

EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS  
DIVISION 3

# MAGAZINE

ISSUE #2 2026, APRIL 17

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**ITALY EDGE CROATIA IN A THRILLER**

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Nicolas Serna

There were no upset in the men's draw on Thursday, and home favorites Luxembourg will be facing Italy in the semis. The top seeds were close to exiting against Croatia but 19-year old Jacopo Luciano Rossi handled the pressure.

## JACOPO ITALIAN HERO

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## [1] Italy 3-1 [7] Croatia

**MATCH BY MATCH.** Nicolas Serna says he doesn't mind the pressure of being #1 (read his interview page 16), and the former Colombian representative did not panic after losing the first game to a very inspired Martin Kegel. Then Croatia levelled thanks to a flawless display from Ivan Krznaric against Omar Zaki. When Lorenzo Staurengo closed out his match in 4 games, Jacopo Luciano Rossi was 2-1 down



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against Fabijan Đuran, which meant he had to clinch at least one more game otherwise the top seeds would be out. But the 19-year old from Milano showed great composure to win in five and send *la Squadra Azzurra* in the semis.

**Marcus Berrett is a legend of the European Team Championships (see next page). We caught up with the Italian coach after his team overcame a valiant Croatian side.**



*It was a close encounter, maybe more than we expected. I thought our #1 Nicolas Serna did a great job after being 1-love down to Martin Kegel, who's a good player. As for Jacopo, it's his first time playing for Italy and he found himself in a deciding match, I've been there before... After the third game I told him to be positive: his game was a bit too one-paced, and when he started breaking the rhythm he was able to get on top. Yes we have a very young team but it*



*wasn't really a choice, it just happened. We are on a journey with these lads, and it's important to go back to Division 2. We'll be facing the home team in the semis, which means we'll need to have a good start to keep the crowd quiet. That's true I've been part of the ETCs for a long time, as a player and a coach, and I still love it. But I can tell you one thing, it's much more stressful when you are behind the glass!*

## FACTS & FIGURES

The 5 Italian players have a 20-year old average age.



This is half of Marcus Berrett's age when he played his last ETC (in Div 3) for Italy in 2016. In 2011, he helped them secure their best ever result of 3<sup>rd</sup> at the ETC1, an event he'd won with England in 1998 and 1999.

**[4] Luxembourg 3-1 [6] Lithuania**

**National coach Tomi Niinimäki gives his view on his team's win and looks ahead to a crucial day.**



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*We did expect Mark Radley and Danny Hutchines to deliver on 2 and 3, which meant their teammates could play without too much stress. Amir Samimi played well, but Mazen Gamal was simply too good on crucial points. It is valuable experience for*

*him and exactly what he needs right now. Although we are the underdogs we definitely have a chance against Italy. It will require all of our guys to perform at their best, and they're up for it. Yes Friday is huge for us, both in men's and women's. This is what we've prepared for all winter, and being on home soil brings that little bit of extra energy and confidence.*

**[3] Ukraine 4-0 [5] Malta**

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Ukraine continue to impress in Luxembourg with a third 4-0 win in as many fixtures. They not only celebrated their fourth qualification for the ETC3 semifinals, but also Maksym Tokar 20<sup>th</sup> birthday (picture).

**[2] Romania 3-1 [8] Slovenia**

They will face Romania, who had a difficult day on Thursday but handled it brilliantly with two 3-1 wins against Croatia to top pool B and then Slovenia in the quarters.



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## [1] ITALY **VS** [4] LUXEMBOURG FRIDAY, 11:30AM

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Luxembourg have already equalled their highest finish of 4<sup>th</sup> at ETC3 and can get promoted to Div 2 for the first time.

While all matches will be important, the potential #3 string between Lorenzo Staurengo and Dan Hutchines looks very interesting on paper.

It's a rematch of the 2016 ETC3 semi, won 4-0 by Italy. It was Marcus Berrett's last appearance as a player, while Dan Hutchines, Kyllian Hebbelinck and Daniel Kaiser were already featuring for Luxembourg.



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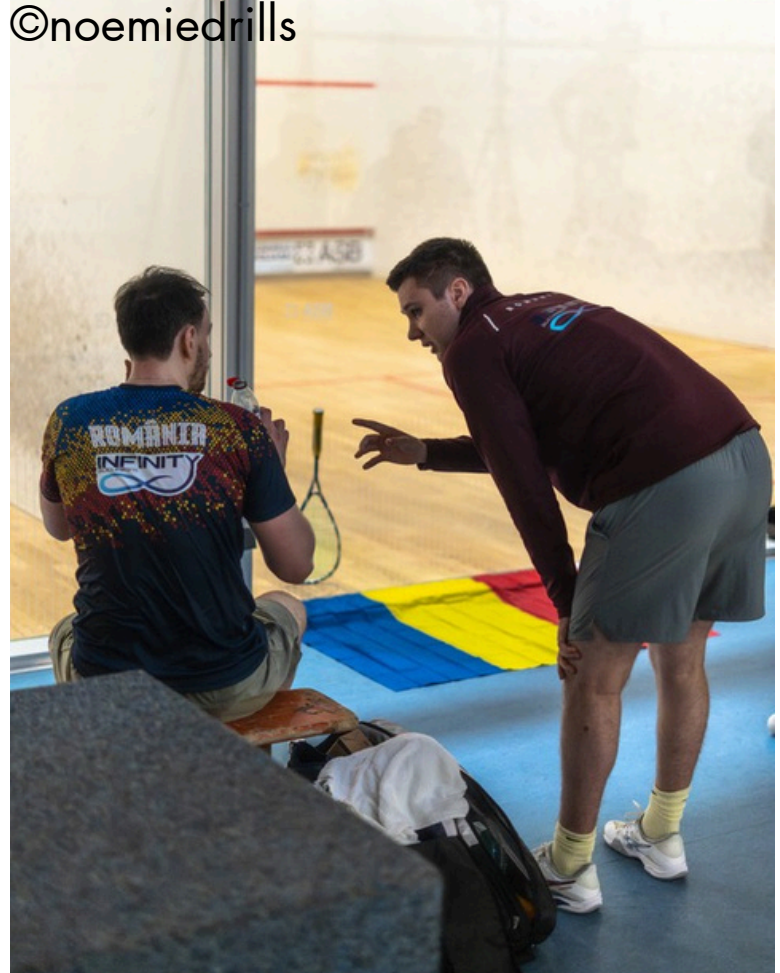
# [3] UKRAINE **VS** [2] ROMANIA

## FRIDAY, 1PM

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Although they are seeded lower, Ukraine are going into this encounter looking very strong with three 4-0 wins so far.

Romania were relegated last year and are hoping to go back up, while Ukraine were last in Div 2 in 2023.

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Last time these two nations clashed was at the 2022 ETC3, and Ukraine had beaten Romania 3-1 in the quarterfinals thanks to comprehensive wins from Valerii Fedoruk and Dmytro Shcherbakov.

*With 4 wins in as many fixtures, Malta are looking good in the women, and Friday will be crucial in the race for promotion.*



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# DAY 2 RECAP



None of the top 4 seeds faced each other on Thursday, which means the race for promotion did not really evolve. Malta's girls did not drop a single game in their fixtures against Gibraltar and Isle of Man, and with 4 wins they are looking like a strong contender.

Luxembourg also kept their 100% record alive beating Isle of Man. Although Greece lost to Austria and Croatia, their number 2 Theodora Papadopoulou continued to give a great account of herself in this year's ETC3 and has won 3 of her 4 matches overall.



## Here are the standings after Day 2

Malta , 8 points (4 wins, 0 losses)

Luxembourg , 6pts (3W, 0L)

Croatia , Austria , 4pts (2W, 1L)

Isle of Man , 2pts (1W, 2L)

Greece , Gibraltar , 0pt (0W, 4L)



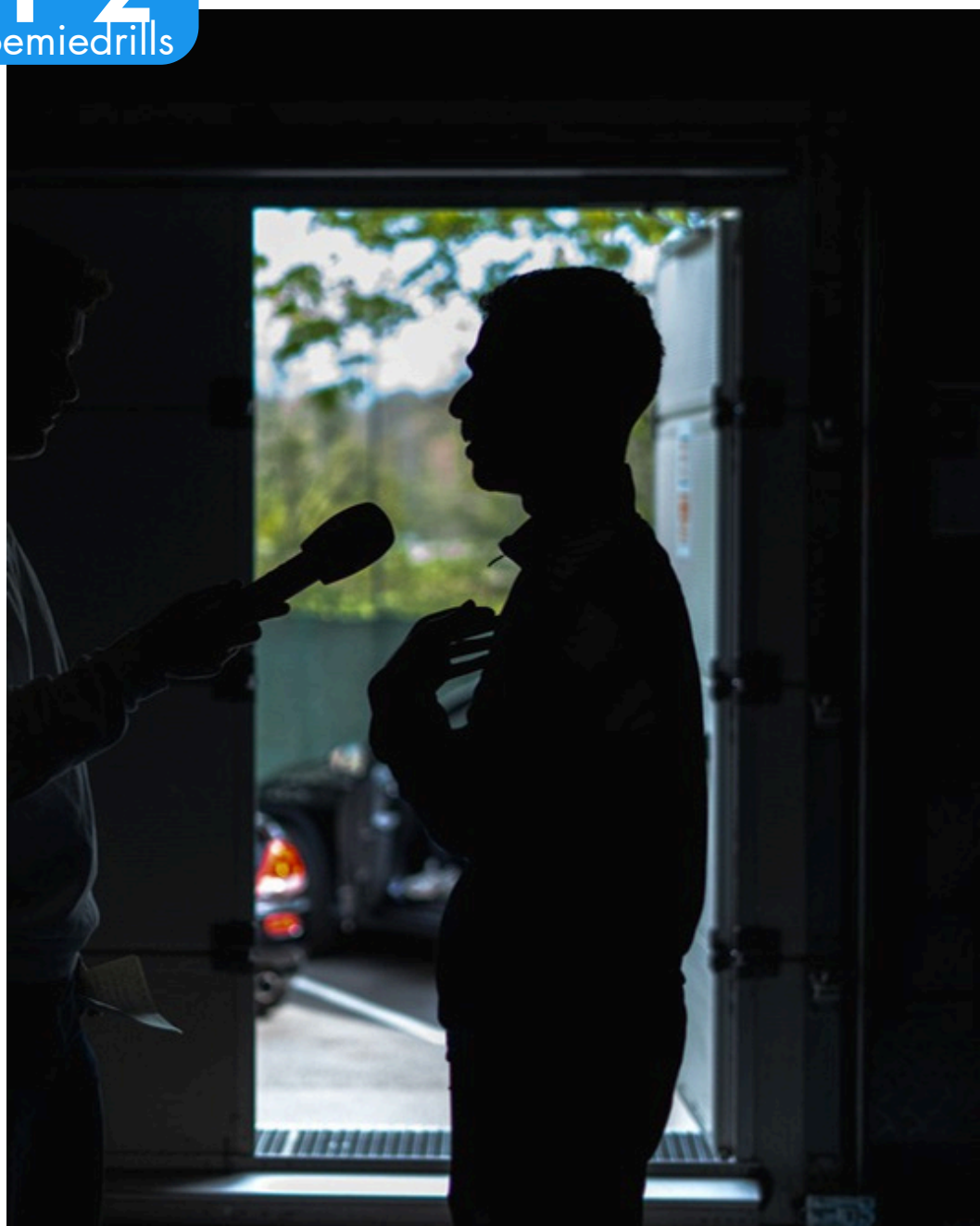
Which means Friday will be absolutely crucial for the home girls, who are meeting Malta in the morning and Austria in the afternoon. We'll have a keen eye on Luxembourg's #1 Elisenda Ruiz-Kaiser's (picture) match against Malta's Colette Sultana.

**In a very anticipated clash, 20-year old Dmytro Shcherbakov won in 5 games against Mazen Gamal who's twice his age.**





**DAY 2**  
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## NICOLAS SERNA

Italy's new number 1 is a major asset in their quest to return to Division 2.



**The 24-year old has won his three matches so far in Luxembourg.**

It's my first time playing for Italy, and obviously my first European Team Championship. I am very happy to be here, and help the team try and go back to Division 2.

**Why switch from Colombia to Italy?**

First of all, I was born in Italy and have an Italian passport. I lived there until I was 6 years old, I used to watch my dad play – he was president of the Colombian Federation,

WSF vice-president as well as member of the PSA board – but I actually didn't start squash until we moved to Colombia, which I played for in a few junior events. At the moment, they have 5 players in the top 100, so after having talked with my parents we came to the conclusion that switching to Italy was a good idea and would give me more opportunities. I contacted the Federation, and they were happy to welcome me in the team.

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**2025-2026 was Nicolas' last year at Drexel University**

Studying in the US had been my plan for a long time, and after doing my freshman year at Dickinson I transferred to Drexel, it was a great experience. My next chapter will be working as an assistant coach in a high school in Philadelphia. In the meantime, I'll try and play some PSA events, my current world ranking is 318 my highest was 185. For sure I'll play the World Team Championship in December. Yes, it would be strange to play against Colombia, but I am not thinking ahead and we'll see if it actually happens.



### **Is there some pressure playing at #1 for Italy?**

Not really, I have some experience and I don't tend to get nervous on court.

### **Did Nicolas switch to Italy to give himself a better chance to make the Olympics?**

It was in the back of my mind but to be honest it wasn't the main reason. Even though it's not my priority right now, of course it would be a dream to be part of it. I know I have a chance to make the final qualifying tournament, which will be a true dog fight and the kind of event where anything can happen...



# Welcome to ETC3 2026!

European Team Championship - Division 3



Four Days of  
International Squash  
One Goal

14 Nations • 19 Teams  
11 Men's & 8 Women's Teams

15-18  
April  
2026



### Participating Nations:

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Slovenia • Ukraine



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