

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games** **Short Track Speed Skating Ladies 500 m**

The Short Track Speed Skating competition at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games continued on Tuesday with the Ladies' 1000 m Heats, the Men's 500 m Heats and the Ladies' 3000 m Relay Final.

In the Ladies' 3000 m and four years after their disqualification team Korea regained its spot atop the podium. Referees disqualified China for impeding, promoting Canada to silver and Italy to bronze.

The race got off with a false start by the Koreans but this did not distract them once the second gun shot went off. They rapidly took the lead but the Chinese did manage to take over in 9 nonconsecutive laps. Drama unfolded with 13 laps to go when Italian skater Arianna Fontana clipped her skate with a Korean and slipped on to the ice and the team dropped to fourth place. The Canadians were consistent and stayed in third place throughout most of the race and crossed the line behind the Koreans and Chinese.

In the Ladies' 3000 m Relay there are 27 laps to skate and in this A Final there were 16 skaters on the ice. When a skater is not racing, it is their responsibility not to interfere with the race or impede any other skater, the consequence is a penalty. China was penalized at the end of the race because one of their skaters impeded. The Italians were then advanced to third place and received the bronze medal.

Ha-Ri Cho new Olympic Champion in the ladies' relay told the press: "You never know how a race is going to unfold so you have to be prepared to adjust at any time. We were able to adjust, and that's how we won the race. Four years ago in Vancouver, we were disqualified and this certainly makes up for it."

Jessica Hewitt from Team Canada and Olympic silver medalist said: "We feel great. We are really happy to have got the silver medal. I have never been on an (Olympic) podium before and we have worked very hard for this." "We tried a different strategy here; making the exchange on different corners, so it got a little messy at times but we did well and then it just so happened that China (CHN) were disqualified so we got the silver."

Elena Viviani (ITA) bronze medalist talked about the mix-up between Arianna Fontana (ITA) and Lucia Peretti (ITA) while trying to make a relay exchange: "We started in third position and it was pretty good. We tried to pass, not to fall, but in the exchange there was a little fall and we tried to come back at the end." She added that she couldn't stop smiling and was crying when they found out they were on the podium.

Fan Kexin team China commented: "We prepared for a long time for today's competition. Our team is united, but we made mistakes this time." The coach Yan Li added: "According to the judges, When Zhou exchanged, she was on the track and impeded skaters behind her."

### **Heats Ladies 1000m**

In the Ladies' 1000 m heats most of the favorites qualified for the quarterfinals. In Heat 3 Valerie Maltais set a new Olympic record of 1.28.771 breaking Yan Zhou (CHN) 2010 record. Maltais said in the mixed zone: "I didn't expect to see that on the board because I was

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at the back. But I knew that I was capable of getting it, and I was very glad I was able to do it first (today)."

In Heat 4, Suk Hee Shim (KOR) crossed the line first and Qiuhong Liu (CHN) came closely behind however the Chinese skater later got a penalty which meant that Marie-Eve Drolet (CAN) qualified and Martina Valcepina (ITA) got advanced to the quarter finals.

In Heat 7 Elise Christie (GBR) sat at the back of the pack. It was not until there were only 3 laps left that she decided to make her move and quickly managed to get to the front to then finish well ahead of the others. Following her disqualification in the 500m race, Christie had a difficult few days and told the press: "I'm not on social media any more, but I've had people reading out the support to me, that people are backing me. It's horrible to have abuse on social media but now people are saying I skate well, there are people backing my skating ability, and that's really brought me back up."

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and final heat Marianne St-Gelais (CAN) fell only two laps into the race and took Jorien ter Mors (NED) with her. Deanna Lockett (AUS) and Veronika Windisch (AUT) qualified for the quarter finals. However after the referees' review, ter Mors was advanced to the quarter finals. The Ladies' 1000 m final will take place on Friday 21 in the Iceberg Skating palace.

## **Men's 500 m Heats**

In the Men's 500 heats it was from third race that things started to heat up. Eduardo Alvarez (USA) fell with about 150m to go and did not qualify for the quarter finals. The Russians competed in Heats 4 and 5, Vladimir Grigorev had to work hard for his spot in the quarter finals while Victor An easily crossed the line first. The Canadians have not had an easy time in the Short Track competitions at the Sochi 2014 Olympics and today was no exception. In the final heat Charles Hamelin crashed in the last lap. Hamelin was in control of the race when his right skate gave out, and he slid into the pads. All dreams of another Olympic medal have been crushed. Hamelin commented: "I'm going out of these Games proud. I wasn't able to put myself in the final because I wasn't fast enough. I can't be disappointed. I won the gold medal in the 1500m race (Monday 10 February) and proved that I can be successful in all areas. I can't lose sight of that. I'm proud of myself for that." The Men's 500 m final will take place on Friday 21.

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: [www.sochi2014.com](http://www.sochi2014.com) and [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)

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