

**May 6, 2024**

### **Obituary – Sjoukje Dijkstra (NED)**

The ISU is saddened by the news of the death of Olympic Figure Skating champion, Sjoukje Rosalinde Dijkstra. On Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024, at the age of 82, Sjoukje Dijkstra passed away peacefully at her home in Someren, Netherlands. She was the first Dutch athlete to win a gold medal at the Winter Olympics Games, when she won gold at the 1964 Olympic Winter Games in Innsbruck (AUT) in the Women's Figure Skating event. She was also a silver medalist at the 1960 Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley (USA), three times World champion (1962-64) and five-time European champion (1960-64).

Dijkstra was born on January 28<sup>th</sup> 1942 in Akkrum in Friesland, Netherlands. As the daughter of Speed Skater Lou Dijkstra, she started skating at the age of 6, her talent for figure skating obvious from the start. She placed fourth at the Dutch Championships of 1953 at the age of 10, and qualified for her first European Championships the following year. Just at the age of 11, she lived away from her family most of the year to be able to train with Mr. Arnold Gerschwiler.

In a podcast she reminisced about her early years of competing internationally: "I never forget, in Garmisch in 1956 [at the World Championships], I had to skate behind Tenley Albright, which, as a 13-year-old, I was kind of flabbergasted, I was hypnotized, I was, oh, I have to skate behind her and she's so good [laughs]. Those memories will always stick to you. And at that moment I never thought I would be in the first three. And then afterwards in Squaw Valley [at the 1960 Olympics] I stood on the podium next to Carol [Heiss], I was a silver Olympic medalist, and I thought, I'm here! [laughs] And I was so proud to stand next to Carol. It was wonderful." [manleywoman.com](https://www.manleywoman.com)

From 1960 onward, she dominated women's figure skating at European and World Championships, crowning her career with the Olympic gold medal. On her medal winning performance being spectated by the Dutch royal family, she commented: "I won in '64. Which of course for me was just wonderful because our Queen Juliana came with her family and watched the performance. I really only skated for her that evening."

After the Olympics in 1964, she turned professional and toured with Holiday on Ice for eight years, meeting Karl Kossmayer, her husband and the father of her daughters, Rosalie and Katja.

She became the advisor to the figure skating section of the Royal Dutch Skating Federation in 1985. In 2005, she was awarded the Fanny Blankers-Koen Trophy for her contributions to Dutch sports. On January 9, 2014, she was inducted into the International Figure Skating Hall of Fame at a ceremony during the 2014 U.S. Championships in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

On what she learned from skating, she mentioned: "It gives you something for the rest of your life. You must never give up. You always have troubles and things, and you must always think of, tomorrow it will be better." [manleywoman.com](https://www.manleywoman.com)

She will be remembered fondly by the Skating family as an outstanding athlete and role model on and off the ice.

The ISU pays tribute to Sjoukje Dijkstra's legacy and will remember her with affection.

Jae Youl Kim  
**President**

Colin Smith  
**Director General**