

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

Harbin, November 13, 2016

ISU Speed Skating World Cup Harbin Day 3 #WCSpeed

Sven Kramer took a surprise win in the 1500m on the final day of the first ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2016/17 in Harbin. Heather Bergsma (USA) took the Ladies' 1500m gold and Nao Kodaira (JPN) grabbed her second 500m gold of the weekend on Sunday. Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) was back on top in the Men's 500m. Ivanie Blondin (CAN) won the ladies Mass Start and Seung-Hoon Lee took gold in the Men's.

Second win for Kodaira

After winning the first Ladies' 500m on Friday Nao Kodaira also took gold in the second 500m race in Harbin on Sunday. The 30-year old Japanese started in the final pair versus compatriot Tsuji, who had won silver on Friday.

Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) was in first position after having clocked 38.11 in the third to last race versus Heather Bergsma. The American skater finished in 38.38 and eventually ended up fifth. In the penultimate pair Marsha Hudey edged out Bergsma by 0.01, but the 26-year-old Canadian lady would not make the podium either.

No skater managed to break the 38 second barrier and neither did Kodaira and Tsuji in the final pair. With 38.04 Kodaira was 0.04 slower than Friday, but it was enough for a second gold. Tsuji did not match her Friday result (38.17) either with 38.30. It left her with the bronze behind Lee, who did beat her Friday time by 0.36 seconds. Kodaira, Tsuji and Lee are first, second and third after the first World Cup weekend of the 2016/17 season.

Kulizhnikov back on top

After finishing second in Saturday's 500m race, world record holder Pavel Kulizhnikov was back on top on Sunday. However, the big surprise was Tingyu Gao. The 18-year-old Chinese prodigy clocked 34.99 in the second pair and was the only skater under 35 seconds until the final pair, with Kulizhnikov and Saturday's surprise winner Roman Krech (KAZ).

Krech could not match his superb Saturday start, when he clocked 9.61 in the opening 100m. Although his 9.74 on Sunday was 0.02 faster than Kulizhnikov, the Russian chased him down at the cross-over and caught him in the last inner turn. After gold in 35.07 on Saturday, Krech had to settle for 35.31 and 11th place on Sunday. Kulizhnikov clocked 34.98 to beat Gao by 0.01. Gao took silver and the Chinese audience happily cheered for his first career World Cup medal. Korea's Tae-Yun Kim also grabbed his first career World Cup podium with bronze in 35.08.

Kulizhnikov and Gao were not the only skaters to beat the 35 second barrier on Sunday. Ruslan Murashov, who was disqualified after a false start on Saturday, clocked 34.88 in the B Division earlier on Sunday. The Russian did not end up on the scoreboard however, because this time he was disqualified for hitting a marker.

Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed

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Kulizhnikov leads the 500m World Cup standings after two races. Krech is second and Mika Poutala (FIN), who was seventh on Saturday and fourth on Sunday, is third.

Second gold for Bergsma

Heather Bergsma took her second gold medal of the weekend in Harbin on Sunday. After her 1000m win on Saturday, last season's runner up in the 1000m and the 1500m World Cup, also won the 1500m on Sunday.

Marije Joling (NED) was the first to break Nao Kodaira's 2009 track record (1:59.03), when she clocked 1:58.72 in the fourth pair. She would end up in seventh place. Joling's compatriot Marrit Leenstra was more than a second faster, when she set 1:57.64 in the sixth pair. Her time stood until Bergsma took the ice in the penultimate pair versus compatriot Mia Manganello. Bergsma was very fast with a 53.93 split, versus Leenstra's 54.75 at the 700m line. The American sprinter struggled in the last two laps, but managed to maintain an advantage when she finished in 1:57.00.

Ireen Wüst (NED) challenged Bergsma in the final pair versus Martina Sáblíková, but she was not able to keep up with either Bergsma or Leentra, who took silver. Wüst had to settle for bronze in 1:58.18.

Surprise win for Kramer in 1500m

Sven Kramer proved that his 1500m win at the Dutch trials was no coincidence. The Dutchman went on to win the race of the kings in a new track record of 1:46.79 in Harbin. The reigning 5000m Olympic Champion, who collected 34 career World Cup wins in the 5000/10000m only won a 1500m World Cup race twice, in 2007 and 2008.

Kramer started in the penultimate pair versus Bart Swings (BEL). Patrick Roest was the fastest from the previous races with 1:47.92, while Kjeld Nuis had set a new track record with 1:47.38 in the B Division earlier on Sunday. Kramer and Swings fought a tight battle with the Dutchman first at the 300m split, the Belgian at the 700m split and Kramer again at the 1100m split. Swings couldn't keep up with Kramer in the last lap however and finished 0.75 adrift in 1:47.54. It proved to be enough for the bronze medal.

Denis Yuskov (RUS) and Joey Mantia (USA) met in the final pair, with Yuskov skating faster split times than Kramer at the 300m, 700m and 1100m line, but in the final lap Yuskov couldn't maintain his pace. He finished with a 29.4 lap versus a 28.2 lap for Kramer. The reigning 1500m World Champion clocked 1:47.46 to take silver.

Blondin sprints to Mass Start win

Ivanie Blondin (CAN) won the Ladies' Mass Start after a flat race. The Canadian World Champion runner-up of last season's Mass Start World Cup went into the final lap in leading position and left everyone behind with a long and strong sprint. Italy's Francesca Lollobrigida finished second and Korea's Bo-Reum Kim third.

Dutch Melissa Wijfje tried to attack halfway the race, but she did not manage to escape from the pack. German Bente Kraus also tried to get away with three laps to go, but Blondin did not give the others an inch.

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Last year's Mass Start World Cup winner Irene Schouten (NED) was absent in Harbin. She will skate her first World Cup races of the 2016/17 season in Heerenveen in December.

Seung-Hoon Lee takes Men's Mass Start gold

The Men's Mass Start race was more exciting than the Ladies' with a series of attacks by Peter Michael (NZL) in the beginning, and a two-man escape group who were only caught in the final lap. Korea's Seung-Hoon Lee eventually sprinted to gold, ahead of French Alexis Contin and Italian Fabio Francolini.

When Michael attacked, he was followed by Andrea Giovannini (ITA), Vitaly Mikhailov (BLR) and Jordan Belchos (CAN). Jorrit Bergsma tried to close the gap, but only when Bart Swings made pace in the pack, the escapees were caught.

Halfway through the race Dutch Gerben Jorritsma crashed, while his compatriot Bergsma tried to make pace. Ryosuke Tsuchiya (JPN) and Reyon Kay (NZL) jumped to Bergsma and pulled through, while the Dutchman fell back in the bunch. Tsuchiya and Kay seemed to be on course for a major surprise, until again Bart Swings took the initiative to close the gap. The Belgian managed to catch up with the leading pair in the final lap, but used too much energy to be able to sprint for gold. Seung-Hoon Lee took advantage to grab his fifth career World Cup Mass Start win.

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series continues next week in Nagano (JPN) on November 18-20, 2016.

For full results of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isureults.eu/> and <http://www.isu.org/en/speed-skating/series/isu-world-cup-speed-skating>

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2016/17 Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating circuit consists of six events across Asia and Europe. The series starts in Harbin (CHN) on November 11-13 and moves to Nagano (JPN) on November 18-20. In December the Series goes to Europe stopping in Astana (KAZ) on December 2-4 and to Heerenveen (NED) on December 9-11. On January 27-19 2017 the fifth leg of the event will be in Berlin (GER) and the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will take place in Chelyabinsk (RUS) on March 10-12. The full ISU Calendar of Events is available here:

<http://www.isu.org/en/news-and-events/calendar-of-events>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series is available as a live stream on the ISU Skating Channel. Please note that geoblocking may be required in certain territories

<http://livemanager.eurovision.edgesuite.net/isu/index.html>

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ISU World Cup Speed Skating Harbin (CHN) – Day 3, medalists

500m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	38.04
2	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	38.11
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	38.30

500m Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.98
2	Tingyu Gao	CHN	34.99
3	Tae-Yun Kim	KOR	35.08

1500m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:57.00 TR
2	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:57.64 TR
3	Ireen Wüst	NED	1:58.18

1500m Men

1	Sven Kramer	NED	1:46.79
2	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:47.46
3	Bart Swings	BEL	1:47.54

Mass Start Ladies

1	Ivanie Blondin	CAN	8:29.56
2	Francesca Lollobrigida	ITA	8:29.71
3	Bo-Reum Kim	KOR	8:30.06

Mass Start Men

1	Seung-Hoon Lee	KOR	7:15.22
2	Alexis Contin	FRA	7:15.40
3	Fabio Francolini	ITA	7:15.40