

Press release

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Yuskov (RUS) clinches world record in 1500m

Denis Yuskov (RUS) finally got his 1500m World Record on the second day of the ISU World Cup speed skating in Salt Lake City on Saturday. Miho Takagi (JPN) and Nao Kodaira (JPN) extended their winning streaks in the 1500m and the 500m respectively, while Ruslan Murashov (RUS) became the second fastest man ever in the 500m. Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA) and Lee Seung-Hoon (KOR) won the Mass Start events.

Yuskov (RUS) breaks world record in 1500m

After falling agonizingly short a week ago, Denis Yuskov (RUS) lived up to expectations and wrote his name in the history books when he skated 1 minute and 41.02 seconds in the 1500m in Salt Lake City to take gold and shave 0.02 seconds off the world record.

“I knew I had a chance. It was do or die,” Yuskov said after his heroics at the Utah Olympic Oval.

The 28-year-old Russian got close to the world record when he won last week’s 1500m in Calgary in 1:41.33. The difference on Saturday was made in the first and second full laps.

“I wanted to skate the first 300m faster, but I did not manage to. My first 300m was the same as in Calgary, 23.6, but after that it was 24.8 and 25.5 instead of 25.0 and 25.7 in Calgary,” Yuskov said.

Although the final lap was a little slower than the Calgary schedule, 27.0 instead of 26.8, Yuskov had enough left in the tank to beat the 1:41.04 Shani Davis (USA) set in Salt Lake City in 2009.

“I’m tired, because of all those weeks here,” he said. “There was a lot of emotional pressure, because I was thinking of the world record so much.”

Yuskov clocked his time in the final pairing versus Joey Mantia (USA), who finished fourth in 1:42.77.

Koen Verweij (NED), facing Thomas Krol (NED) in the penultimate race, had set the bar with a personal best of 1:41.63, breaking the national record (1:41.95) he set in Calgary last week.

Krol could not keep up with Verweij, but also set a personal best of 1:42.63 to take bronze.

When Verweij came off the ice he knew that his training partner Yuskov was capable of skating a world record.

“I could see it coming after my own 1:41.63 in a sloppy race with quite some little mistakes,” he said.

The Dutchman was satisfied with his own performance after having missed the World Cup circuit for two years because of kidney problems.



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“I can see that I made good steps over the past months,” he said. “The speed comes easy, now I have to work on the second part of my race. I didn’t manage to stay low enough, and I didn’t keep my arms on the back, that’s something I have to work on.”

With three wins and a total of 300 points, Yuskov leads the World Cup ranking, ahead of Verweij with 252 points and Mantia with 250 points.

Takagi (JPN) queen in ‘Race of Kings’

While Nao Kodaira (JPN) rules the Ladies 500m, her compatriot Miho Takagi is queen in the ‘Race of the Kings’. On Saturday in Salt Lake City, Takagi maintained her immaculate record in the 1500m World Cup, taking her fourth gold this season. Marrit Leenstra (NED) and Yekaterina Shikhova (RUS) took silver and bronze respectively.

Leenstra had set the bar in the eighth of 10 pairings when she raced against Shikhova. The 28-year-old Dutch skater could not match the national record of 1 minute and 52.06 seconds she set last week in Calgary, but 1:52.31 was more than half a second faster than her pair mate, who set a Russian record of 1:52.86.

Takagi took the ice in the final pairing versus Lotte van Beek (NED).

The 23-year-old Japanese skater was fractionally faster than Leenstra had been at the 300m, 700m and 1100m marks, and eventually made the difference in the last 400m. With 29.6, Takagi was the only skater to pull off a sub-30 final lap, while Leenstra clocked the second-fastest final lap in 30.2.

Takagi’s pair mate Van Beek was nowhere to be seen when the Japanese skater finished. The Dutch skater, who was marking her 26th birthday, finished 19th in 1:57.10.

Takagi leads the World Cup ranking with the full 400 points. Leenstra comes second with 190 points and Shikhova is third with 176 points.

Lee sprints to Mass Start victory

Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR) added another Mass Start gold to his tally on Saturday. The 29-year-old Korean edged out Livio Wenger (SUI) and Bart Swings (BEL) in the final sprint. The Swiss and the Belgian took silver and gold.

The men’s Mass Start Race was lit up in the first intermediate sprint, when Danila Semerikov (RUS) pulled through to escape from the pack on his own.

Simon Schouten (NED) tried to chase the Russian down, but he couldn’t bridge the gap and Semerikov managed to stay ahead until less than two laps before the finish.

Peter Michael (NZL) pulled the pack back to Semerikov and the sprinters took position, with reigning World Champion Lee proving to be the fastest of the pack again.

Wenger took his first career World Cup podium behind the Korean, while Swings took his first World Cup medal of the season.

The Belgian, who had won the B-Division 1500m earlier on Saturday, was happy to be back after a poor start to the season.

“I’m improving every weekend,” he said. “I’ve been struggling in the beginning of the season. The Heerenveen World Cup was bad and Stavanger was only slightly better, but here (at the North American World Cups), everything has improved a lot.

“I knew I would not be good at the season’s start. I suffered from an inflammation in my knee and I got sick, but I left the troubles behind and from now on the only way is up.”

Lee leads the Mass Start World Cup with 218 points. Wenger is second with 175 points and Andrea Giovannini (ITA), who came seventh on Saturday, is third with 150 points.

Lollobrigida (ITA) fashions a winning breakaway

Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA) firmly took the lead in the Mass Start World ranking with an atypical victory in Salt Lake City on Saturday. Dan Guo (CHN) took silver and Bo-Reum Kim (KOR) clinched the bronze medal.

Lollobrigida set up a breakaway together with compatriot and namesake Francesca Bettrone. Guo came along and the three got a big gap, while the pack was being patient. Bettrone couldn’t keep up with the pace of the leaders, but Lollobrigida and Guo stayed out of sight. Kim won the sprint of the pack.

“We did not intent to escape from the peloton,” Lollobrigida said.

“The plan was to grab the points in the first intermediate sprint together, but than we had a gap so I said: okay, let’s go.”

“The other Francesca is more of a sprinter and at one point she told me to go on and then I was alone with the Chinese girl (Guo).

“At first I was a little bit angry with Guo, because she took the points in an intermediate sprint while I was leading the breakaway. That’s not how you should do it if you want to cooperate to make the breakaway work, so I was screaming go, go, go.

“After that she also took the lead for a few laps so that was okay and in the end I was stronger.”

For Lollobrigida the breakaway was unknown territory.

“I’ve never been in a breakaway like that, usually I’m more of a sprinter. This felt more like a five kilometer race, but it was fun.”

After the Salt Lake City World Cup, Lollobridgida will be off to Rome to spend some time with her family before she starts her Olympic preparation.

“I live in Heerenveen so I haven’t been home since the beginning of August. I just want to go home for Christmas, because my mum is sick and she’s treated with chemotherapy at the moment. She’s alone with papa and that’s not easy for me.”

Going home Lollobridigda will carry a well-earned gold medal. With 220 points she leads the Mass Start World Cup rankings. Claudia Pechstein (GER), who came eighth in Salt Lake City, is second with 152 points and Guo is third with 146 points.

Murashov wins Russian 500m battle to take gold

In a battle of the Russian giants Ruslan Murashov defeated Pavel Kulizhnikov to win the Men's 500m in Salt Lake City on Saturday. Dutchmen Kai Verbij and Dai Dai Ntab took silver and bronze.

Murashov managed to beat Kulizhnikov in a head-to-head battle, but just failed to depose him as the fastest man ever in the 500m. Clocking a personal best of 34.02 seconds, Murashov was only 0.04 away from Kulizhnikov's world record.

Kulizhnikov finished in 34.16 to take fourth place.

Skating in the sixth pair, after Murashov had already set the bar, Ntab had the fastest opener of the field clocking 9.51. The Dutchman was a little slower than Murashov in the full lap, but still finished in a personal best 34.15, second position at that moment.

"My opener was good, but I was beaten in the full laps this weekend," Ntab said.

"It was a good race, but I was a little surprised that Kai (Verbij) had to edge me out by 0.02 seconds."

Ntab was a little disconcerted about the gap between Murashov and the rest of the field.

"I'm not disappointed because of losing, but the gap is too big," he said.

In the ninth pair, Verbij did not open as fast as his compatriot and Team Plantina teammate, but like Murashov he was faster in the full lap to clock 34.13.

He knew why Murashov was faster in Salt Lake City: "In the previous high-altitude races he started in the outside, finishing on the inside. This time it was the other way around, which is an advantage for a big guy like him. He just skated a very good race."

Verbij was happy with his own race too: "My opener was 9.6 for the first time this season, which is like a milestone for me. The full lap was good as well. I was a little surprised about my time, I don't think I can pull this off four times in a row."

Ronald Mulder (NED) retained his lead in the World Cup ranking with 416 points. The Dutchman finished seventh in 34.22 on Saturday.

Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR), who took 12th place in 34.41, is still second with 376 points and Verbij is third with 368 points.

Kodaira (JPN) extends winning streak

It was Nao Kodaira (JPN) leading the way yet again in the Ladies 500m on the second day of World Cup racing in Salt Lake City on Saturday. Finishing in 36.54 seconds, she was 0.04 slower than the day before, but the 31-year-old World Champion has clocked the second and third best time ever over 500m this weekend.



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Lee Sang-Hwa (KOR), who still holds the world record with 36.36, again had to bow her head for the Japanese queen of the shortest distance. Lee was also a little bit slower than her 36.71 the day before, finishing in 36.79.

With Arisa Go (JPN) taking bronze in 37.05 and Karolina Erbanova (CZE) coming fourth in 37.18, Saturday's top four was exactly the same as Friday's.

Five ladies broke their personal best times, with Arisa Go being the fastest. The others were Angelina Golikova (RUS), fifth in 37.31, Konami Soga (JPN) 15th in 37.95, Kaylin Irvine (CAN) 17th in 37.97 and Park Seung-Hi (KOR), 20th in 38.28.

Kodaira leads the World Cup ranking with 700 points. Lee is second with 510 points and Vanessa Herzog (AUT) third with 375 points. The Austrian sprinter came seventh in 37.34 on Saturday.

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 a series of international Speed Skating competitions which takes place annually. 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 on a given distance at the end of the series is the World Cup winner of that distance. Skaters also cumulate 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 on 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: 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, combined 5000 m / 10000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint. For Ladies 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, the combined 3000 m / 5000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint.