

European Cup Combined Events, 1st and 2nd Leagues

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Estonian and Czech women, Spanish and Finnish men gain promotion - European Cup Combined Events 1st and 2nd League summaries



William Frullani (ITA) (Getty Images)

This year's European Cup Combined Events competition was the 27th edition of these series. Founded in 1973 it is the longest existing nation meeting in combined events worldwide. The first 9 editions were held biennially and since 1989 it is an annual competition.

In the first 5 editions semi finals in the month of June first had to decide which countries could participate in the cup finals to be held in September. From 1983 onwards it was changed into only one meeting a year in which the teams were divided in Super League, 1st League and 2nd League. In the first 2 Leagues 8 teams enter, while the remaining teams enter in the 2nd League.

The European Cup Combined Events, 1st and 2nd Leagues are part of the IAAF World Combined Events Challenge.

Since its founding, the European Cup meeting has proven itself as an important meeting for young combined events athletes. Many have their first international experience from this meeting. Athletes like Thorsten Voss, Christian Plaziat Paul Meier, Roman Sebrle, Erki Nool, Tomas Dvorak, Larisa Nikitina, Denise Lewis, Eunice Barber and Carolina Klüft are not only examples of this, but they all were at least once individual winners in the Super cup meeting, and therefore important members of their teams. Often they came to such a result after being a member of the team for already several years. The ultimate performance in these series was the World record of Tomas Dvorak with 8994 points in 1999 during the ECCE meeting in his native town Prague.

The Super League meeting 2009 was held in the Polish town of Szczecin. It was for the second time (after 2007) that this town had been chosen as the organizer of the Super League meeting – see separate report.

1st League in Zaragoza (Spain)

The overnight leading teams in Decathlon, Italy and Czech Republic, could not keep their positions on the second day. Strong performances from Spain and Finland on the second day and no marks in Javelin Throw and Pole Vault from the overnight leaders changed the team position in favour of the home team (22692 points) and the Finnish squad (22573 points).

As such, the Spanish team returns to the Super League after only 1 year. It will be their 11th Super League appearance. With 12 appearances the Finnish team is also a regular participant in the Super League.

After the relegation from the Super League in 2008 the Belgium team is now again regulated to the 2nd League. As the Latvian team did not complete the competition with 3 athletes the team is also regulated to the 2nd League.

From the first event (100m win in 10.84) the leader in the Decathlon was the Italian, William Frullani. The athlete, 30 next month, was followed by another 30-year-old Agustin Felix from Spain. At the end the gap between the 2 athletes was only 39 points (7828 versus 7789). For the Italian carabinieri it was a come back after struggling with many injuries for 3 years.

The women's teams of Estonia and Czech Republic were promoted to the Super League. The total of 17,170 points for Estonia was the best ever score of this country in the ECCE competition. In the ultimate event the Czech team passed the team of Switzerland, who was 150 points ahead before the start of the 800m, with 61 points.

The Finnish team was relegated to the 2nd League. It will be for the first time since 1983 that the Finnish women will have to start in the 2nd League. The team of Latvia, who were promoted last year to the 1st League, did not enter the competition and will also be relegated to the 2nd League in 2010.

The 33-year-old Greek athlete, Aryiro Strataki, was the only athlete with a score over 6000 points. After 2006 this was her second individual victory in the 1st League. With a total of 6021 points in her 10th appearance in the ECCE competition she proved again her value for the team.

2nd League in Maribor (Slovenia)

The city of Maribor, the famous winter sport town in the Eastern part of Slovenia, hosted the second League meeting already for the 8th time. No other city has dedicated itself so often to the European cup combined events meeting.

In the Second League not only are complete teams entered in this competition, but smaller countries are also permitted to enter individual athletes.

Five teams entered the competition in the Decathlon. The team of Romania, participated for the first time since 1995, and made promotion to the 1st League with a total of 20269 points, together with Hungary, who was overnight in 4th position, with a total of 19760 points.

Slaven Dizdarovic from Slovakia, who was the overnight leader in Decathlon, with a total of 4097 points, lost this leading position to Norwegian Hans Olav Urdal after the Pole Vault. As Dizdarovic did not start in the 1500m race he finally did not score a decathlon total. With the total score of 7702 points Hans Olav Urdal was almost 400 points ahead of Greek Andreas Tsoukalis (7311 points)

In women's Heptathlon Sara Aerts from Belgium was the only athlete who scored over 6000 points. With 6011 points she broke this barrier for the second time in her career. In the first 2 events (100m Hurdles in 13.33sec and High Jump 1.81m) she scored very strong personnel bests. Although she could not maintain this high level in the other events the 6011 points were enough for her to qualify for the World championships. She was followed by a huge margin of 750 points by Romanian athlete Judith Nagy (5256 points).

The promotion to the 1st League went to Hungary (14454 points), with Austria second with 14011 points.

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