

# The Organization was perfect and all Details were Taken Care of

## 18<sup>th</sup> Masters' International Speed Skating ALLROUND GAMES Bjugn/Norway at 27 Feb – 3 Mar 2009.

As a speedskater I travelled for the last 30 years to many countries to be able to participate in as many longtrack races as possible. The trip to Bjugn in Norway however was a special one. Flying



first to Trondheim, than taking the bus to the Ferry-station for a very nice boat trip over the Fjords to Brekstad and then a nice bus trip to the city of Bjugn was just like a long awaited Holiday-trip for me and most of the other skaters from Holland. We were really surprised by the fact that so many inhabitants of the city of Bjugn helped to build such a nice Hall for all kinds of sports including speedskating.

The same can be said for the welcoming of us all in the wonderful Fosenhallen, where one could see that the people of Bjugn were proud to have so many skaters from all over the world to take part in this 18<sup>th</sup> Masters ALLROUND GAMES competition. We can only say that the organisation was perfect, and all details were taken care of, like warming up in the sportshall next to the icehall, the possibility to buy some food in the restaurant and the presence of so many volunteers from the small community of Bjugn, it seemed like everyone from the town did something for some time for this event.



Before the Drawing there was a nice Welcome drink together with a cultural program and a fine Welcome Drink where the proud Mayor of Bjugn made his speech.

During the first day of the competition there were even a lot of schoolchildren from Bjugn to support us, and we can say that they were not only supporting the Norwegian skaters but all skaters



of all nations, and that's what makes speedskating a special sport in the World, no nationalistic feelings but just enthusiasm for all competitors. There were also two groups with musicians and one



of these could even play the popular music that is played in Heerenveen during the big international competitions, so we Dutch skaters felt like being home.

The cultural event that was organised by the city of Bjugn was impressive, this was for the people of Bjugn a good moment to show their skills, and everybody liked what they presented to us. The many types of dance and music showed that this

community is very much alive and works as a team in everything they do in and for the city of Bjugn. This is very important to keep the young people from moving to bigger cities and keep the social life in a small town like Bjugn in place. The icemakers of Bjugn did their best to give us the best conditions under all circumstances to make it a fair competition for everyone, and they succeeded very well. For an Icehall of this type the conditions were not changing too much over the days, so no complaints were heard at all. The only thing we had to get used to was the temperature inside, because most other Icehalls are warmer inside but here in Bjugn the temperature did not get

over 6 degrees Celsius. But a speedskater should never complain about the cold, because that comes with the sport.

There were enough helpers around the track, including first-aid and that was very helpful, because at the last day of competition one of the skaters (Berry den Brinker) who was preparing for the start in the next pair, had a bad moment when another skater was turning after a false start, and they collided so hard that Berry had an big injury above his left eye and had to be stitched by a doctor after being helped by the first-aid group.



During the competition we could even dance and drink (no alcohol for us) outside the Icehall, because a very friendly group of traditionally dressed locals made a fire and played nice folklore music.

At the end of the competition they prepared a wonderful victory ceremony for all of us, including an impressive dinner, that was served by the students of a school in Bjugn. I must say, I never had a better fish-soup like the one they prepared, so much good salmon in the soup and such a good taste. A nice performance was done by 3 of the Norwegian skaters, they are as good on stage as they are on the ice, maybe a good idea for the Norwegian popstars-competition on TV?



This was a very well organised Masters-competition, we were all impressed and happy after the races, and we all would like to come back one day for another wonderful time in Bjugn. Thank you all in Bjugn in the name of all Dutch (and hopefully all other) speedskaters and their companions.

*Ben Rückert/NED*