austria's Herzog speeds to Sprint glory

Sven Kramer took his 10th European Allround title beating team-mate and countryman Patrick Roest in spectacular fashion in picturesque Collalbo on Sunday. Roest collected silver while Norway's Sverre Lunde Pedersen clinched the overall bronze. In the ladies' Sprint Championship, Austria's Vanessa Herzog kept her Russian rivals at bay with a superb second 500m to take the European title. Daria Kachanova (RUS) secured silver beating the 13-year-old track record in the 1000m, and her compatriot Olga Fatkulina won the overall bronze.

Kramer draws first blood

World Allround champion [Patrick Roest](#) was in pole position following the 500m and the 5000m on the first day, but the 23-year-old was unable to defend his 0.13 second lead over [Sven Kramer](#) in the 1500m on Sunday morning.

With a time of 1:45.91, the experienced Kramer - who had triumphed in the 5000m on Saturday - took his second distance win in the tournament to leave Roest 0.49 behind in second place. [Sverre Lunde Pedersen](#) took the 1500m bronze in 1:46.65 to keep the two Dutchmen in his sights with only the 10,000m to come.

Russia's [Danila Semerikov](#) was disqualified after an illegal move at the cross-over in his race versus countryman [Sergey Trofimov](#), which paved the way for [Douwe de Vries](#) (NED) to enter the 10,000, for which only eight skaters qualify.

Pedersen lacks power

De Vries took full advantage of his unexpected opportunity, skating 13:35.87 to record the fastest 10,000m time before the ice preparation break. World Allround silver medallist Pedersen was up next in the penultimate pairing versus compatriot Håvard Bøkko (NOR). The 26-year-old Pedersen had to make up 5.40 seconds to catch classification leader Kramer, and never looked likely to apply serious pressure. Halfway through the race Pedersen had a small advantage over De Vries, but he could not maintain his pace and finished in 13:36.14.

"The last 10,000m was heavy and halfway through the race I felt that I did not have the extra power to skate faster at the end," Pedersen said.

Similar game plan

With only the climax between Kramer and Roest yet to come, De Vries was leading the 10,000m ranking and Pedersen was on top of the overall ranking. They knew that the king and his challenger were likely to overhaul first and second place in both rankings.

Kramer was defending a 2.36 lead over Roest, but instead of following his young rival the defending champion decided to take the initiative.

"I wanted to gain one or two tenths of a second per lap in the beginning. I knew that Patrick could have a good sprint in the final laps so I wanted to create a buffer for the attack. And in the end that's exactly how it worked out," Kramer said.

While the Dutch duo started the final distance with the same goal, each was aware that any slip up could allow Pedersen through to claim gold.

"We've got the same coach and we had the same instructions," Roest said.

"We had to stay around Sverre's [Lunde Pedersen] lap times and after the halfway point we had to decide how we felt. Starting the 10,000m too fast could be dangerous, because a breakdown could even mean dropping beneath Sverre in the ranking."

Too late

Halfway through the race Kramer was executing his plan meticulously, while Roest was struggling to keep up and the Championship seemed to be over. But Roest did what Kramer had anticipated. He attacked ferociously in the final two laps to catch his experienced team-mate, overhauling him with a final lap of 29.3 seconds. It was enough to win the 10,000m in 13:26.45, but the attack came too late to claim the title. Kramer finished 0.42 behind in 13:26.88.

"When you're able to skate 29.3 in the final lap, you haven't paced the race well," Roest admitted. "That was stupid, but that's knowledge in hindsight."

During the race it felt as if I was not capable of attacking any earlier, but maybe I should have. I did not have the faith, maybe that's experience. I just did not feel good enough."

Kramer agreed that experience was key. For him, collecting his 10th title was less important than being able to compete at the top level again after struggling with a back injury in the first half of the season.

"It's only a number, but it felt great skating the way I did this weekend. That's more than I could have dreamt of. Yesterday it was damage control, but today I could attack. It's great to be able to skate dominantly again, to make a tactical plan and to be able to execute it."

Pedersen's first

Pedersen has won two silver medals and one bronze at World Allround Championships, but he had never before been on the European Allround podium.

"It's nice to take this medal here in Collalbo, where I skated my first European Allround Championships in 2011," he said.

"I've had a slow start this season, because of sickness in September and October, but my shape is getting better and better. I hope to be at my best at the [World Single Distance Championships in Inzell \(GER\)](#) and the [World Allround Championships in Calgary \(CAN\)](#)."

Solid foundation in 500m

Two blistering 500m races laid the foundation for [Vanesse Herzog](#) (AUT) to win her second successive European Sprint title. Both times the athletes took to the ice over that distance in Collalbo, she was the only one who stopped the clock in less than 38 seconds. In Sunday's race she was 0.01 slower than she had been the day before, but 37.62 was still 0.42 quicker than [Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS), who repeated her silver-winning 500m performance from the previous day. [Daria Kachanova](#) (RUS) once more took bronze in the shortest distance with 38.22.

"I know I'm really fast in the 500m, because I'm faster in the opener than I was before. That's a good sign for Inzell," Herzog said. The Austrian will face Olympic 500m Champion [Nao Kodaira](#)

(JPN), who has been unbeatable in the 500m over the past two seasons, at the [ISU World Single Distance Championships on 8 February in Inzell, Germany](#).

Improved 1000m

Herzog went into the final 1000m with a 1.40 second advantage over Fatkulina, who was in second place after three distances. With 1:15.89 and third place in the longer distance, Herzog secured her title. She was 0.65 seconds faster than she had been on the first day.

"My first 1000m was not so good, but my second was all right, so I'm happy. But for the World Sprint Championships [[23-24 February in Heerenveen](#)] I'll have to improve my 1000m," she said.

For Herzog winning outdoors in Collalbo was special.

"I started skating outdoors as a kid and I saw my first indoor rink when I was 13 years old," she said. "I really love this place. I come from Innsbruck, which is not too far away from here. I skated my first international races as a junior at this rink. I've skated here since I was 15-16 years [old]."

Track record

Kachanova, who was 1.53 behind Herzog and 0.13 behind Fatkulina going into the final race, had won Saturday's first 1000m and she triumphed again on Sunday. Finishing in 1:15.21 the 21-year-old Russian broke Anni Friesinger's (GER) 2006 track record (1:15.47). Jutta Leerdam (NED) came second in the distance with 1:15.76, to take fourth place overall.

Fatkulina ended up fourth in the 1000m with 1:16.46 and saw her young compatriot pass to second place in the overall ranking.

"I had to skate a super fast 1000m and I'm very happy with the track record," Kachanova said. "It was a good competition for my experience as a speed skater."

Having secured the overall bronze medal, Fatkulina was satisfied too.

"I had a stomach problem in the first days of January, but I decided to compete and use this competition as a training for Inzell [World Single Distance Championships in February]. I'm happy with that decision and with the medal."

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

About ISU European Speed Skating Championships

The European Allround Championships is one of the oldest international sport events globally. After two unofficial tournaments in 1891 and 1892, the first official European Championships were held in 1893 in Berlin. In 1970 the first ladies' European Championships were held and since 1990 the men's and ladies' events are held at the same time and venue. In 2017 the European Sprint Championships were added to the program and since then the tournament is held biannually instead of yearly.

Unlike the World Cup, in which Skaters race for single distance titles, at the European Sprint and Allround Championships performances in four distances add up to the final ranking. In both formats, times are calculated based on the 500m, for example the 1500m time will be divided by 3. In the Allround tournament the Men skated 500m, 5000m, 1500m and 10,000m. The Ladies' Allround competition featured 500m, 3000m, 1500m and 5000m races. In the Sprint competition the Men and the Ladies raced the 500m and the 1000m twice. The Ladies' Allround and the Men's Sprint tournament started on Friday and finished on Saturday. The Men's Allround and the Ladies' Sprint tournaments started on Saturday and finished on Sunday.