

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

Heerenveen, January 27, 2017

ISU Speed Skating World Cup Berlin Day 1 #WCSpeed

Nao Kodaira reigns the Ladies' 500m. The Japanese sprinter took her fifth World Cup win in the shortest distance on Day 1 of the ISU Speed Skating World Cup at the Sportforum in Berlin. Nico Ihle delighted the home crowd winning the Men's 500m, America's Heather Bergsma took her fourth 1000m gold of the season in the Ladies' 1000m, and Kjeld Nuis (NED) won the Men's 1500m.

Kodaira superfast

Kodaira won all five 500m World Cup races she skated this season. The 31-year old sprinter was the only one to break the 38-second barrier in the Ladies' field on Friday. With 37.43 she set a new personal season's best. Kodaira skated in the final pair against compatriot Maki Tsuji, who finished fifth in 38.40.

Karolina Erbanova had hoped to take World Cup gold, after winning the European Sprint title with four second places in the separate distances in Heerenveen in January. The Czech sprinter was ranked first, before the Japanese ladies took the ice, but she had to settle for another second place with 38.12.

Olga Fatkulina, who won overall bronze at the European Championships, finished in 38.36 to take another bronze medal at Friday's 500m. Fatkulina's compatriot Angelina Golikova was the only one to skate a personal best. She managed to shave 0.10 off her previous best, when she clocked 38.64 to finish tenth.

Kodaira grabbed the lead in the 500m World Cup with 500 points. China's Jing Yu, who is absent in Berlin, dropped to second with 452 points, followed by Maki Tsuji (JPN) with 445 points.

Ihle makes home crowd happy

Only two men finished under 35 seconds in the Men's 500m. Japan's Yuma Murakami set the bar at 34.97 in the fourth pair already. Nico Ihle beat him with 34.83 in the fifth pair and none of the ten skaters who followed, managed to come close. Dutchman Jan Smeeckens crashed after he crossed the line in 35.02 to take bronze.

Pavel Kulizhnikov still leads the 500m World Cup, but the Russian is injured and already announced that he will also skip the World Single Distance Championships and the World Sprint Championships in February. Ruslan Murashov, who is second in the World Cup ranking, met third ranked Dai Dai Ntab in the final pair. The Russian beat his Dutch opponent in a close race, but 35.17 only took him to 7th place. Ntab, who lost a lot of speed in the final 200m, clocked 35.41 to finish 14th.

Kulizhnikov still leads the 500m World Cup with 425 points. Murashov is second with 345 points and Ihle climbed to third with 272 points.

Bergsma edges out Kodaira

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Nao Kodaira is this season's 500m queen, but in the 1000m she has to bow for Heather Bergsma. This season's fourth 1000m gold did not come easy for the American however. Kodaira set the bar at 1:15.49 in the penultimate pair, before Bergsma faced Kodaira's compatriot Miho Takagi in the final pair. Bergsma easily left Takagi behind, but had to fight hard to beat Kodaira. With 1:15.42, she was only 0.07 seconds faster.

Reigning 1000m World Champions Jorien ter Mors (NED) took bronze in 1:15.62, just 0.02 seconds ahead of compatriot Marrit Leenstra. European Sprint Champion Karolina Erbanova set 1:15.90 to finish sixth.

Bergsma strengthened her lead on top of the 1000m World Cup ranking with a total of 400 points. Takagi, who won in Astana when Bergsma was absent, is second with 326. Leenstra is third. She also has 326 points, but no race win to her name.

Another Michael surprise

Peter Michael is this season's speed skating revelation. The inline skater from New Zealand is growing more and more accustomed to the ice, which resulted in the first World Cup gold for New Zealand in the 5000m at the Astana World Cup in December. On the first World Cup day in Berlin he surprised in the 1500m.

After 18 of 20 skaters had a go, Michael was on top of the 1500m table with a personal best of 1:46.87. Kjeld Nuis and Denis Yuskov (RUS) beat him in the final pair, but Michael walked away with the 1500m bronze. Nuis was the only one who managed to skate under 1:46, when he stopped the clock at 1:45.94 to take gold. Yuskov crossed the line in 1:46.03 and collected the silver medal.

World Cup leader Joey Mantia (USA) was absent in Berlin and dropped to third place with 270 points. Yuskov is climbed to top position with 340 points and Nuis is second with 305.

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>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Berlin (GER) continues tomorrow with the Ladies' and Men's 1500m, the Men's and Ladies' Team Sprint and the Ladies' and Men's Mass Start Finals.

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 Stavanger (NOR) 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 Berlin (GER) medalists

500m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	37.43
2	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	38.12
3	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	38.36

500m Men

1	Nico Ihle	GER	34.83
2	Yuma Murakami	JPN	34.97
3	Jan Smeeckens	NED	35.02

1000m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:15.42
2	Nao Kodaira	JPN	1:15.49
3	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:15.62

1500m Men

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:45.94
2	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:46.03
3	Peter Michael	NZL	1:46.87

ISU World Cup Ranking

500m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	500
2	Jing Yu	CHN	452
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	445

500m Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	425
2	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	345
3	Nico Ihle	GER	272

1000m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	400
2	Miho Takagi	JPN	326
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	326

1500m Men

1	Joey Mantia	USA	270
2	Denis Yuskov	RUS	260
3	Kjeld Nuis	NED	205

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