

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
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2001 European Championships of Figure Skating, Bratislava, Slovakia **Day Six**

The 2001 ISU European Figure Skating Championships concluded in Bratislava, Slovakia with the Ladies' Free Program.

Last year's silver medallist, Maria Butyrskaya (RUS), in second place after the Short Program, was the first of the top three skaters to take to the ice. She knew that unless she and another skater finished ahead of the overnight leader, Irina Slutskaya (RUS), that she could not win the gold medal.

Butyrskaya opened with a triple lutz/double toeloop combination and followed it with a beautiful triple flip - the jump she fell on in the Short Program. She went for her triple toeloop/triple salchow combination but could not hold the landing to the salchow. Another triple lutz followed but she fell on her attempt at the triple loop. Fighting all the way, she put in another triple loop and landed it cleanly. As always, she performed fast, well-centered spins and her program featured lyrical choreography. Her marks for technical merit ranged from as low as 5.2 to 5.6 and for presentation from 5.5 to 5.7.

Teammate Viktoria Volchkova, in third place after the Short, followed Butyrskaya. She opened with a double axel followed by a triple lutz/double toeloop but popped her attempt at the flip. Two clean triples followed but she doubled her flip before finishing strongly with a triple salchow and triple toeloop. So, like Butyrskaya, she landed five clean triples but her quality of skating, spins and steps were not so good. Accordingly she earned marks ranging from 5.1 - 5.7 for technical merit but her presentation marks were lower (from 5.1 to a high of one 5.7).

Elena Liashenko (UKR), in fifth place after the Short, had an opportunity to reach the podium for the first time since her European bronze in 1995. But it was not to be. She landed four clean triples (one in combination) but could not quite hold the landing on two more attempts. Her overall performance put her ahead of Volchkova in the Free by a majority verdict but it would prove to be not enough to win a medal. The last skater was the third Russian, defending champion Irina Slutskaya. She doubled her opening triple lutz but landed a triple salchow/double loop combination. She made the same mistake again with her second attempt at the lutz but then she hit top form in her balletic Don Quixote program. She landed four more clean triples (including the troublesome lutz) in a powerful performance that featured her trademark Biellmann spins and spirals. She came off the ice knowing that she had won her fourth European title. All nine Judges put her first and her marks one 5.8 for technical merit and five more for presentation.

So Slutskaya won the Free Program and the European title. Behind her, the results were more complicated. Butyrskaya placed second in the Free. Julia Sebestyen (HUN), in eleventh place after the first two sections of competition, was the surprise third placed skater in the Free. She produced a fine performance with five clean triples to move up five places to sixth overall (for a third successive year). Liashenko was fourth in the Free ahead of Volchkova and last season's world junior bronze medallist Sarah Meier (SUI).

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In the final reckoning, it was an exact repeat of last year's result with Butyrskaya taking the silver and Volchkova the bronze. For a third successive year, Russian skaters filled all three positions on the podium in the Ladies' competition. Liashenko was fourth, Meier fifth and Sebestyen sixth. "I wasn't too pleased with my free program," said Slutskaya. "I have been skating only for one week, that's probably why I didn't do everything today. I still feel my flu. I was very sick. I got the worst flu that is going around in Moscow. I'll prepare better for the next competitions."

"After the Short, I didn't have any chance to win anymore," said a philosophical Butyrskaya. "So I just wanted to go out and show what I can do. I think I was too confident on the loop because I usually never miss this jump. I think I have a very good free program this year and I shouldn't have any problems. I just need to get my brain right!"

"The competition wasn't bad overall," said Volchkova, bronze medallist for a third successive year. "I wasn't quite ready physically because I have been sick one week before the Championships. It has been difficult to skate. I was lacking strength. I did what I could do. I want to have it (a triple/triple) for Worlds. It will be difficult to medal without it."

The Exhibition Gala for the 2001 European Figure Skating Championships takes place tomorrow, Sunday.

Results

Ladies

FPL.	Name	Nat.	Points	QA	QB	SP	FS
1	Irina SLUTSKAYA	RUS	2.0	1		1	1
2	Maria BUTYRSKAYA	RUS	4.2		1	3	2
3	Viktoria VOLCHKOVA	RUS	8.2	5		2	5
4	Elena LIASHENKO	UKR	8.4	2		6	4
5	Sarah MEIER	SUI	10.2	3		5	6
6	Julia SEBESTYEN	HUN	11.2		4	11	3
7	Elina KETTUNEN	FIN	14.6	4		10	7
8	Galina MANIACHENKO	UKR	16.2		5	7	10
9	Vanessa GUSMEROLI	FRA	18.8		6	4	14
10	Vanessa GIUNCHI	ITA	19.0		8	13	8
11	Silvia FONTANA	ITA	20.8	6		9	13
12	Susanne STADLMÜLLER	GER	22.8		9	12	12
13	Zuzana BABIAKOVA-PAUROVA	SVK	23.8		11	14	11
14	Tamara DOROFJEV	HUN	25.0		7	22	9
15	Sabina WOJTALA	POL	28.2		3	15	18
16	Hristina VASSILEVA	BUL	30.6		12	18	15
17	Zoe JONES	GBR	32.0	7		17	19
18	Anna WENZEL	AUT	33.8		13	21	16
19	Alisa DREI	FIN	34.4	9		23	17

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20	Lenka SENIGLOVA	CZE	35.4		10	19	20
21	Karen VENHUIZEN	NED	35.4	12		16	21
22	Idora HEGEL	CRO	38.2	8		20	23
23	Julia VOROBIEVA	AZE	41.0	10		25	22
R	Julia SOLDATOVA	BLR			2	8	
25	Klara BRAMFELDT	SWE			14	24	
26	Roxana LUCA	ROM		11		27	
27	Anja BRATEC	SLO		14		26	
28	Darya ZURAVICKY	ISR		13		28	
29	Olga VASSILJEVA	EST			15	29	
R	Kaja HANEVOLD	NOR		15			
31	Ellen MAREELS	BEL		16			
31	Melania ALBEA	ESP			16		
33	Julia SELEPEN	LTU		17			
33	Julia LEBEDEVA	ARM			17		
35	Anna CHATZIATHANASSIOU	GRE			18		

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