

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships – Seoul (KOR) Day 1

Heather Richardson-Bergsma (USA) and Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) lead the classification after day one of the 47th World Sprint Championships in Seoul, but the battle is far from over. Jorien ter Mors (NED) put the pressure on Richardson beating her in the 1000m, and Kjeld Nuis (Ned) did the exact same thing to Kulizhnikov in the men's tournament.

Two times second equals first for Richardson

Richardson-Bergsma thanked her top-rank to second places in the 500m and the 1000m on the first day. Ter Mors and Brittany Bowe (USA) are second and third in the classification.

Nao Kodaira (JPN) set a strong 38.30 in the fourth last pair of the 500m. The Japanese lady held the best time when Richardson-Bergsma took the ice in the next race. The American skated 38.24 to beat her. Bowe and Ter Mors were due up in the penultimate 500m race.

Bowe had been sick due to food poisoning only two days ago. "She's good for racing and keeps focusing on the things you normally would do", professional coach Desly Hill said. Even after Ter Mors had a false start the defending champion kept her focus. She didn't manage to reach the 500m podium,

but skated a competitive 38.34 for fifth place. Ter Mors struggled after her start and had to settle for sixth place in 38.54. "I had many misstrokes in the beginning and only started skating after 200m, then 500m becomes a very short distance," she said.

Kodaira eventually had to settle for third place in the 500m, because Hong Zhang (CHN) skated 38.11 to win the first distance, with Richardson-Bergsma 0.13 seconds adrift.

Track records in ladies' 1000m

In the 1000m Zhang faced Marrit Leenstra (NED), who was seventh in the 500m. The Chinese Olympic Champion managed to stay close to the Dutchwoman until the final 200 meters. Leenstra needed a little over a second to pass Zhang in the classification, and she managed to do just that with a new track record in 1:16.18. Zhang had to settle for 1:17.23, sixth place in the distance and fifth in the classification.

Richardson and Ter Mors faced each other in the next pair, with the American taking an early lead. Ter Mors trusted on her stamina and eventually managed to catch Richardson in the final lap. She smashed Leenstra's new track record reaching 1:15.09. Richardson hung in and finished 0.28 adrift to edge out Ter Mors by 0.16 in the classification.

In the next pair Bowe stopped the clock at 1:15.51 to set the third time of the day in the 1000m, but she came three hundredths short to stay ahead of Ter Mors in the classification. The defending champion is third with Leenstra 0.62 behind Bowe in fourth.

Superb Kulizhnikov in 500m

Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) leads the men's classification after day one, but Kjeld Nuis (NED)

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handed the Russian something to think about with a superior 1000m. Nuis is second in the classification at 0.235 from Kulizhnikov and Nico Ihle (GER) is third at 0.43.

Kulizhnikov blew away the field with a superb 500m. Before he took the ice in the penultimate pair Korea's Tae-Yun Kim had set the fastest time on home ice with 35.01 in the 11th pair. Kulizhnikov was the first to beat the 35 second mark in a new track record time of 34.76.

In the final pair Kai Verbij (NED) and Mika Poutala (FIN) also beat the 35 second barrier, but they did not come close to Kulizhnikov. Verbij managed to keep Poutala at bay for second place in the distance with 34.94 versus 34.95.

Nuis hits back in 1000m

Kjeld Nuis only finished fourteenth with 35.29 in the 500m. The Dutchman hit back in the 1000m. In the final pair he faced Kulizhnikov. With an outer lane start he knew he had to take a distinct lead before entering the final outer turn and that's exactly what he did. "It felt great to be in the lead at 600m and think 'catch me if you can'. I felt really strong", Nuis said. He finished in a track record time of 1:09.28 beating Kulizhnikov by 0.59. The Russian kept his lead in the classification, with a 0.235 gap over Nuis.

Nuis and Kulizhnikov were the only ones to beat the 1:10 mark in the 1000m, but Ihle came very close. The German skated 1:10.15 in the sixth last pair and his time stood until the Dutchman and the Russian took the ice in the final race of the day. Ihle had come fifth in the 500m with 35.05 and his strong 1000m took him to the third place in the classification. Verbij finished sixth in the 1000m (1:10.45) and dropped to fourth place in the ranking. Tae-Yun Kim is fifth and Poutala sixth.

ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships – Seoul (KOR)

Day1 - Results

Ladies 500m

1	Hong Zhang	CHN	38.11
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	38.24
3	Nao Kodaira	JPN	38.30

Ladies 1000m

1	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:15.09 TR
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	1:15.37
3	Brittany Bowe	USA	1:15.51

Men 500m

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.76 TR
2	Kai Verbij	NED	34.94
3	Mika Poutala	FIN	34.95

Men 1000m

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:09.28 TR
2	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	1:09.87
3	Nico Ihle	GER	1:10.15

Classification after Day 1 - Ladies

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1	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	38.24 (2)	1:15.37 (2)	75.925
2	Jorien ter Mors	NED	38.54 (6)	1:15.09 (1) TR	76.085
3	Brittany Bowe	USA	38.34 (5)	1:15.51 (3)	76.095

Classification after Day 1 - Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.76 (1) TR	1:09.87 (2)	69.695
2	Kjeld Nuis	NED	35.29 (14)	1:09.28 (1) TR	69.930
3	Nico Ihle	GER	35.05 (5)	1:10.15 (3)	70.125

Additional information

[ISU Speed Skating Media Guide](#)

Results: <http://www.isureports.eu/>

Live Stream on [ISU Skating Channel](#) NB: geoblocking may be required in certain territories

Twitter: [@ISU_Speed](#)

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