

2017 CEV SNOW VOLLEYBALL EUROPEAN TOUR KRANJSKA GORA



Slovenian triumph with home gold for bottom-seeded Bozenk & Pokersnik

Slovenia celebrated a historic gold on the CEV Snow Volleyball European Tour at the first ever stop in the small Alpine country. The team of Tadej Bozenk & Danijel Pokersnik, who were seeded bottom 20th in the men's main draw and suffered a defeat in the second round, made a fantastic winning run through all five legs of the losers' bracket to eventually emerge victorious from the big final and top the podium on home snow.

Pokersnik, the 2011 "King of the Snow", and Bozenk never played on the CEV European Tour before, but gained some experience as a team on the snow at February's international season opener in Iran. They were placed at the very bottom of the seeding in Kranjska Gora by the will of the draw and played as many as nine matches for the two competition days of the tournament, losing only one, and heroically persevered all the way through to the top.

On Sunday morning the Slovenian pair went through victories over sixth-seeded Germans Florian Schweikart & Simon Kulzer and fourth-seeded Poles Piotr Groszek & Tomasz Cwiertnia, to whom they had lost on Saturday. In their semifinal match, Bozenk & Pokersnik overcame the third-seeded Austrian duo Florian Schnetzer & Helmut Moser with a hard-earned 2-1 (11-8, 7-11, 11-8).

The other semifinal also went to a tie-breaker set. It featured a dramatic clash between the two top-seeded teams - Michal Matyja & Karol Szczepanik from Poland and Robert Kufa & David Kufa from the Czech Republic. The Czech brothers came back from a set down to advance to the final with a 2-1 (9-11, 14-12, 11-7) win. The third place match also had to resort to a third set to determine its winner. Schnetzer & Moser managed a 2-1 (11-4, 8-11, 11-4) victory over Matyja & Szczepanik to take the bronze medals home to Austria.

In the final match, much anticipated by the home crowd, Tadej Bozenk & Danijel Pokersnik were on fire. Charged by the cheering fans, they stayed in control throughout the match and cruised to the victory in three straight sets – 3-0 (11-6, 11-7, 11-8).

"Amazing! Everything is good now. We had a strong opponent in the final, but we played in our home country," said an elated Danijel Pokersnik immediately after the winning point. "Everything here was prepared very well. The organization was good. We are really proud that we achieved this gold. Next week we are going to the international tournament in Wagrain-Kleinarl and I hope that we play this well there too."

"This is a great success for Slovenia!" exclaimed Metod Ropret, the president of the host country's national federation. "These guys went to play all the way to Iran, so they are very dedicated to snow volleyball and want to be successful in this sport. Their achievement will be a good promotion for volleyball in our country, in general."

European ranking leaders with first gold on European Tour!

Czech Republic's Anna Dostalova & Michaela Knoblochova, current leaders in the CEV Snow Volleyball Ranking and top-seeded team at the Kranjska Gora stop on the 2017 CEV Snow Volleyball European Tour, finally claimed their first gold in the circuit. They had two silver and one bronze medals so far, but on the Slovenian snow Dostalova & Knoblochova managed to climb the highest step on the podium.

In Sunday's final match in the Julian Alps, the Czech team faced their neighbors and friends from Slovakia, second-seeded Silvia Poszmikova & Eva Elekova. The Slovaks were hoping to take revenge for losing to Dostalova & Knoblochova at the Czech stop on the Tour three weeks ago, but it was not meant to be. Enjoying some quite enthusiastic support from the fans, Anna and Michaela dominated the game. Silvia and Eva put up a battle in the first set, but eventually suffered a shutout - 3-0 (16-14, 11-7, 11-8) in favor of the Czech duo.

"We feel perfect! Our time is now! Perfect atmosphere, perfect fans (we don't know them, but they are cheering for us), and we felt well on the court. The first set was hard, but we won! So now we have a problem – we have to buy bus tickets to go home," said the Czech winners after the last point jokingly referring to the fact that, for their trip to Slovenia, they car-pooled with Sisi Poszmikova, who lives in Prague.

The two teams cruised to the final match unbeaten taking the shortest way through the winners' bracket. In the semifinals earlier on Sunday, Dostalova & Knoblochova mastered a 2-0 (11-6, 11-5) win against fourth-seeded Marta Swiechowska & Magdalena Zochowska from Poland, while Poszmikova & Elekova won a 2-1 (11-9, 9-11, 11-8) victory over fifth-seeded Tiana Nicolaus & Anika Wucherer from Germany. Swiechowska & Zochowska claimed the bronze medals after beating Nicolaus & Wucherer by 2-0 (11-5, 12-10) in the third place game.

Further information regarding the tour, the registration, kids' activities or press pictures are online on www.snowvolleyball.com or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) #snowvolleyball!