

# 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](mailto:info@isu.ch)

Event 6 of 6

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## **Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final – Heerenveen (NED) Day 3**

The Essent ISU World Cup Final concluded at the Thialf Stadion, Heerenveen on Sunday with American skaters Heather Richardson and Shani Davis winning the Ladies and Men's Grand World Cup titles. The second 500m for Ladies, the 5000m for Men, the 1000m for Ladies and the second 500m for men were followed by the Ladies' Team Pursuit and there were two track records, in the 1000m and in the Team Pursuit.

For the third year in the history of the World Cup speed skating series a special prize from Essent and US\$20,000 was awarded to the lady and the man who had accumulated the highest number of points throughout the season to be crowned Grand World Cup winner. For each competition in the individual distances the top five ranked competitors earned Grand World Cup points, and the overall honours went to Richardson and Davis with 108.25 and 95.50 points respectively.

### **500m Ladies**

This was the last race for Jenny Wolf (GER), who won the World Cup over this distance for six years in a row from 2006 to 2011. She skated in the penultimate pair, with Nao Kodaira (JPN), and although she has opened faster in the past her 10.37sec opener was still the second fastest. She followed it with a strong 27.6 lap, leading to a time of 38.00, exactly one second outside her personal best, skated at Salt Lake City in December 2009, a time that stood as the world record until January 2012.

She had skated her first world record in March 2007 but now, aged 35, Wolf says she is looking forward to the future. "I was nervous because I wanted to go out with a good race. It went super. I am a bit sad, but the joy prevails. As a child I had never dreamed of the career I had. On 1 June my husband and I will move to Canada [Toronto] for a year as he got a job there."

Her 38.00 was good enough for the podium, but not quite enough for her 50th World Cup win. Olga Fatkulina took the victory, beating Richardson in the last pair. The two were level on points after Saturday's racing, and on Sunday Fatkulina opened in 10.50. Richardson clocked 10.61 but Fatkulina never gave up the lead, crossing the finish line in 37.86 and raising her hands. Richardson, with 38.05, conceded second place to Wolf.

Richardson said: "I can't feel sad that I lost. I am actually happy with second place. The 500 wasn't my distance, and it was only because Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) and Beixing Wang (CHN) weren't skating last week that I climbed up the rankings, but honestly I don't know what rank I was in. After what happened at the Olympic Games I am just happy to finish strongly."

Fatkulina said: "I have no particular love for the 500 above the 1000 or the other way around. I think I am better this year in the 500m because the older ladies like Wolf weren't so strong this year. And of course I should thank Lee for not starting this week and last."

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## 5000m Men

The 5000m had to make do without its Olympic champion, Sven Kramer (NED), who underwent surgery on his respiratory tract last week. The Dutch, who dominated this distance at the Olympics, were still represented by Sochi silver and bronze medalists Jan Blokhuijsen and Jorrit Bergsma, the Olympic 10,000m champion. Bob de Jong, the Olympic 10,000m bronze medalist, withdrew on Saturday with a viral infection.

With Kramer (300 points) and Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR, 230 points) not skating, Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR), who was fourth in the rankings on 225 points, had a good opportunity. He was paired with Bergsma, and in order to finish second overall ahead of Kramer, the Norwegian needed a place among the top four, with Patrick Beckert (GER) finishing behind him. Beckert had a good race, each lap slightly faster than the previous one, finishing in 6:25.30. It was a time that was within Lunde Pedersen's reach, but the Norwegian was just not his normal self.

He saw Bergsma skate away from him with mid-29sec laps towards an eventual time of 6:13.80. Two laps before the end Lunde Pedersen was still faster than Beckert, but with two weak laps he finished in 6:27.08. Behind Bergsma, Blokhuijsen took the silver with 6:19.03 and the bronze went to Aleksandr Rumyantsev (RUS), the first podium finish of his career with a time of 6:25.06. He said: "This is my second year of work with coach Marchetto and I hope I can continue working with him. It means hard work with good results."

Bergsma of course won the World Cup for a second time with 500 points, Beckert finished second with 311 and Kramer third with 300. Lunde Pedersen, fourth with 265, was disappointed: "Something is wrong with my body," he said. "I got sick at the end of last weekend and I have to find out what is wrong, I can't lose shape that much. My goal was 6:20, which should be possible with the shape I was in, but my legs got stiff after two laps. It is strange and frustrating."

Beckert said he knew he had a chance to move up to second place: "I am more or less equal with Sverre Lunde Pedersen, and this time it fell my way. I wanted to skate an even race and am happy with how it worked out." Bergsma said: "I knew that I simply had to finish in order to win the Cup, but it is nice to finish the season well in a full Thialf Stadion. I was easily doing laps of 29.5 and so that was the pace I kept."

## 1000m Ladies

In the absence of Olympic champion Hong Zhang (CHN), Sochi silver medalist Ireen Wüst (NED) won in a new track record time of 1:14.63, beating the old mark of 1:15.01. Margot Boer (NED), bronze medalist in Sochi, also dipped below 1:15 with 1:14.92. However, the top two skaters in the overall World Cup rankings are both from the USA, with Richardson leading from Brittany Bowe (USA), and that didn't change even though Bowe was the faster on Sunday. She finished fourth in 1:15.10, just behind Lotte van Beek (NED) who had clocked 1:15.09. Richardson finished in fifth while Fatkulina was only ninth. It was enough for Richardson to win the World Cup with 555 points, ahead of Bowe who had 500 and Fatkulina with 352 points.

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Bowe said: "I gave it my all, I am disappointed that I am not on the podium in this race, but I am happy the season is over." Boer added: "It was super, I am not sharp in the opener, but otherwise I enjoyed the skate and am happy with such a good finish to a beautiful season." Wüst, who now heads to the World Allround Speed Skating Championships here next weekend, said: "I thought 1:14.8 was possible today, but 1:14.6 is pretty much below the old track record. Everything seems to be going my way. I am really in shape, and I have to be careful to keep it until next week. I have to spend a lot of time on my bed. All my colleagues are teasing me that they can go home, but next week I want to have my party to make them jealous."

## 500m Men

The battle between the twin brothers Michel and Ronald Mulder (NED) over 500m was the highlight of the day. Due to his sixth place on Saturday Michel Mulder was the first of the brothers to race, and this time he went below 35sec, clocking 34.94 with an opening of 9.69. Nico Ihle (GER) skated well again, as he had on Saturday, this time finishing in 35.01, just faster than Gilmore Junio (CAN) who skated 35.07.

Then came Ronald Mulder, paired with Jan Smeeckens (NED), the two men opening fractionally faster than Michel Mulder in 9.65 and 9.68 respectively. Smeeckens, who like Michel Mulder started in the outer lane, was able to skate towards Ronald Mulder going into the last turn and took the victory in 34.78. Ronald finished in 34.89, however, which was faster than his brother and his second place gave the Olympic bronze medalist the overall World Cup title; his brother's third place gave the Olympic champion second place in the World Cup while Smeeckens, silver medalist in Sochi, moved past the absent Tae-Bum Mo (KOR) to take the final World Cup podium place.

Michel Mulder said: "It went a bit better today, but it still doesn't come as easy as it did in January and February. Now I really appreciate that I won everything when I was in good shape, but being a bit less good I can still finish on the podium. I think Ronald deserved to win, he even skipped the races in Berlin and I was everywhere."

Ronald Mulder said: "That was fantastic. I knew I had to be very fast today, knowing Michel. When I woke up this morning I realised I would not often have the chance to win the World Cup. I had a consistent season, seven podium finishes out of 10 starts with three wins, more than anyone else. Still, I was really bad at the World Sprints and considering how bad I was in January I was really happy with how the Games went. Even if [Tae Bum] Mo had been here today I am sure he would have had a pretty tough time."

## Team Pursuit

The Team Pursuit was won by the Olympic champions, the Dutch, who improved the track record to 2:59.65 (without Wüst this time). Sochi silver medalists Poland were second again in 3:01.45. The Japanese, fourth in Sochi, took third place with 3:04.38, keeping the Canadians (3:04.81) behind them. The Dutch won the World Cup with 450 points, Poland were second on 315 and Japan third with 285.

The Allround skaters will stay in Heerenveen for the World Allround Championships next weekend, 22-23 March.

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## Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final - Heerenveen (NED) - Medal Winners Day 3

### 500m Ladies

1	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	37.86
2	Jenny Wolf	GER	38.00
3	Heather Richardson	USA	38.04

### 5000m Men

1	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	6:13.80
2	Jan Blokhuijsen	NED	6:19.03
3	Aleksandr Rumyantsev	RUS	6:25.06

### 1000m Ladies

1	Ireen Wüst	NED	1:14.63 TR
2	Margot Boer	NED	1:14.92
3	Lotte van Beek	NED	1:15.09

### 500m Men

1	Jan Smeeckens	NED	34.78
2	Ronald Mulder	NED	34.89
3	Michel Mulder	NED	34.94

### Team Pursuit Ladies

1	L. van Beek / M. Leenstra / L. de Vries	NED	2:59.65 TR
2	K. Bachleda-Curus / N. Czerwonka / L. Zlotkowska	POL	3:01.45
3	A. Kikuchi / M. Tabata / N. Takagi	JPN	3:04.38

## World Cup Final Rankings

### 500m Ladies

1	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	960
2	Heather Richardson	USA	915
3	Jenny Wolf	GER	803

### 5000/10,000m Men

1	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	500
2	Patrick Beckert	GER	311
3	Sven Kramer	NED	300

### 1000m Ladies

1	Heather Richardson	USA	555
2	Brittany Bowe	USA	500
3	Olga Fatkulina	RUS	352

### 500m Men

1	Ronald Mulder	NED	782
2	Michel Mulder	NED	728
3	Jan Smeeckens	NED	655

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## Team Pursuit Ladies

1	The Netherlands	NED	450
2	Poland	POL	315
3	Japan	JPN	285

## Grand World Cup Ladies

1	Heather Richardson	USA	108.25
2	Ireen Wüst	NED	99
3	Brittany Bowe	USA	82.5

## Grand World Cup Men

1	Shani Davis	USA	95.5
2	Koen Verweij	NED	67.5
3	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	50

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