

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77 E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

Event 6 of 6

For immediate release: 14 March 2014

Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final – Heerenveen (NED) **Day 1 Friday**

Ireen Wüst (NED) and Shani Davis (USA) won the World Cups for the Ladies 1500m and the Men's 1000m respectively on the first day of the Essent ISU World Cup Final at the Thialf Stadion in Heerenveen on Friday. With only the 20 best skaters at each distance taking part, Francesca Lollobrigida won the Ladies' Mass Start and Bob de Vries (NED) the Men's, though that finished in chaos. There were no personal bests or track records on Friday.

Wüst won the 1500m, as expected, and thus secured the World Cup. In the penultimate pair, Lotte van Beek (NED) beat Julia Skokova (RUS) with a strong race, winning by more than a second and a half. With a 25.49 opening, followed by laps of 28.1, 29.3 and 31.4, she crossed the finish line in 1:54.47. Skokova, finishing in 1:56.14, was also faster than everybody before her. Then Wüst and Brittany Bowe (USA) skated and Bowe started hardly faster than Van Beek, with Wüst a tenth of a second slower. Both recorded a 28.1 first lap, but Bowe continued with 30.1 and 32.7 to finish just outside the podium; Wüst continued with 29.1 and 30.8 for the second best time ever skated in Thialf of 1:53.68. Thus Wüst won the World Cup with 530 points, Van Beek passed Bowe to take second place in the rankings with 430 and Bowe finished third with 389.

Wüst said: "I had not expected such a fast time when I saw the times of the skaters in the first pairs, but then I felt the ice and it felt very good and Lotte skated 1:54. So then I gave it my all. I will not race the 3000 because on the road to the World Allround title one has to make choices. So in Inzell I skipped the 1000 and here I will skip the 3000. The World Cup to me is part of my training. Knowing I could win the 1500m World Cup title gave me just a bit of extra motivation."

In the Men's 1000m Davis had already secured the title last week but gave it everything in Thialf once again. In the first pair Mark Tuitert (NED) skated the last 1000m of his career and finished in a strong 1:09.33. This time stood up even to the test of Olympic champion Stefan Groothuis (NED), until in pair seven Denny Morrison (CAN) skated another good race. He was the only one to skate a 25.2 first lap, finishing in 1:08.91. Kjeld Nuis (NED) could not match Morrison's time and dropped behind him in the rankings, but his 1:09.25 was faster than Tuitert.

Nuis passed Brian Hansen (USA), who did not skate well after being ill on Wednesday. Michel Mulder (NED) went out very fast against Davis in the final pair, his first lap was good with 41.86, but the 1000 seemed one lap too far for him and he finished seventh in 1:09.53. Davis finished well, in 1:09.13, taking silver on the day. In the rankings Davis won with 590 points, far ahead of Morrison, who jumped from sixth to second with 344 points. Nuis gained enough points (305) to kick Mulder (300) off the final podium place.

Nuis said: "It was all I could do, with the competitions that I missed. I am happy to rank this high in the final standings. I won last year, but this year Davis had too many points."

Morrison said: "The field was very tight so I knew I could climb a few places. I had a good feeling on my blades. I began the season slightly injured, but who knows, this might have helped me now."

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77 E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

Davis said: "This is my distance. It is just the right distance for me. As a child I raced 800m pack-style races, and I joked that one day I would be Olympic champion in the 1000m. I am happy with being good at the 1000 and 1500 as they are the most competitive distances. I like to be consistent in them. I have been really blessed with my body, and as long as my heart is in it I will continue skating."

In the Ladies' Mass Start, Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA) won well ahead of Irene Schouten (NED) and Ivanie Blondin (CAN). Last week's winner, Claudia Pechstein (GER), tried to move to the front of the pack on the inside but found herself locked in. With her win, the multiple inline world champion from Italy claimed 200 points, Schouten followed with 190 and Janneke Ensing (NED), second last week and now fifth, finished third with 155 points.

The Mass Start for the Men was unusual, and in the end nobody understood why Bram Smallenbroek (AUT) got a bronze medal. Two skaters lapped the pack: Bob de Vries (NED) escaped and Maarten Swings (BEL) went with him. It didn't take long before they had half a lap advantage on the pack, and the pack with Bart Swings (BEL) at the head slowed down waiting to be lapped. In the traditional marathon competition, that would mean that the pack would sprint for third place and the two skaters would get two extra laps to sprint for the win. And so nobody in the pack realised they were signing their own death certificates by allowing themselves to be lapped.

Afterwards they found that Mass Start differs from marathon, with the rules stating: "Competitors being lapped will be ranked according to the order by which they have been lapped". And when the pack was lapped, two laps before the end, the time at the last finish line passage counted, even though none of the skaters had thought the order at that point was important. That is how Smallenbroek got bronze, and Swings was fourth, ahead of Arjen Stroetinga (NED).

In the final ranking Bob de Vries won with 220 points, followed by Stroetinga with 175 and then Bob Swings with 170 points, ahead of his brother Maarten. Even the jury agreed that the rules need to be improved. De Vries said: "It doesn't matter for me because it was clear that I was the winner. If nobody knows the rules, they should not be applied. I am happy with my win, but I would rather have more skaters in the race, to have a better competition, and more laps, to have more a tactical race, not a pure speed item."

Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final - Heerenveen (NED) - Medal Winners Day 1

1500m Ladies

1	Ireen Wüst	NED	1:53.68
2	Lotte van Beek	NED	1:54.47
3	Julia Skokova	RUS	1:56.14

1000m Men

1	Denny Morrison	CAN	1:08.91
2	Shani Davis	USA	1:09.13
3	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:09.25

Mass Start Ladies

1	Francesca Lollobrigida	ITA	
2	Irene Schouten	NED	

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

3	Janneke Ensing	NED	
----------	----------------	-----	--

Mass Start Men

1	Bob de Vries	NED	
2	Bart Swings	FRA	
3	Bram Smallenbroek	NED	

World Cup Final Ranking

1500m Ladies

1	Ireen Wüst	NED	530
2	Lotte van Beek	NED	430
3	Brittany Bowe	USA	389

1000m Men

1	Shani Davis	USA	590
2	Denny Morrison	CAN	344
3	Kjeld Nuis	NED	305

Mass Start Ladies

1	Francesca Lollobrigida	ITA	200
2	Mariska Huisman	NED	190
3	Janneke Ensing	NED	155

Mass Start Men

1	Bob de Vries	NED	220
2	Arjan Stroetinga	NED	175
3	Bart Swings	BEL	170

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

Selina Vanier, ISU Communications Coordinator

Tel: +41 21 612 66 66

Fax: +41 21 612 66 77

E-mail: vanier@isu.ch