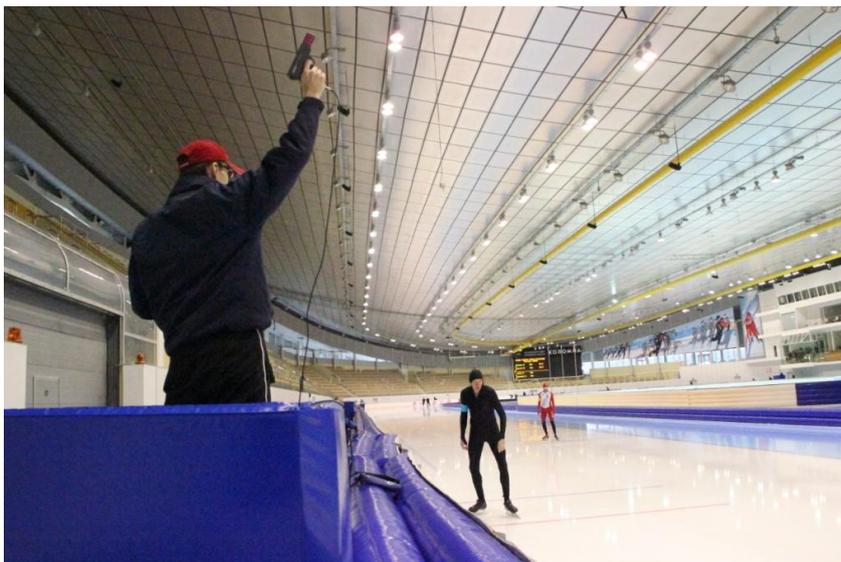


# Fantastic Kolomna!

## 1<sup>st</sup> Masters' International RUSSIAN SINGLE DISTANCE RACES

The first Russian Masters' International Speed Skating Single Distance event took place in Kolomna from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> April. The distances on the first day were 500m, 1500m and 5000m and on the second 1000m, 1500m, 3000m, and 10000m. On the final day there were team events as well as a 50-lap race. 54 female and 110 male skaters from Belarus, Germany, Kazakhstan, Norway, Russia, Spain, and Ukraine took part in the competitions.



Kolomna Ice Hall has everything a skater could wish for: a fantastic 400m track with absolutely top quality ice, surrounding a 250m track ideal for young skaters, and a central area for short track and figure skating; ample indoor warming-up facilities as well as a swimming pool; a reasonably priced and very comfortable hotel within walking distance of the hall. The town itself offers interesting tourist attractions

such as a spectacular castle, a *kremlin*, with a moat and numerous churches.



The event was smoothly and efficiently run by Sergej Orlov and his friendly team of organizers. It marked the end of a long season for participants, who achieved 375 new personal bests. In addition, Vladimir Kostin, KAZ, M35, set new world records: 1.50.74 for 1500m and 151.493 all-round.

A week before the Kolomna event, I had the pleasure of participating in the 6th Jevgenij Grisjin Memorial Races in Moscow with nearly 70 other skaters. The event was smoothly organized by Ramir Kuramshin and his team. During my stay in Moscow Maria Isakova, World Champion in 1948, 1949, and 1950, died at the age of 92 and Ramir invited me to attend the funeral with him.



This was an unforgettable experience, not least because several famous former skaters whose names and times are fondly remembered by devotees of the sport, were present to pay their last respects. They included Valentina Stenina, Natalia Petrusova, Svetlana Jurova, Viktor Kositsjkin, Pavel Beljajev, and Nikolaj Guljajev.

That I was at all able to participate in Kolomna is entirely due to the efforts and efficiency of extremely

hospitable Russian skaters. During a training session in Moscow, just 36 hours before the Kolomna races, I had a spectacular fall which left me completely unhurt but with a skate where the welding between the blade and the hinge was severed. In addition, the blade itself was badly bent. I understood immediately that there would be no Kolomna for me. How wrong I was! Almost before I was on my feet, it had all been organized: the skate was welded, adjusted, and brought to Kolomna on the morning of the first race. In the hall workshop the blade was expertly straightened in time for the warm-up!

On behalf of the non-Russian skaters I would like to thank both organizers and Russian competitors for a truly memorable skating event in Kolomna. It is good to see how well skaters enjoy each other's company and how well we communicate, despite language barriers, by means of smiles, handshakes, hugs, and thumbs-up. I am sure I have the support of all participants when I express the hope that the Masters' Games will take place in Kolomna in the not too distant future.

Kolomna participants: Jelena Fedjuskina, Natalja Rulkova, and Tatjana Michaleva.



Arne Kjell Foldvik/NOR