

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Event 2 of 6

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Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating – Salt Lake City (USA) – Day 2

The Essent ISU World Cup in Salt Lake City continued today, and again there were two world records. Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) set a world record in the Ladies' 500m. Her 36.36 was not a time anybody had considered a possibility. The Dutch Men skated the Team Pursuit in a world record time of 3:35.60.

There were 61 personal best today times including 18 NRs, for Austria (Bram Smallenbroek, 1:09.76), Belarus (Vitalij Mikhailov, 1:10.25), Belgium (Jelena Peeters, 1:57.67), Kazakhstan (Yekaterina Ajdova, 1:56.54), Korea (Sang-Hwa Lee, 36.36; Seon-Yeong Noh, 1:56.04), the Netherlands (Ireen Wüst, 1:52.08), Norway (Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen, 1:07.95; Ida Njåtun, 1:54.09), Poland (Luiza Zlotkowska, 1:54.77, Katarzyna Bachleda-Curus, 1:53.95), Russia (Olga Fatkulina, 37.13; Julia Skokova, 1:53.87), Switzerland (Kaitlyn McGregor, 1:59.32), Sweden (Johanna Östlund, 1:59.75) Chinese Taipei (Ching-Yang Sung, 1:08.83), USA (Heather Richardson, 36.90; Brittany Bowe, 1:52.45). In the Team Pursuit, each countries set NRs (see under Team Pursuit).

Ladies' 500m

In the second 500m race Sang-Hwa Lee again went out for a fast time. After yesterday's world record she opened even faster today, in an unheard of 10.09. She carried this speed into her lap time which was also faster than any woman had ever skated before, 26.25, resulting in a final time of 36.36, her third 500m world record in a row.

In second place finished Heather Richardson (USA), who sharpened her fresh NR to 36.90 – fast, but still more than half a second slower than Lee. Olga Fatkulina (RUS) finished in third place. She too skated a new NR with 37.13.

Lee's coach, Kevin Crockett, said: "Yesterday I thought 36.5 was the limit. But I was a little shocked today. Maybe the sky is the limit. She does things I never thought I would see. She can keep up with any man. I challenge her every day with the boys. She has to keep up with them or I am not happy. She can also be a little bit worse and still win. I know what she can do in practice. I had not expected this level in competition so quickly. I think she is where we need her in the 500, there is still some work to do in the 1000."

Men's 1000m

The 1000m was disappointing for those who watched, as the timing device had some trouble functioning so it was hard to judge who was leading and with what times. It was striking that many skaters had trouble keeping their balance in the turns on the 1000m especially and on a day of very low air pressure such as today skaters reach very high speeds that are hard to simulate in training. This certainly tests coordination skills. Shani Davis (USA) has experience as world record holder and was the fastest today with 1:06.88. He was paired with Kjeld Nuis and just like last week, Nuis finished in second place, this time with a personal best of 1:07.02, 0.01 second faster than the bronze winner, Brian Hansen (USA), whose 1:07.03 was also a personal best. As the order on the podium was the same as last week it is no surprise that these skaters also lead the World Cup rankings in the same order.

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Davis said: "I am starting to get speed again: 24.6 is a fast lap. Anyone who is in the top five is fast and can step up on a good day. Brian Hansen is one of them: a hungry ambitious, wonderful skater."

Ladies' 1500m

Most skaters in this distance skated a personal best time. Last week's surprise winner Lotte van Beek (NED) could not repeat her feat this weekend, finishing in fourth place, and moved to second place in the overall standings. Brittany Bowe (USA) skated strongly, shaving another 1.3 seconds off her personal best and snatching the US record away from Heather Richardson (who had held it at 1:53.37) with a time of 1:52.45. Richardson managed to improve on her best time too, fresh from setting an NR in the 500 meters, but this time had to leave the glory to Bowe, as she finished in 1:52.55. Only one woman managed to a faster time than these two. After skipping yesterday's 3000m, Ireen Wüst (NED) had the strength to lower the Dutch record to 1:52.08, the second fastest time ever skated.

Wust said: "I am happy that I skated a NR. My last PR in this distance was five years ago. I knew that I was on the right track, but on this fast ice, when you see that Sang-Hwa Lee skates 36.3, you think: 'I want that too.' Not because you have to in preparation for the Olympic Games, but the winner in me wants to win in a personal record. Making choices like about the 3000m is hard. Today I am happy but yesterday I had a hard time. My opener could still have been better. The 1500m is the most beautiful distance, you want to win it."

Men's Team Pursuit

The two fastest teams of last week, Team USA and Team NED were paired in the last pair of the Team Pursuit. There had been fast times, eight NRs: the French skated 3:39.41, Norway did very well with 3:37.93 and Korea was on world-record pace but lost their coherence towards the end, although they still finished in 3:37.51. Germany reached 3:40.50, Belgium 3:45.64 and New Zealand 3:49.82.

The US Team this week featured Brian Hansen, Jonathan Kuck and Shani Davis. They were only 0.05 outside the world-record time with their 3:37.22, but the Dutch with their dream team (Sven Kramer, Jan Blokhuijsen and Koen Verweij) never showed a moment's weakness in their race and lowered their mark to 3:35.60, the second world record of the day.

Tomorrow's program has the second 500m and the 5000m for Men, and for Ladies the 1000m and Team Pursuit.

Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating - Salt Lake City (USA) - Medal Winners Saturday

500m Ladies (2)

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|----------|
| 1 | Sang-Hwa Lee | KOR | 36.36 WR |
| 2 | Heather Richardson | USA | 36.90 NR |
| 3 | Olga Fatkulina | RUS | 37.13 NR |

1000m Men

| | | | |
|---|--------------|-----|-----------|
| 1 | Shani Davis | USA | 1:06.88 |
| 2 | Kjeld Nuis | NED | 1:07.02 P |
| 3 | Brian Hansen | USA | 1:07.03 P |

1500m Ladies

| | | | |
|---|------------|-----|-----------|
| 1 | Ireen Wüst | NED | 1:52.08 N |
|---|------------|-----|-----------|

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| | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-----|-----------|
| 2 | Brittany Bowe | USA | 1:52.45 N |
| 3 | Heather Richardson | USA | 1:52.55 P |

Team Pursuit Men

| | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------|-----|------------|
| 1 | J. Blokhuijsen, S. Kramer, K. Verweij | NED | 3:35.60 WR |
| 2 | S. Davis, B. Hansen, J. Kuck. | USA | 3:37.22 NR |
| 3 | S. Lee, H. Joo, C. Kim | KOR | 3:37.51 NR |

For details of the Essent ISU World Cup, including complete results see www.isu.org .

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