



# Press release

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

### Gold medal in the Women's 10km Event to Italy's Martina Grimaldi 25<sup>th</sup> international medal for "Mr Open Water" Thomas Lurz of Germany

Eilat (pps) 2011 World Championship runners-up Martina Grimaldi of Italy and Thomas Lurz of Germany won the first medals at the European Open Water Swimming Championships in Eilat (ISR) on Wednesday. Both celebrated success in the "Olympic" 10km events which were held on the first competition day close to the Red Sea's "Royal Beach" under very good weather conditions and a water temperature of 26 degrees.

22-year-old Grimaldi clocked a time of 2h00min18.6sec leaving team-mate Rachele Bruni (2h00min19.2sec) in second place. Germany's 26-year-old Nadine Reichert finished in 2h00min20.0sec, only 1.4 seconds behind, taking the Bronze medal. Former European 25km Champion Margarita Dominguez of Spain and Croatia's Karla Sitic finished in fourth and fifth position respectively.

Title defender Lurz took his fourth successive European 10km Gold medal, clocking 1h53min18.2sec, ahead of Russian Vladimir Dyatchin (1h53min20.0sec) and Ukraine's Igor Snitko (1h53min21.5sec). Evgeny Drattsev (RUS) and Nicola Bolzonello (ITA) just missed the medal podium finishing in fourth and fifth position respectively. It was the 25<sup>th</sup> international medal for Germany's 32-year-old "Mr Open Water" at Olympic Games, World and European Championships.

22 of the 25 female swimmers and 27 of the 31 male swimmers finished the 10km races in the Red Sea on Wednesday. In Eilat, a total of 24 medal winners from Olympic Games, World and European Championships compete in seven races until Sunday. The Women's and Men's 10km events are on the schedule of the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

#### Women's 10km: Perfect Italian strategy from the start to the finish line

During the first three (of six) laps (1660m each) all swimmers in the Women's race remained in one large pack, from time to time as wide as six swimmers next to each other. At half race distance, the leading Italians Martina Grimaldi and Rachele Bruni increased the pace and the pack spread out in one single line. Only during the last lap did Grimaldi manage to get ahead of Bruni.

Grimaldi, 2010 World Champion in Roberval (CAN) and runner-up at the 2011 Worlds in Shanghai, was pleased with her race: "Together with my team-mate Rachele, we decided to go into the lead right from the start of



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the race. This is a very hard task! But it permitted us to control the pace and after the third lap we started to increase our efforts. We managed to break away from the big pack and then kept our position up until the finishing line.”

For runner-up and 2008 European 5km champion Rachele Bruni it was a first international medal on the 10km distance. “It was a team effort with Martina. We often exchanged the lead, and always kept positions 1 and 2. During the last lap, I hoped to catch up with her... But she knew that I am a good finisher so she maintained a high speed and I was unable to pass her. I would have preferred gold, of course...”

After a season that did not really go according to her plans, Germany’s Nadine Reichert was equally satisfied with her Bronze medal. “2011 was a bad season for me. I did not make the Worlds in Shanghai, so I wasn’t in the best of moods before the race. But during the event, when I noticed that I wasn’t actually too far from the leaders, I managed to keep my position within the top 5 of the leading pack during the last lap. This was a great motivation and it helped me to earn the Bronze medal”, disclosed Reichert (née Pastor), who already won a Bronze medal in the 5km at the 2002 Europeans in Berlin.

## Men’s 10km: Sprint for Gold clearly went to “Mr Open Water”

In contrast to the women’s race where two Italians lead right from the start to the finish line, the Men’s 10km saw several leaders throughout the course. During the first half, Italian and French swimmers took the lead in a row, when suddenly the two French swimmers decided to split in two, thus creating two packs swimming at the same height. But in the background Germany’s Thomas Lurz, who started rather quietly within the pack, increased his speed and slowly but surely came within the top five leaders. At the beginning of the last lap, momentary leader Brian Ryckeman (BEL) could not hold the pace under the pressure of Thomas Lurz. The sprint for medals then clearly went to Lurz ahead of Dyatchin and Snitko.

Thomas Lurz, the most successful Open Water Swimmer of all times, was happy: “The fourth Gold in a row makes me very proud, because the 10km race is an Olympic event but also because between my first title in 2006 and the one today there are six years... My tactic was to stay within the pack during the first half of the race, and to move then towards the top. I knew that Dyatchin is a strong finisher, this is why I had to be in the lead ahead of the two last buoys and to stay very concentrated in order to avoid any mistake”, explained Lurz, who had already won three 10km titles



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at World (2004, 2006, 2009) and European Championships (2006, 2008, 2010).

Vladimir Dyatchin, three-time World and 2002 European Champion in the 10km, disclosed: "The 2011 season was very long for me. I was in better shape here at the European Cup in May. Nevertheless, I tried hard to pass Lurz about 20m before the finish, but I couldn't manage. I clearly gave up and then made sure to keep the second position", said the 28-year-old.

After his 8<sup>th</sup> place in the 10km at the 2010 European Championships, Igor Snitko was really happy about his first medal in an Open Water event: "This Bronze medal comes as a total surprise", said the 33-year-old former pool swimmer who already won a Gold medal in the 1500m freestyle at the 1999 European Championships in Istanbul.

## 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

## Medal Table (after 1<sup>st</sup> Competition Day – 10km Men + 10km Women)

	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	Italy	1	1	0	2
2.	Germany	1	0	1	2
3.	Russia	0	1	0	1
4.	Ukraine	0	0	1	1
		<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>



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## Preview: 5km Team Event on Thursday - Russia and Italy the favourites

Eilat (pps) The Team event in Eilat will take place on Thursday (September 8) at 11:00 hrs local time. So far, Italy (2008) and Greece (2010) took the European titles in this event that was first held in 2008. The teams from Russia and Italy won medals at both editions and are considered among the top favourites in this discipline. Further medal contenders are Spain and France.

Germany, third at the Worlds in Shanghai, will give the new 2011 European Junior Champions of Navia (ESP) a chance to perform “on the big stage” – Svenja Zihlsler and Rob Muffels (who also won the individual 5km titles in Navia) as well as European OWS Cup winner Hendrik Rijkens will thus represent the German colours.

The competition will be held in the time trial format, just as the Men’s and Women’s individual 5km. The teams will start in one-minute intervals. Each team consists of three swimmers, either two men and one woman, or two women and one man. The team will start together. The time of the last of the three swimmers crossing the finish line defines the team’s time.

**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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