

Figure Skating World Team Ready for Home Championships

The World Figure Skating Championships will be held at Hartwall Arena from March 29-April 2, 2017. Finland will be represented by Emmi Peltonen in the Ladies discipline, Valtter Virtanen in Men, Emilia Simonen/Matthew Penasse in Pairs, and Cecilia Törn/Jussiville Partanen in Ice Dance.

65,000 spectators are expected to attend the event. Henri Nordenswan, Secretary General of the Championships, is happy with how ticket sales are going with three weeks to go until the start of the event.

- I believe we'll reach our target; everything points in that direction, Nordenswan says.

The list of entries for the Championships was released today. 199 skaters/couples from 44 countries have registered to compete. In addition to Finland, only 11 countries will field an entry in each of the four disciplines.

Finnish Skaters Excited to Compete at Home

The Finnish national team met with representatives of the press today, after taking advantage of an opportunity to practice on the future competition ice in the arena.

Finnish champion **Emmi Peltonen**, 17, will compete at the senior World Championships for the first time. Peltonen came in 11th at the European Championships in January. Peltonen, who trains with Sirkka Kaipio in Finland and Rafael Arutunian in the US, did not consider senior worlds to be a realistic possibility in the beginning of the season. Her original goal was to make the team for the European Championships as well as the World Junior Championships, but now she will skip the junior event in order to concentrate on the senior competition.

- These worlds are going to be an amazing experience. I don't want to think about what skating in front of the home crowd is going to feel like yet. Right now, I'm going to concentrate on my training, since there are still a good two weeks to go. I'll think about the actual competition later, said Peltonen, who will compete on the opening day.

Pair skaters **Emilia Simonen**, 21, and Canadian **Matthew Penasse**, 29, began their journey together in August last year. Despite skating together for a relatively short time, they achieved the minimum technical elements score required for the World Championships at their very first international competition.

Simonen used to compete as a single skater, while Penasse was a pair skater. Penasse had already decided to retire and focus on his studies, when his coach hinted that a Finnish skater was looking for a partner.

- Hearing that she was from Finland was a shock at first, but after sleeping on it I thought "why not?" Penasse laughs.

Simonen, who relocated to Canada, has worked hard to learn the lifts and throws of pair skating, which naturally are not included in a single skater's regimen.

- The decision to switch from singles to pair skating was the right one. I've always been eager to try new things, Emilia Simonen says.

Finland's representative in the men's discipline, **Valtter Virtanen**, has been chasing the minimum scores required for worlds for five years. Now, at 29, he has reached his goal and will take part in the championships for the first time. Virtanen, who lives and trains in Oberstdorf, has increased the technical content of his programs by adding his first quadruple jump, a quad toe loop.

- The quad was absolutely essential in getting those scores. I'm hoping to have two quads in my programs next season, Virtanen says. Virtanen has combined his skating career with a career in medicine and recently graduated as a medical doctor.

Ice dancers **Cecilia Törn**, 23, and **Jussiville Partanen**, 25, were faced with an important decision after the European Championships. When this season's free dance didn't seem to work, they decided to change the program.

- At the European Championships our coach, Maurizio Margaglio, suddenly asked if we'd like to change the free dance. We hadn't discussed it, but in the end we didn't even have to think about it, Törn and Partanen explain.

The team is preparing for the championships in Milan, sharing the ice with world-class competitors.

- The cheering is going to be extremely loud at worlds, but we are not going to let it get to us. We look forward to skating, and the audience reactions will only energize us, Cecilia Törn summed up the feelings of the entire Finnish team.

Additional information:

Secretary General Henri Nordenswan, henri.worlds2017@gmail.com, 050 531 91 71
Finnish national team skaters: Laura Kankainen, laura.kankainen@stll.fi, 040 940 23 16

www.helsinki2017.fi