

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games Speed Skating Review**

54 athletes from 20 countries competed in the Speed Skating competitions between February 13 and 19, 2016. Seven medal events including the Ladies and Men 500m, 1500m, Mixed NOC Team Sprint and Ladies and Men Mass Start took place in the iconic Olympic Hall Viking Ship in Hamar.

At Lillehammer 2016, a new force is emerging. Out of the 30 Speed Skating medals awarded, nine (6 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze) were won by Korean skaters. China ranks second in the medal table with six medals (2 gold, 3 silver, 1 bronze) and Italy comes third with three medals (one gold, two bronze). Japan won two silver medals while host nation Norway got two bronze and the Netherlands one silver and one bronze. For the first time in the Winter Olympic Games history, Mongolia won a gold medal. Other countries to leave with a medal are Germany, Kazakhstan, Poland, Romania and USA.

### **Ladies 500m**

Spectators witnessed the international arrival of the young athlete they are already calling “Little Lee Sang-Hwa” back in Seoul. Eighteen-year-old Kim Min Sun stormed to the gold medal in the 500m, with a cumulative time of 78.66 seconds. On the same day Lee won the 500m World title in Kolomna (RUS) in 74.859. “Lee is an amazing role model for me and all Korean skaters,” said Kim. “I am now racing in senior as well as junior races, so I can apply what I have learned from her. She is a similar kind of build to me, so the hard part for me now will be trying to compete in the senior races.” China’s Han Mei won the ladies’ silver medal (in 79.44) and her teammate Li Huawei took the bronze (79.75).

### **Ladies 1500m**

Korea’s Ji Woo Park seized the gold medal in the 1500m with a time of 2:03.53. “Every Korean skater athlete seems to be getting gold, so I desperately wanted one too. Our government is funding our sport well, with PyeongChang 2018 coming up. We can become one of the strongest nations at senior level.” China’s Han Mei took her second silver medal of the Games (2:04:48) and Italy’s Noemi Bonazza finished third (2:05:49).

### **Ladies Mass Start**

Introduced at the Innsbruck 2012 Youth Olympic Games and now part of the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games program, Mass Start races concluded the Speed Skating competition at the Lillehammer 2016 Youth Olympic Games. The nature of a Mass Start race brings together skaters who specialize in sprints and those who work better over long-distance, as well as those who are good – but not specialists – in both. The first lap out of a total of 10 laps must be skated in one group without fast accelerations. At the junior level there is one intermediate sprint at the fifth lap, the first three skaters earn 5, 3 and 1 sprint points. The final sprint takes place in the final lap; the first three skaters earn 30, 20 and 10 points.

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Ji Woo Park (KOR) added a second YOG gold to her trophy case, having previously won the 1500m. Mei Han, of China, silver medalist in the 500m and 1500m, was second again, while Republic of Korea's Min Sun Kim collected a bronze to accompany the gold medal she won in the 500m.

## Men 500m

The Men's gold went to Yanzhe Li of China, with a cumulative time of 71.95. "I was very nervous on the ice, but I calmed myself down and it feels very nice to win," said Li. "My overall aim is to compete at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games, so I will try my hardest to get there." Japan's Kazuki Sakakibara took silver (73.97) while Korea's Jae Woong Chung got bronze (74.13).

## Men 1500m

Just as in the Ladies event, Korea also topped the podium in the Men's event when Min Seok Kim finished in 1:51:35. Daichi Horikawa (1:52:96) won Japan's second silver medal of the Games, with Dutchman Dan Baks finishing third (1:53:29).

## Men Mass Start

Min Seok Kim won his second gold-medal but he had to fight for his spot "At one point I thought I was going to fall down," said the skater. Many of the skaters talked about the physical side of the Mass-Start race, which saw Jae Woong Chung, of Republic of Korea, add a silver medal to his collection. He now has a full set of medals from Lillehammer 2016, having already picked up bronze in the men's 500m and gold in the mixed NOC team sprint. Norway's Allan Dahl Johansson kept pace with the two Koreans, but just as he was planning to make his move for the drive to the finish line, things turned physical. Like any high-speed, powerful sport where athletes are in close proximity, contact is all but inevitable. "There was so much [contact]," said Johansson. "There was a lot of pulling and tugging and they were shouting at me." He finished with the bronze on home ice.

## Mixed NOC Team Sprint

On February 17, two small pieces of sporting history were made at the Hamar Olympic Hall Viking Ship as Speed skaters contested for the first time at any Olympic level a mixed NOC Team Sprint, and Mongolia won its debut medal at a Winter Games.

In the all-new event, 13 teams composed of two men and two ladies from mixed NOCs were grouped together, with each race skated over 4 laps. The two teams competing in each heat started on opposite sides of the rink. The four skaters from each team start together, with one dropping out each lap until the fourth skater ends the fourth lap alone, finishing the race for the team.

It was won, in one 1. 57.85, by 'mixed team six', consisting of Sumiya Buyantogtokh of Mongolia, Italy's Noemi Bonazza, Shen Hanyang of China and the men's 500m bronze medalist from Republic of Korea, Chung Jae Woong. By contributing to her team's gold-medal performance, Buyantogtokh became the first Mongolian athlete to win a medal at any Olympic Winter Games. "Before the race, I was afraid. Now I can't believe I won the gold," she said. "I was very stressed. It was a lot of pressure, but I'm very proud. When he realized that his team had won gold, a delighted Shen said: "I'm not sure what I am feeling, but it is very good. [The athletes from different

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countries] cooperated and worked together very well.” Italy’s Bonazza, who had already won bronze in the ladies’ 1500m, was excited with the team’s performance after having trained together only twice. “We are all very happy. I am for sure very happy. We skated very well together, I think our team was a very good team. In a competition where the two women lead the first two laps and the men have to control their speed not to crash into the skaters in front, Bonazza said: “There is a risk of making a mess. But we did well in every lap and we also started well compared with some of the other teams, who were a bit messy in the start.”

Team 9 composed of USA’s Austin Kleba, Karolina Gasecka of Poland, the Netherlands’ Elisa Dul and Anvar Mukhamadeyev of Kazakhstan took silver in 1:58.80. “This format is very nice,” said Kleba. “It’s different and it brings everyone together. Our coach was Czech and didn’t speak good English, but we were able to communicate with him. It was interesting to work with athletes from other countries. They have different warm-up strategies and they do a lot of different things on the ice.” Dul, his teammate agreed. “Working with athletes from other countries was really nice,” she said. “You get to know each other in a new way and we learned from one another,” she said.

Norway’s Allan Dahl Johansson, who won bronze in 1:58.87 alongside Mihaela Hogas of Romania, Italy’s Chiara Cristelli and Ole Jeske of Germany, said the event “was different, but fun. They should definitely keep doing it.”

## Additional information

**Results:** <http://www.lillehammer2016.com/sportresult/>

**Videos available on Olympics YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/user/olympic>

**ISU Social Media Hub:** <http://www.isu.org/en/social-media-hub>

**Twitter:** [@ISU\\_Speed](https://twitter.com/ISU_Speed)

**Instagram:** [isuspeedskating](https://www.instagram.com/isuspeedskating)

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**Youtube:** [SkatingISU](https://www.youtube.com/SkatingISU)

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