

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009

HELSINKI, FINLAND

Day 1 - 20 Jan 2009

The Championships started with the Compulsory Dance. The Compulsory Dance drawn for the 2009 European Championships was the Finnstep. The Finnstep is the newest of the Compulsory Dances and was performed for the first time in an ISU competition. It is fun, fast dance and a ballroom type Quickstep that should be danced very lightly. It requires very crisp and tidy timing. The dance was created by Susanna Rahkamo/Petri Kokko (FIN) and their coach Martin Skotnicky. It was first performed in 1995 (as an Original Dance) and then adapted to become a Compulsory Dance.

Faiella/Scali were second with 36.03 points (18.08/17.95). They expressed the character of the dance very well, but Scali had a little wobble on one twizzle. *"We were excited to compete the Finnstep. We started working on it after Italian Nationals, so there was not so much time. But once we started working on it, we felt comfortable"*, Scali told the press. *"There was a little stumble, but I saved the twizzle. This is a difficult part of the dance. We arrive from the Choctaw and we have to do a double twizzle, and maybe our position was too open and I wasn't ready to twizzle. It is one of two or three critical parts of the dance, especially in the second pattern when you are tired"*, he continued.

Day 3 - 22 Jan 2009

The Original Dance of the 2008/09 season is rhythms of the 20s, 30s and 40s. The 27 couples in the event chose a wide variety of dances.

Faiella/Scali interpreted a tap dance from the Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire movie "Follow the Fleet" and completed a level-four side by side midline step sequence, a one armed rotational lift and a dance spin that were graded a level four as well. Faiella was slightly shaky on the synchronized twizzle. The Italians got a level three for the twizzles and the diagonal step sequence and picked up a seasons best of 59.03 points (30.90/28.13). They remained in second place at 95.06 points. *"We could handle the situation well, and we were really into the dance today. It was like going back to the 30s. The elements were really good"*, Scali told the press. *"It was exciting to get our first silver small medal today. The pressure is higher being in the medal position. The hardest part was the Finnstep and after that everyone got more relaxed. Today we felt confident with our performance."*

Day 4 - 23 Jan 2009

The Ice Dance event concluded with an exciting Free Dance and many strong performances. Russia's Jana Khokhlova/Sergei Novitski danced off with the gold medal while Federica Faiella/Massimo Scali of Italy took the silver and Sinead Kerr/John Kerr (GBR) earned the bronze medal. It was the first ISU Championships medal for the Italians and the Scots.

Faiella/Scali performed a lyrical routine to "Moonlight Sonata" in the roles of Pierrot, the sad clown. The Italians completed a combination spin, a curve lift, straight line lift and twizzles that were graded a level four and also smooth footwork that got a level three. Only their serpentine lift was a level two. Faiella/Scali scored a new seasons best of 91.11 points (45.80/45.31) and were ranked fourth in the Free Dance but held on to second place at 186.17 points. As soon as the skaters understood that they were on the podium, they hugged each other backstage for a long time and Faiella broke down in tears of happiness. *"We are so happy when we saw that we got the silver medal. It is really hard to describe the feeling, it's so strange. The pressure was really high, because we were for the first time in this situation"*, Scali explained. *"We are excited that we are on the top and we want to stay there. We were dreaming of a medal at Europeans and Worlds and Olympics since we were 10 years old and in the last two, three years we were waiting for this medal."*