



[Grand Prix of Europe – Women’s Race Report](#)

As with the men’s competition, the overall Grand Prix of Europe standings for the elite women went down to the wire in the final race in Bratislava, although the action started early on Friday evening up the 779 steps of the Danube Tower in Vienna. As the runners took off in descending order based on their TWA World Cup ranking, all eyes were on the final three runners. Polish mountain running champion Dominika Wisniewska Ulfik first posted a personal best 4:44.6, while World Cup silver medalist Lenka Svabikova (CZE) followed next in 4:45.7. But it was four-time World Cup Champion Suzy Walsham (AUS) who took the eventual win and collected the maximum 78 points in a personal best 4:29.7. In a surprise twist, the local Austrian winner of the women’s open event, Brigitte Stocker, broke the 5 minute mark and achieved fifth place in the overall women’s standings.

Saturday’s race moved to the 700 step AZ Tower in Brno, and although the stairwell was shorter and faster, the final steep, outdoor four floors provided a late-race challenge. Svabikova was keen to improve her overall standings, but started out too fast, and faded slightly to finish in 3:49.9, claiming third place from fellow Czech Zuzana Krchova by only 0.1 seconds. The other two podium positions followed the same order as the previous day, with Walsham taking the win in 3:39.2 from Ulfik in 3:46.1. After two days of competition, Walsham lead with 146 points, Ulfik was second with 122 and Svabikova third in 106 points. “It’s been a tiring week for me so I am really happy to come away with two wins” commented Walsham, “I just have to keep it together for tomorrow and be on the podium.”

The final positions would be decided in the UFO’s short, narrow and spiraling staircase. It was in this race last year that Svabikova first beat Walsham, and she knew she would have to repeat that performance to overtake Ulfik in the overall pointscore. Despite slower times than the previous year, Walsham reversed the tables on Svabikova to win by just 0.1 seconds and take a clean sweep of victories and the overall title. In a twist of fate, Ulfik took third place from Krchova also by 0.1 seconds. And so it was that the overall Grand Prix second and third positions were decided by just 0.1 second, with Ulfik scoring 174 points from Svabikova’s 166. “The weekend was great. I especially enjoyed the Bratislava race because of the atmosphere and organization” Svabikova said. Ulfik acknowledged the closeness of the competition “The Grand Prix of Europe was a real battle. I had some luck today but I am very happy with my overall second place”. Her continued strong performance in leading World Cup races will now see her jump to third place in the TWA World Cup rankings,



The global attraction of the event was evident by the representation of 7 nations from 3 continents in the women's Top 10, with the Czech Republic featuring prominently with 4 athletes. In total, 43 athletes from eleven countries scored overall Grand Prix points.

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