

Reimagine sport

Esmee Visser (speed skating)

“Elite sports culture exploits the planet and the bodies of athletes involved. Short term goals and profits. We need to change that to become more sustainable. Practicing sport outdoors is an experience of freedom”.

Esmee is a professional speed skater who can seamlessly connect the movement of skating with sustainability. According to her, sustainability is about achieving maximum results with minimal energy, similar to the movement of skating. Additionally, she mentions that sustainability encompasses much more than that and can sometimes feel elusive. She often struggles with the doomsday scenarios painted by scientists.



Nature & Training

As preparations for the new skating season begin in summer, she loves being outdoors and enjoying nature. Being active in the sun all day gives her a sense of fulfillment. Even outside of training, she often ventures into nature. Like many other athletes spending so much time outdoors has given her a strong desire to contribute to preserving this beautiful environment. “When you experience the beauty of nature, you know what's at stake”.

Direct Consequences

Whereas in the past, skaters used to practice on the ice rink well before competitions began, now she considers herself lucky to have spent a decent amount of time on the ice. She notices that it's becoming increasingly challenging to start the season in top form with preparation solely in the Netherlands, something that was unthinkable in the past. This raises questions about the responsibility of holding preparations abroad, which requires an entire team and support staff to fly.

Action from the world of sports

Waiting for action from the federation may take a long time. The world cup is organized in a super inefficient way. We fly all over the world without any regard to impact on the climate. Also, the major teams do not seem to care at all and continue to sacrifice everything for the best performance of their skaters. This extreme inward focus will not lead to a greener future. The federation could organize something in this regard, like having a joint preparation in the Netherlands to lower impact and improve fair competition.

Change!

She feels that due to the changing circumstances and the lack of action from the federation, a bitter feeling remains. She expresses that it's impossible to achieve this alone, no matter how much effort she puts in. If the federation doesn't take serious collective action towards a greener skating world, it becomes very difficult. Ultimately, Esmee says that the feeling of wanting to achieve something but being unable to do so alone is one of powerlessness we must not accept!



EUROPEAN UNION
European Regional Development Fund
Funded as part of the Union's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

