

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND  
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Event 6 of 6

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## **Essent ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships – Heerenveen**

**(NED)**

**Day 2**

Ireen Wüst (NED) and Koen Verweij (NED) were crowned as the queen and king of a party, officially called the Essent ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships. The two sat in a carriage behind traditional Frisian horses. Slipping and sliding on the ice of the Thialf arena, they were cheered by a capacity crowd of 10,000 speed skating fans.

Wüst is no stranger to the horses, having been world champion in the allround category in Heerenveen before. But that was seven years ago. In all, this was her fifth title but in Calgary (2011), Moscow (2012) and Hamar (2013) there were no horse-drawn carriages on the ice.

Longhaired Verweij, on the other hand, is new to the winner's ritual, although this was the third consecutive year that both titles went to Dutch skaters. Verweij replaced Sven Kramer, the winner in 2012 and 2013 who is expected to be back next season. "This can happen again," Verweij said.

Wüst and Verweij both skated for the professional team of TVM, the insurance company that is saying goodbye to speed skating after 14 years. During those years TVM invested some 40 million euros in speed skating. Runners-up in the Ladies' competition were Olga Graf (RUS) and Yvonne Nauta (NED). Jan Blokhuijsen (NED) and Denis Yuskov (RUS) finished second and third respectively in the Men's competition.

### **Men**

There must be something in the air in the part of the Dutch province of Noord-Holland that is called West-Friesland. There, they grow speed skaters like tulips. Verweij is from Koedijk, near Alkmaar, and Jan Blokhuijsen was born and raised in Noord-Scharwoude. The distance between the two is hardly more than 10 kilometres. That was also the distance that decided this year's crown.

Verweij, aged 23, had to outdo himself in the last laps of the final distance, the 10,000m. "I was in a sprint during the last three laps," he said. "Of course I was exhausted. In those moments speed skating is a mental thing. It's the mind that has to be strong. My legs could hardly do any work. I stole the championship from Jan in those last laps. It felt super. In the future I want to be a stable skater. Today I have grown up."

Blokhuijsen said he lost the competition in the 500m, when he tipped the ice with his hand. "I tried to attack in the 10,000m and I didn't succeed. Koen was sticking to me. I am fed up. I wanted to end the season with this title. I am so sorry. Technically, I failed. This loss will be analyzed."

Jan Blokhuijsen won the final distance in 13:13.93. That is not an outstanding time set against Kramer's track record of 12:45.09. In an allround competition at the end of the season, though, this was still a decent performance. Verweij could afford to trail by nearly 10 seconds; he conceded only 5.19. In a strong race Yuskov finished second in 13:17.84. He was a threat to Blokhuijsen after his win in the 1500m (1:46.12). "I was not sure of my 10,000m,"

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Yuskov said. "I didn't think of that second place. You know, I can race a good 1500 and 5000m. With my fast start, I have doubts over the longest distance."

Verweij was lucky that the 1500m is really his territory. In each World Cup race this season, Verweij made the podium. He did it again in Heerenveen, together with Bart Swings (BEL), who recovered from a very moderate first day. Verweij's 1:46.47 saw him extend his lead over Blokhuijsen (1:47.15) slightly. (Yuskov was first in 1:46.12.) The advantage for Verweij was that on the 1500m and the 10,000m Blokhuijsen was his direct opponent. The two were like each other's shadow. Two months ago Blokhuijsen took the European crown, with Verweij finishing second.

## Ladies

Ireen Wüst had never won a title by a bigger margin than here in Heerenveen. The difference between the champion and runner-up Olga Graf (RUS) was 2.7 points. That equals 27 seconds on a 5000m race.

"This was the best season of my career," the 27-year old said. She thanked TVM and her coach, Gerard Kemkers, for their longstanding support. "It was our strength that we were also in good condition after those great Olympics. Others had problems with the long season. We were still hungry."

In the 1500m Wüst had improved her already commanding position by winning the distance. Again, she came close to the track record (1:54.13 against 1:53.31). Her partner in pair 11, Yuliya Skokova (RUS), third at the distance, had no chance. Second place surprisingly went to Olga Graf (RUS), who scored a third personal best of the weekend: 1:55.67.

Wüst and Graf met in the last pair at the final distance. Wüst skated to a second place (6:59.07) behind teammate Yvonne Nauta. Graf was third in 7:00.01. "It was a crazy season with many emotions," Graf said. "Next year I will taking it up against the Dutch. I hope my Italian coach Maurizio Marchetto will stay in Russia. In three years I improved under his guidance, but now I prefer to have a bigger team. All female skaters want Marchetto. At the moment we have the best conditions for speed skating."

So the 5000m ended in a victory for Yvonne Nauta (NED) in a personal best of 6:57.59. That was enough to push Skokova into fourth place. "This is very nice. Actually, I am no allrounder," Nauta said. "Look at my 500m and my start. Then it is ridiculous that I am on the podium. I prefer to skate the longer distances. Maybe next year I will come back with a better sprint."

## Essent ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships – Heerenveen (NED) – Day 2

### Ladies' 1500m

1	Ireen Wüst	NED	1:54.13
2	Olga Graf	RUS	1:55.67
3	Yuliya Skokova	RUS	1:55.99

### Ladies' 5000m

1	Yvonne Nauta	NED	6:57.59
2	Ireen Wüst	NED	6:59.07

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<b>3</b>	Olga Graf	RUS	7:00.01
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## Final classification

<b>1</b>	Ireen Wüst	NED	158.615
<b>2</b>	Olga Graf	RUS	161.315
<b>3</b>	Yvonne Nauta	NED	162.488

## Men's 1500m

<b>1</b>	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:46.12
= <b>2</b>	Bart Swings	BEL	1:46.47
= <b>2</b>	Koen Verweij	NED	1:46.47

## Men's 10,000m

<b>1</b>	Jan Blokhuijsen	NED	13:13.93
<b>2</b>	Denis Yuskov	RUS	13:17.84
<b>3</b>	Koen Verweij	NED	13:19.12

## Final classification

<b>1</b>	Koen Verweij	NED	149.365
<b>2</b>	Jan Blokhuijsen	NED	149.600
<b>3</b>	Denis Yuskov	RUS	150.030

For details of the Essent ISU World Cup, including complete results see [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org) .

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