

## Press release

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### **Takagi wins 3000m, Team Sprint world record for Canada**

Miho Takagi (JPN) claimed her first 3000m World Cup win in a Japanese national record time of 3 minutes and 57.09 seconds at the Calgary Olympic Oval on day one of this season's third ISU World Cup Speed Skating. Canada's men won the men's team sprint in a new world record, while Russia won the ladies team sprint and Sven Kramer (NED) grabbed gold in the men's 5000m.

#### **Japanese record and gold for Takagi (JPN)**

Takagi won the first two 1500m World Cup races this season, in Heerenveen and Stavanger, but had never taken gold over the longer distance. She clocked 3 minutes and 57.09 seconds, and was delighted with the sub-four-minute national record.

"Over the past few weeks, I was able to feel and understand how to skate on this rink," she said. "I've been under four minutes before but this time, emotionally I had this feeling that I had to break four minutes."

Takagi started in the fourth pairing against compatriot Fuyo Matsuoka, whom she left behind quickly.

Ireen Wüst had clocked 3:58.10 in the third pairing and Takagi initially did not seem to be a threat for first place. At the 2200m mark, the Japanese skater was still 0.75 seconds behind, but Wüst could not maintain her pace in the final two laps, and Takagi ducked under her time. Wüst eventually took bronze.

In the sixth pairing, Martina Sáblíková (CZE) could not match Takagi's lap times from the start, and neither could Claudia Pechstein (GER) in the seventh pairing.

Antoinette de Jong faced World Cup leader Ivanie Blondin (CAN) in the final pairing. The Dutch skater was one second behind after the first full lap but kept Takagi's time in sight only to come up 0.69 seconds short. She took silver with a personal best of 3:58.10.

De Jong said: "I wanted to start well with a 30.6 first full lap. I managed to build a good race from there, but unfortunately that 30.6 was just a little too slow.

"My personal best was 3:59.49, so you know it's going to be tough when you see 3:57 on the scoreboard. It's fun to set a new personal best and I've shown myself to be among the best in the 3000m."

De Jong was not surprised by Takagi's victory.

"She's really good at the moment. Her technique is good and if you've got enough stamina you can skate a very good 3000m.

“We [the Dutch girls] just face tough new competition.”

Blondin had to bow her head early to finish in 4:04.15 for 10th place.

De Jong took the overall lead in the 3000m/5000m World Cup. She won the 3000m in Heerenveen and was eighth in the 5000m in Stavanger. Claudia Pechstein, who won in Stavanger, is second and Blondin third.

### **Kramer maintains 100 per cent record**

In winning the 5000m, Sven Kramer (NED) maintained his unbeaten record after three long distance races this season, once again consigning rival Ted-Jan Bloemen (CAN) to silver. Patrick Beckert (GER) took the bronze.

Before the race, Kramer spoke about breaking the world record of 6 minutes, 3.32 seconds he set in Calgary 10 years ago.

“I hope this time will be gone by next week, and broken by me, of course,” Kramer said last week.

When he started in the final pairing against Bloemen, he already knew a world record was not possible this weekend.

“The ice was fast all right, but the others did not skate under 6:10 and that was a sign that 6:03 was not going to be easy,” he explained after the race.

“It all depends on the conditions – the ice, the air pressure and my own condition. I’m all right physically, although I’ve just been here one week and usually you see that skaters flying over here from Europe tend to be better in the second North American World Cup tournament.”

Kramer will not be present in Salt Lake City to prove that next week. He will be attending a training camp to prepare for the Dutch Olympic qualification tournament.

Bloemen lost for the third consecutive World Cup event in a head-to-head battle with Kramer in the final race.

Apart from Kramer, he was the only skater to beat the 6:10 barrier with 6:08.54. Bronze medallist Beckert finished in 6:10.80.

Despite again being beaten by Kramer, Bloemen was happy with his performance.

“The last two weeks I have been a little bit sick and I lost my feel with the ice a bit, so I’m mostly happy that I was able to bring it back like this and be this competitive again,” he said.

He is confident that he can close the gap on Kramer as they head towards the Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang in February.

“I’m happy to be closer and closer, and in a season like this, these are not the races that really count. There’s only one race that really counts and that’s the Olympics.

“My training program is made in a way that I should be at my best in February, so I should have a little bit in the bank still.”

### **Canada’s men take team sprint gold in world record time**

Laurent Dubreuil, Gilmore Junio and Vincent De Haître (CAN) handed the home crowd a gold medal and a world record in the men’s team sprint. Russia won the ladies team sprint.

Canada started with a different line-up than the one that took to the ice in Stavanger two weeks ago.

With Dubreuil instead of Alex Boiosvert-Lacroix, they faced Norway’s Bjørn Magnussen, Henrik Fagerli Rukke and Håvard Lorentzen in the final pair.

As at the earlier world cup season stops in Heerenveen and Stavanger, the Canadian men did not leave any room for doubt, being faster throughout the race.

Finishing in 1:17.31, Canada was more than two seconds faster than the 2016 world record of 1:19.97 set by the USA’s Jonathan Garcia, Mitchell Whitmore and Kimani Griffin.

Second-placed Russia (1:18.25), bronze medallists the Netherlands (1:18.53) and fourth-placed Norway were all faster than the previous world record.

### **Russia wins ladies team sprint**

Russia’s Angelina Golikova, Olga Fatkulina and Elizaveta Kazelina won the ladies team sprint in 1:24.84.

Norway’s Martine Ripsrud, Hege Bøkko and Ida Njåtun took silver in 1:26.38 and China’s Xiaoxuan Shi, Xin Zhao and Ruining Tian clinched bronze in 1:26.65.

Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#WCSpeedSkating** and **#SpeedSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

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## **About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2017/18 Series**

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating is an annual series of international Speed Skating competitions. The Series started in 1984 and usually consists of six or seven events, including the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final. Skaters can earn points at each competition, and the skater who has the most points over a given distance at the end of the series is the World Cup winner of that distance. Skaters also accumulate Grand World Cup points each time they compete in a distance. During the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final, the lady and the man with the most Grand World Cup points is crowned the Grand World Cup winner.

The results for the individual distances in the World Cup ranking are the main qualifying method for the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships.

A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season. For men: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, combined 5000m/10000m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint. For Ladies: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, the combined 3000m/5000m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint.