

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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World Synchronized Skating Championships **Zagreb (CRO) 1-4 April 2004**

The fifth World Synchronized Skating Championships concluded on Saturday 3 April, in Zagreb, Croatia.

The Championships started on Friday with the Short Program. The top two teams were very closely matched. Team Sweden 1, winners in 2003, 2001 and 2000, skated to music from the film Matrix Reloaded and was second after the Short Program. A minor error (a stumble in the open block) may have lost them first place. The leading team, Finland 1, skated to the Rocky IV soundtrack and was almost faultless.

There was a tense atmosphere for the second and the final day. Team Finland 1 (2002 World Champions) and Team Sweden 1 (2003 World Champions) battled for the gold.

Team Finland 2 skated to the soundtrack from Evita. Dressed in white, they skated their sophisticated program with grace and elegance. Their excellent lifts and unison were rewarded with marks for technical merit from 5,5 to 5,7 and from 5,7 to 5,9 for presentation. Finland 2 achieved their stated objective of winning the bronze medal.

Team Sweden 1 was able to perform their program to music from Gladiator without the added burden of being in the lead. The reigning World Champions skated their beautifully choreographed routine with heart and power but an unfortunate fall from one skater during the intersection at the end of the program proved costly. The marks were between 5,5 and 5,8 for technical merit and from 5,8 to 5,9 for presentation. The team was disappointed with the fall but otherwise it was an excellent performance.

Team Finland 1 had chosen a mixture of music (In the Dungeons and Cu Chullain). They began their program with a dramatic lift, which set the tone for the whole performance. The lifts were spectacular and the program was packed with difficult steps. Finland 1 received marks between 5,6 and 5,9 for technical merit and between 5,7 and 5,9 for presentation, which earned them the gold medal. Coach Ms Anu Jaaskelainen said that the team was delighted to be at the World Championships in Zagreb. She was very happy and proud of her skaters for staying so calm and relaxed. The team captain said: "We were very excited, we were anxious and all we wanted to do since we woke up is to skate our program. We skated with our hearts".

Finland, Sweden, Canada, USA and Germany earned the right to enter two teams at the 2005 World Championships in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The standard of performances in Zagreb demonstrated that Synchronized Skating continues to develop rapidly. At the 2004 ISU Congress delegates will decide whether next year's World Championships will be conducted using the New Judging System, which was tested at the Neuchatel Trophy in Switzerland in February.

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Results of 2004 World Synchronized Skating Championships Zagreb, Croatia, 1-4 April 2004

| | Team | Nat. | SP | FS |
|----|---------------------|------|----|----|
| 1 | Team Finland 1 | FIN | 1 | 1 |
| 2 | Team Sweden 1 | SWE | 2 | 2 |
| 3 | Team Finland 2 | FIN | 3 | 3 |
| 4 | Team USA 1 | USA | 4 | 4 |
| 5 | Team Germany 1 | GER | 5 | 5 |
| 6 | Team Canada 2 | CAN | 6 | 6 |
| 7 | Team Canada 1 | CAN | 7 | 7 |
| 8 | Team Russia | RUS | 8 | 8 |
| 9 | Team USA 2 | USA | 9 | 9 |
| 10 | Team Czech Republic | CZE | 10 | 10 |
| 11 | Team Japan | JPN | 11 | 11 |
| 12 | Team Sweden 2 | SWE | 13 | 12 |
| 13 | Team Germany 2 | GER | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | Team Switzerland | SUI | 15 | 14 |
| 15 | Team Italy | ITA | 16 | 15 |
| 16 | Team France | FRA | 14 | 16 |
| 17 | Team Croatia | CRO | 17 | 17 |
| 18 | Team Hungary | HUN | 18 | 18 |
| 19 | Team South Africa | RSA | 20 | 19 |
| 20 | Team Austria | AUT | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | Team Great Britain | GBR | 21 | 21 |
| 22 | Team Australia | AUS | 22 | 22 |
| 23 | Team Netherlands | NED | 23 | 23 |

For further information see www.isu.org

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