

EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS  
DIVISION 3



# MAGAZINE

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## INTERVIEW

*DMYTRO SHCHERBAKOV*

## MEN'S

*ITALY AND UKRAINE  
CLAIM THE SPOTS*

TOP STORY

# PROMOTED!

## MALTA UP TO DIVISION 2



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The ETC3 has quite a unique vibe, for example because it gathers nations of very different sizes. As far as players go, the age range is rather spectacular - this year, from 14-year old Greece's Nefeli Makrycosta to 57 year-old Slovenia's Damjan Adlešič – and their profiles are diverse.

Although teams have different ways to express them

depending on where they're from, emotions were running high on Friday at the CK Sport Center for those who were contenders for the spots in Division 2. Ukraine and Italy clinched them in the men's, who will join Malta in the women's? Everyone will be cheering for Luxembourg, but Croatia and their star player Franka Vidovic will give everything they have to deny the home team a first ever promotion to the upper level.

*Jérôme Elhaik*

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Friday was a decisive day at the ETC3 with 3 of the 4 promotion spots being clinched by Malta in the women's draw, as well as Ukraine and Italy in the men's.

## MALTA, ITALY AND UKRAINE GET PROMOTED

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## [1] Malta 3-1 [4] Luxembourg

**MATCH BY MATCH.** This fixture was featuring the two teams who had a 100% record after Day 2. The #1 string was a rollercoaster, 19-year old Elisenda Ruiz-Kaiser putting the home team ahead in 5 games against Colette Sultana (picture). Boosted by her captain's win, Enas Mohamed started well and was 1-love and 9-7 up, but she lost 4 points in a row and from then on Colette's younger sister Lijana was completely dominant. It came down to a deciding match between 53-year old home hero Sandra Denis and 17-year



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old Jocelyne Lydall. Once again the second game proved crucial, with the veteran not being able to convert one opportunity to go 2-love up. It went to the wire, and Lydall kept her cool in the fifth to send Malta in Division 2 and her camp to ecstasy.

It was all smiles in the Malta's camp after their win over Luxembourg: it guaranteed them a top two finish and promotion to Division 2, much to the delight of their national coach Niall Engerrer.



*You can ask Colette because she's the older member of the team but I think the girls have never played in Div 2. It's a massive achievement for us, and the result of 6 years of hard work. We have a young squad, and we can reasonably hope we'll be able to stay there. We knew it would be a tough one against Luxembourg, especially because they have a strong number one, but overall the girls did a brilliant job. This result*



*comes at a time where squash is on a high in Malta: we have a brand new national center with a glass court, which will host the 2027 Commonwealth Youth Games, and some good juniors are coming through. As far as I go, I am half English and half Maltese and I've been there since 2019. This move was a great decision, I am having a blast. Will we celebrate tonight? We celebrate every day, we are quite rowdy (he laughs).*

## FACTS & FIGURES

Although they've been ETC3 champions twice (in 2014 and 2017), Malta have never played in Division 2 before.



Niall Engerrer used to represent England and was European U15 Team Champion with them in 2008.

Malta meet the criteria for the universality place at the Olympics => their players can apply for it provided they reach the world top 75.

## [1] Italy 3-1 [4] Luxembourg

We wandered around a joyful Italian camp after they ended the home team's dream of promotion.

**Marcus Berrett (national coach):** *"There were a lot of emotions, because this 4-match format adds some excitement. Players have to focus on every point, and this is something we've prepared for before the tournament. As I said previously, we have a very young squad and it was about going up as early as possible. We won't be celebrating tonight, as we want to go and get the gold medal."*

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**Lorenzo Staurengo (winner of the deciding rubber v Dan Hutchines):** *"I played well in the first two games, I was pushing him to the back, then I felt the pressure and was going too short too early. Our coach told me to relax, and I am glad I was able to refocus. I try to stay calm on court because it helps me play*

*better, but I let the emotions out after closing it out for the team. Playing for Italy is special, I have butterflies every single time I put the national jersey on. We have a young team, we've know each other for a few years and get on very well. As far as I am concerned, I am lucky enough to be part of the Olympic squad and train with Marcus Berrett. So far I've been playing Satellite events, it's tough to climb the rankings but my goal is to push my limits and go as far as I can."*

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## [3] Ukraine 2-0 [2] Romania

**We expected this to happen because they've looked very strong all week: Ukraine's men team delivered and will be returning to Division 2 in 2027.**

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Although being seeded lower, Ukraine were coming in as favourites against Romania. It looked like this prediction could go wrong early on, but Valerii Fedoruk (pic) saved 3 game balls in a crucial first game against Dumitru Goian, while on the next court Dmytro Scherbakov took the upper hand after seeing Vasile Hapun level at 1-all. In the next set of matches, Nikita

Panov and Denys Podvornyi both went 1-love up, sealing Ukraine's return to Division 2.

**Read Dmytro Scherbakov's interview in pages 16-19**

**National Luxembourg coach Tomi Niinimäki reflects on an eventful day for the home country.**

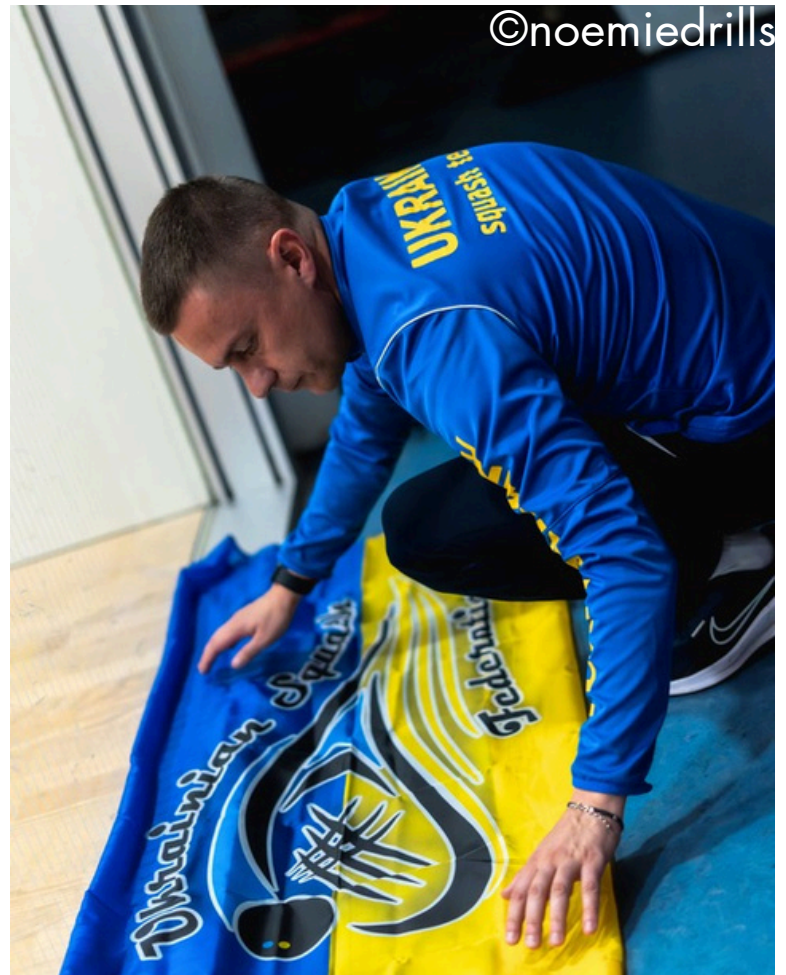
*“Ending the day on a high was important, with the girls beating Austria and keeping our promotion hopes alive. It’ll be a must win against Croatia (see page 13). Their #1 Franka Vidovic is the best player in the event, but Eli has impressed me this week with her physicality and the way she’s been able to regroup during matches. I am convinced she can push her but recovery will be key after playing two five setters. The back-to-back losses in the morning stung, they came down to small details and we have to admit Malta and Italy were better than us. My role is mostly mental, our players lack a bit of confidence, but they shouldn’t because the way they performed this week show they are right up there.”*

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# [1] ITALY **VS** [3] UKRAINE

## SATURDAY, 2PM



It is Italy's third appearance in the final in fourth ETC3 participations.

We expect a entertaining encounter as all rubbers look close on paper. The #1 string between Nicolas Serna and Dmytro Scherbakov, who are both on a 100% win ratio this week, should be particularly exciting.

The two nations haven't crossed paths since a pool match in the 2017 ETC2, won 4-0 by Italy. Denys Podvornyi and Valerii Fedoruk were featuring for Ukraine.




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**[3] CROATIA** **VS** **[4] LUXEMBOURG**  
**SATURDAY, 10AM**

Both teams will better or equal their highest ever rank but they won't settle for this: the winner will be ensured a top two finish and promotion to Div 2 - and could even be ETC3 champion if Austria beat Malta.

**FACT**

Franka Vidovic and Elisenda Ruiz-Kaiser are the only two #1s who have a 100% win ratio this week. They both study in the US and won the national championship, Elisenda with Trinity in 2025 and Franka with Penn in 2026



**This is the match which sealed the deal for the Maltese girls: Jocelyne Lydall was behind in the score during the whole match but managed to sneak the win 11-8 in the fifth.**



**DAY 3**  
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## DMYTRO SHCHERBAKOV

His first name is Dmytro but everyone calls him Dima. The 20-year old who plays #1 for Ukraine was key to his country's return to Division 2.

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### Mission accomplished

We were in Div 2 a few years ago, it was our goal to get promoted coming here because we want to measure ourselves against better teams. It wasn't easy but we are happy with the outcome. As far as I am concerned I've been #1 for two years which is good for me. For example, I was looking forward to playing Mazen Gamal this week, he's a very experienced player and I was happy with my performance.

**The Ukraine's men team are performing while the war has been going on in their country for a few years**

I don't live there anymore but I speak to my family and friends every single morning to know how they are doing, it's become a ritual. Valerii and I are based in the US but our teammates still live in Ukraine, and they are doing everything they can to be in the best possible shape.

**Dmytro has been studying in Trinity College since 2023**

Luxembourg's Elisenda Ruiz-Kaiser is also overthere, we'd talked about it before and it's funny to be together this week. Trinity was my first and only choice, it's a great university with a long tradition of success in squash which means there's some



pressure. Winning our 18<sup>th</sup> title was amazing, especially for the guys who were in their last year and had lost two finals in 2023 and 2024. Being there has been a fantastic experience, we all push each other to get better every day.

**Dmytro's father is very involved in squash, and he's been playing since he was five years old.**

I also played some football but I actually preferred individual sports. Funnily enough, between college squash and national team I am playing mostly team events these days...

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## What does the future hold for Dmytro?

I've been playing a few PSA events lately, 2026-2027 will be my last year at Trinity so I want to do more in the future and improve my ranking (author's note: he's 218 in the world at the moment). As far as 2028 Olympics go, the final qualifying tournament is already circled in my calendar. I am sure it's the same for other guys such as Nicolas Serna, and I am expecting a tough battle against him in the final on Saturday.

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# 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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