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Estonian men, French women take European Super League combined events titles



Hanna Melnychenko of Ukraine competes in the women's Heptathlon javelin throw (Getty Images)

The Estonian men's squad and the French women's took the team honours at the European Cup Combined Events Super League in Tallinn over the weekend.

This year celebrating its 28th edition, the European Cup combined events is the most important Multi-events team competition for European countries. Since its start in 1973 the competition was held every two years until it switched to an annual format in 1993. For most European athletes it is one of the main competitions of the season, with the results also included in the **IAAF Combined Events Challenge**.

In the Super League the top eight countries from Europe compete, while the next eight countries competing in the First League and the rest in the Second League. In the Super League and First League the numbers 7 and 8 are relegated, while the number 1 and 2 of the First and Second Leagues are promoted to the higher division.

Super League in Tallinn - host men dominate, first title from French women

The Estonian city of Tallinn hosted the event for the fifth time. Backed by a strong Decathlon tradition, the men's squad dominated the competition. With three athletes in the top nine, the Estonians (23,746 points) won by a huge margin of more than 1000 points over Russia, last year's winner. France finished third with 22,556 points.

The captain of the French team, Romain Barras, showed solid form by winning the individual title with a personal best of 8313 points, bringing him closer to the contenders for the European title next month in Barcelona. Second was Estonian Mikk Pahapill with 8198 ahead of his countryman Andres Raja who totalled 8023. The teams from Sweden and Spain have to step back to the First League next year.

The victory in the Heptathlon went to the French. Although this country has the most appearances in the Super League with 24 starts – next closest is Poland, with 16 – France has never taken the team victory. With a total score of 17,654 points, France topped the Czech Republic (17,402) and Russia (17,301), a ten-time winner at the event.

The individual title went to Ukrainian Hanna Melnychenko with 6098 points. Runner-up Marisa de Aniceto of France also broke 6000 points with her 6010 tally. Poland, last year's winner, and Sweden were relegated to the First League for 2011.

First League titles to Poland and Greece – Hengelo

The first League competition was held in the Dutch city of Hengelo in the famous Fanny Blankers Koen stadium. The team of Poland, who was relegated to the First League last year, was by far the strongest in this meet to earn promotion back to the Super League. With its 22,884 point total, the Poles tallied more points than the Super

League's runner-up finisher. The Czech Republic will join them next year in the Super League. The individual victory went to Simon Walter of Switzerland with 7820 points, ahead of Pole Dawid Pyra's 7759. Teams from Hungary and Romania took the last two places.

In women's Heptathlon the Greek team, led by Sofia Ifadidou and long time captain Aryia Strataki (third and fourth respectively, with 5931 and 5888 scores), took the victory to move up in 2011. Despite the absence of many of the top Dutch athletes, The Netherlands managed to salvage the runner-up spot, due mainly to the efforts of Ramona Franssen and Nadine Broersen, who improved their personal bests to 5993 and 5842 respectively, finishing first and fifth. For Broersen, her performance was a 264-point improvement.

Teams from Spain and Austria were relegated to the Second League.

Top honours to Belgium and Finland - Second League, Tel Aviv

In the Decathlon, Belgium (22,176) and Greece (21,070) earned promotion into the First League next year with their 1-2 finish at the Second League competition in Tel Aviv. Finland won the Heptathlon over Norway, 16,660 to 15,766, with both squads moving up in 2011.

Serbia's Igor Sarcevic won the Decathlon with a personal best 7921. Niina Kelo of Finland took top honours in the Heptathlon, scoring 5817.

Hans van Kuijen for the IAAF