



# Press release

## 2011 European Open Water Swimming Championships / September 7-11

### 5km Team Event – Top favourite Italy ahead of Germany and France who both caused a big surprise

Eilat (pps) Top favourite Italy won the 5km Team Event at the 2011 European Open Water Swimming Championships in Eilat (ISR) on Thursday, clocking 56min12.4sec. Silver and bronze – and that was in fact the big surprise of the race – went to the teams from Germany (57min15.2sec) and France (57min41.1sec).

Italy finished with a clear lead of 1min02.8sec ahead of the German team. France came behind Germany but also clearly ahead of Russia. The Russians – with 2008 European 25km bronze medallist Anna Uvarova and multiple World and European medal winner Evgeny Drattsev, among the favourites for medals before the race having won a medal in the Team Event at the past two European Championships (2008 and 2010) – missed the medal podium, finishing in fourth position. A total of seven teams competed in the race which was held in a time-trial format.

The Italian team, 2008 European Champion and 2010 runner-up, showed a strong performance with Rachele Bruni, 10km Silver medallist the day before here in Eilat, and her compatriots Luca Ferretti and Simone Ercoli, the 2010 European Champion and runner-up in the 5km. “We are training with this team for a long time already, and this is why we found our best tactics: both men in front, Simone Ercoli and myself at the same height, and Rachele Bruni between us and just a little bit behind, so that we can drag her. We knew throughout the race that we were in the lead. It then became a pure time-trial effort to do our best”, disclosed Ferretti.

Germany competed with the new 2011 European Junior Champions of Navia (ESP) who thus took the chance to perform “on the big stage”: Svenja Zihler and Rob Muffels (both 2011 European Junior OWS Champions in the 5km) as well as European OWS Cup winner Hendrik Rijkens represented the German colours. Rob Muffels was extremely happy with the performance at their first “senior” event: “We are a junior team and our aim before the race was to finish at least in fifth place. After a while we three then managed to swim well together. We saw the French team which started one minute ahead of us, tried to catch up, and this effort eventually gave us an unexpected Silver medal.” All three repeated success after Navia in August when they took Gold in the 3km Team Event. By the way, at the Worlds in Shanghai Germany had won Bronze with a then completely different team (Thomas Lurz, Jan Wolfgarten, and Isabelle Haerle).



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France pinned its hopes on a team of “youngsters” as well – and was rewarded with a Bronze medal: of their three athletes, Coralie Codevelle, Damien Cattin Vidal and Sebastien Fraysse, only 22-year-old Cattin Vidal had made the headlines at this year’s World Championships when he finished in 7<sup>th</sup> position in the 5km. “My two ‘boys’ were great, they dragged me all the time. We only had a problem when we had to pass the Spanish team, because both teams were at a turning buoy, which makes it very complicated. I think that we lost some time there”, said Coralie Codevelle.

## Statistics

### Women’s 10km

1. Martina Grimaldi	ITA	2h00min18.6sec
2. Rachele Bruni	ITA	2h00min19.2sec
3. Nadine Reichert	GER	2h00min20.0sec

### Men’s 10km

1. Thomas Lurz	GER	1h53min18.2sec
2. Vladimir Dyatchin	RUS	1h53min20.0sec
3. Igor Snitko	UKR	1h53min21.5sec

### Team event 5km

1. Italy	56min12.4sec
2. Germany	57min15.2sec
3. France	57min41.1sec

## Medal Table

(after 2<sup>nd</sup> Competition Day – 10km Women, 10km Men, 5km Team)

	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	Italy	2	1	0	3
2.	Germany	1	1	1	3
3.	Russia	0	1	0	1
4.	France	0	0	1	1
	Ukraine	0	0	1	1
		<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>



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## Preview: Women's and Men's 5km Time Trial on Saturday

At the 2010 European Championships the Italian Federation celebrated a "clean sweep" in the Men's 5km event by winning the Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. In Eilat, however, only European runner-up Simone Ercoli will start in the 5km event. Defending champion Luca Ferretti and bronze medallist Simone Ruffini (tied for third place in Budapest with Spyridon Gianniotis of Greece) gave priority to the 10km on Wednesday. Not very successfully indeed: Ruffini finished in 14<sup>th</sup> place and Ferretti had to abandon the race. So Simone Ercoli will have to battle it out on Saturday with World bronze medallist Evgeny Drattsev of Russia and Thomas Lurz of Germany, the 7-time World Champion in a row, who already won 10km Gold on the first competition day.

Seven weeks prior to the Europeans, Swann Oberson of Switzerland was in seventh heaven when she earned the title at the World Championships. It was Switzerland's first gold medal ever in Open Water Swimming at World Championships. In the 5km event 25-year-old Oberson is to be counted among the top favourites, although the "dress rehearsal" in the 10km event wasn't really successful as she finished in 12<sup>th</sup> place. Also among the top medal contenders: Italy's silver medallist in Eilat in the 10km, Rachele Bruni; 2010 European runner-up Kalliopi Araouzou of Greece, who did not compete in the 10km race. Czech Jana Pechanova also hopes to have a say in the fight for victory. The "veteran" in Open Water Swimming earned her first European Championship medal in Helsinki eleven years ago when she took the bronze in the 5km. Last year in Balatonfuered she finished in fourth position. Further medal contenders are Italy's Alice Franco, Yurema Requena of Spain and Russia's Anna Guseva.

The 5km will take place on a circuit in direct vicinity of the Red Sea shore line on Royal Beach, each of the three laps will measure approximately 1660 meters.

**Webcasting:** Watch the European Open Water Swimming Championships - Eilat 2011 on [www.len.eu](http://www.len.eu), clicking on the dedicated link.

Complete **Results** and **starting lists:** [www.omegatiming.com](http://www.omegatiming.com)

You can find **further information** on the Europeans (schedule, start lists, results, quotes, news, photos, webcasting, etc.) at [www.len.eu](http://www.len.eu) and [www.iswim.org.il](http://www.iswim.org.il).



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