

October 30, 2021

Nagoya, Japan

Confortola (ITA) stuns field to win maiden World Cup gold

[Yuri Confortola](#) (ITA) delivered a moment of high drama with a stunning surprise on the opening day of Finals at the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating session in Nagoya, winning his first-ever individual World Cup gold in the Men's 1500m. Compatriot Arianna Fontana (ITA) also topped the podium in the Women's 500m to make it Italy's day in Japan.

Thirty-five-year-old Confortola outfoxed a stacked field of skating superpowers at the Nippon Gaishi Arena on Saturday - including [Semen Elistratov](#) (RUS), [Hwang Daeheon](#) (KOR) and [Sjinkie Knegt](#) (NED) – by storming to a blistering start to put his rivals on a lap.

Behind him, none of the skaters reacted, showing no inclination to close the gap. It allowed Confortola to speed to glory, before Daeheon held off [Sun Long](#) (CHN) for silver.

"I talked with my coach before the race about this, but it was my idea [to go early]. I tried to take a lap and if someone was to catch up that would also have been good, as it would have meant that the race was fast and that suits my qualities," Confortola said.

"But then I see the group all together, skating slowly, so I knew I had to finish the race and I did. I feel so happy, as this is my first gold medal. It's crazy, because I'm old.

"Maybe I need to continue until Milano Cortina [2026 Winter Olympic Games]," he said jokingly. "I skate because I want to have fun on the ice. Today was a funny race."

Elistratov only just missed out on the podium after he won gold in this event last week. He was nevertheless elated for Confortola: "I'm very happy for him. He's a great friend of mine. I noticed the situation, but all guys decided to wait, that's also Short Track. Yuri is the champion today."

Daeheon delighted with gold

In the Men's 500m Final, [Steven Dubois](#) (CAN) went out hard but faded as the race progressed and was later penalized for causing contact, as he tried to pass from the outside with only one and a half laps to go, bringing down [Denis Nikisha](#) (KAZ).

Daeheon timed his run to the front perfectly, however, moments before Dubois made contact with Nikisha. He saw off [Ren Ziwei](#) (CHN) down the final stretch, with Nikisha claiming a bronze medal following a jury decision to relegate Dubois to fourth place.

“I’m very proud to win this medal after my performance earlier today. The ice was feeling pretty heavy, so to get this result is great,” Daeheon said, moving one step closer to qualifying for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games. “I can’t wait to demonstrate my form at the Games.”

Bronze medallist Nikisha said: “I’m just as happy with this medal [after he also won bronze in the first World Cup session of the season]. Now my goal is to win a gold medal in the coming events. I want to thank my country and my fans for the support they have been giving me - it feels amazing.”

Schulting shows her strength

In the Women’s events [Suzanne Schulting](#) (NED) executed her gameplan to perfection to win gold in the opening final of the day, the 1500m. Saturday also yielded a gold medal for seven-time overall ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Champion [Arianna Fontana](#) (ITA) in the Women’s 500m at the Nippon Gaishi Arena.

Schulting came out on top in the first final on Saturday, taking full advantage of the absence of key rival [Choi Minjeong](#) (KOR), who suffered a knee injury after her crash in Beijing last week and had to return home for further treatment.

The reigning World Champion took the lead in the race with six laps to go and never looked back. Schulting ultimately held off Fontana, who had to settle for silver. [Kim A Lang](#) (KOR) completed the podium.

“That was a great final, I’m so happy. You race against the best skaters out there, so that makes this win feel even better. I also got to take revenge for last week,” Schulting said, referring to her crash in the quarter finals of the Women’s 1500m last week.

“You know that you just have to get through the last two laps, as everyone is hurting. But I felt strong, was able to pick out some good lines and managed to stay ahead of the rest.”

Silver medallist Fontana said: “I ended up doing the complete opposite than planned. I was gonna stay in the middle of the pack to see what the Koreans were doing, but once we started something in me was telling me not to do it. So I stayed in the front and that was the right choice.”

By claiming top spot, Schulting was able to rack up valuable points in the quest for berths at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, as she now finds herself in third place behind [Kristen Santos](#) (USA) and [Lee Yubin](#) (KOR) in this distance.

The Special Olympic Qualification Classification for each distance is based on the best three results achieved at the four ISU World Cup Short Track Competitions this season.

Fontana fights off Maliszweska to win gold

Fontana picked up Italy's second gold medal of the day, after compatriot Confortola's win. She overtook [Natalia Maliszewska](#) (POL) and moved up to first on the second-last lap.

It was a position she did not relinquish, crossing the line for yet another World Cup gold medal. Behind the dominant Fontana, Maliszewska took the silver medal and [Fan Kexin](#) (CHN) got the bronze.

"It felt great. The pass was a little bit tight, because I slipped so it made me lose a little bit of speed. But I was gonna go for it this final, as I don't have anything to lose," Fontana said.

"I think Japan is a lucky country for me. I got three medals in three distances the last time we were here [in 2019] and before that [in 2011] I got three gold medals. It's been good so far."

Silver medallist Maliszewska said: "Arianna really is a great skater; I lost my position to someone who has more experience than me. From that moment I just had to protect my position. It feels amazing to win another medal."

Racing in Nagoya continues on Sunday from 14:02 (local time), including finals in the Men's and Women's 1000m, Mixed Team 2000m Relay, Women's 2000m Relay, and Men's 5000m Relay.

World Cup Classification - Men

[Men 500m](#)

[Men 1000m](#)

[Men 1500m](#)

[Men 5000m Relay](#)

World Cup Classification - Women

[Women 500m](#)

[Women 1000m](#)

[Women 1500m](#)

[Women 3000m Relay](#)

World Cup Classification – Mixed Relay

[Mixed Relay](#)

Where to watch and follow the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating 2021/22?

Viewers will be able to watch the Saturday and Sunday afternoon (local time) World Cup sessions via their national broadcaster/channel. For countries where there are no broadcasters and for the

qualification and repechage races, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#). You will find the full list in the Where to watch news [here](#).

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and the “[Where to Watch](#)” news. You can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams start or new videos are published.

Highlights, clips, interviews, behind the scenes:

YouTube: [ISU Skating](#)

IG: [@isuspeedskating](#)

Facebook: [@ISUShortTrackSpeedSkating](#)

Twitter: [@ISU_Speed](#)

Follow the conversation with #ShortTrackSkating.

For further information on ISU Short Track Speed Skating visit: <https://www.isu.org/short-track>.

ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating Series events 2021:

[Beijing, CHN October 21 – 24, 2021](#)

[Nagoya, JPN - October 28 – 31, 2021](#)

[Debrecen, HUN - November 18 – 21, 2021](#)

[Dordrecht, NED - November 25 – 28, 2021](#)

About ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating Series

The World Cup series consists of nine distances 500, 1000 and 1500 meters for Women and Men, Women 3000 meters Team Relay, Men 5000 meters Team Relay and a Mixed Gender Relay over 2000 meters.

The competitions have a single distance character and are held in separate sessions over four days. Day 1 and 2 are dedicated to all Qualifying Rounds. Days 3 and 4 the last Qualifying Rounds (if necessary) take place, followed by the World Cup sessions.

For the Mixed Gender Relay Teams (2 Women & 2 Men), the Women 3000 meters Relay races and Men 5000 meters Relay races a maximum of four Skaters shall compete and must belong to the same ISU Member.

During the Olympic season there are four ISU World Cup Short Track events that also serve at the Olympic qualifying events.