

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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**Press release**

**Heerenveen, December 9, 2016**

## **ISU Speed Skating World Cup Heerenveen Day 1 #WCSpeed**

Nao Kodaira took her fourth 500m World Cup win this season and Ruslan Murashov won his second 500m win on the first day of the ISU Speed Skating World Cup in Heerenveen. Japan and Norway won the Ladies' and Men's Team Pursuit.

### **Kodaira still unbeaten**

Nao Kodaira is still undefeated in 500m World Cup races this season. After having won the first three races in Harbin and Nagano and skipping the Astana leg last week, the 30-year-old Japanese lady took gold again in Heerenveen.

Kodaira was paired to World and Olympic Champion Sang-Hwa Lee in the penultimate pair and both Ladies opened fast in 10.4. Entering the first turn from the outer lane, Lee lost balance a little. Although she managed to stay on her feet, Kodaira was long gone to clock 37.69. Lee crossed the line in 38.33 to end up ninth. Jing Yu (CHN) and Kodaira's compatriot Maki Tsuji grabbed silver and bronze in the final pair. Yu set 37.81 and Tsuji 37.97.

Kodaira has had the best season start of her career/ "I just go. Maybe the others are not super fit", she explained after her race. "It would be great to still be on top in February." The Japanese sprinter was happy with the new Thialf Ice rink: "It's very beautiful. If I would have had allround legs, I would love to skate here all day, but I have sprinter's legs unfortunately"

Despite coming second, Yu retained the World Cup lead after last's weeks double 500m victory. She collected 452 points. Kodaira climbed to 2<sup>nd</sup> place with 400 points and Tsuji is third with 395.

### **Murashov takes back-to-back 500m gold**

Ruslan Murashov continued where he left off last week. After winning the second 500m race in Astana, the 23-year-old Russian also took gold in the shortest distance on Day 1 of the Heerenveen World Cup. Poland's Artur Waś took silver and US skater Mitchell Whitmore grabbed bronze.

The first ten skaters were all faster than 35 seconds, but no one came close to Michel Mulder's 2013 track record of 34.31. The Olympic Champion himself skated 35.35 to come fourth in the in the B Division. Murashov's winning time in the A Division was 34.50.

Despite finishing 0.29 seconds adrift, Waś was still confident that he will beat either Murashov or his compatriot Kulizhnikov in the near future. "Nobody's unbeatable", he said. "I did not skate a perfect race. The competition is so tight, it's all open." Waś skated in the third pair versus Korea's Jun-Ho Kim, who crashed out of the race at the start. The Polish skater was not distracted and rushed to the line in 34.79 after a 9.64 opener.

"My first goal was to make the qualifying time for the World Championships", he said. "My second goal was to be on the podium and a bonus goal was to skate my fastest opener." The Polish sprinter had skipped the first two World Cup events of this season in Harbin and Nagano.

**Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed**

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“I’m not the guy who handles long flights very well”, he explained.

Whitmore set 34.81 to take bronze in the sixth pair. He defeated Olympic bronze medalist Ronald Mulder, who finished in 35.16 to end up 17<sup>th</sup>. Pavel Kulizhnikov and Dai Dai Ntab, who led the World Cup ranking heading into the race, could not match Whitmore’s time in the final pair. The Russian set 34.93 to finish 6<sup>th</sup> and the Dutchman took 12<sup>th</sup> place in 35.01.

Despite coming sixth Kulizhnikov retained the lead in the 500m World Cup with 425 points. Murashov is second with 305 points and Ntab third with 248 points.

## Japan wins after Dutch crash

After having won in Astana last week, the Japanese ladies took their second World Cup win of the season in Heerenveen on Friday. Miho Takagi, Ayano Sato and Nana Takagi clocked 2:59.51 to confidently beat Germany in the penultimate pairing. The German ladies (Gabriele Hirschbichler, Roxanne Dufter, Isabell Ost) took silver in 3:02.47, and Poland (Katarzyna Wozniak, Natalia Czerwonka, Katarzyna Bachleda-Curus) grabbed bronze in 3:03.50.

The Netherlands, who had won the first two World Cup races this season, finished ninth after a Linda de Vries crash. Marrit Leenstra and Ireen Wüst waited and the Dutch Ladies finished in 3:38.15.

Japan’s Dutch coach Johan de Wit thought that the Dutch ladies might have won, if they would not have had a crash. “We were not as fast as last week. We did not have our strongest team because of an injury.” De Wit said there were no secrets to Japan’s success this season. “We work hard, we train hard and if you do that, success will come automatically.”

Netherlands stayed on top of the World Cup ranking with 310 points. Japan climbed to second with 280 points. Russia, who came fourth in Heerenveen also have 280 points. Russia is third because they did not win a race and Japan did.

## Norway take Team Pursuit win

Norway took their season’s first victory in the Men’s Mass Start. Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen, Sindre Henriksen clocked 3:42.43 to beat Canada in the penultimate pairing. The Netherlands, who did not skate in their strongest lineup, without Sven Kramer and Jorrit Bergsma, took silver. Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries, Patrick Roest set 3:43.04 in the final pair versus Japan, who ended up fourth in 3:43.76. Italy ((Nicola Tumolero, Michele Malfatti, Luca Stefani) took bronze in 3:43.53.

The Men’s Mass start was incident prone with Emery Lehman crashing for the USA in the first pair. His teammates waited, but they skated only 4:01.83. Despite the disappointing result, USA did not end up last, because the Russian team did not finish after a crash.

The Netherlands stayed on top of the World Cup rankings with 280 points. Norway is second with 270 points and Japan is third with the same amount of points.

## Team Pursuit Men

1	Norway (Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen, Sindre Henriksen)	NOR	3:42.43
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2	Netherlands (Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries, Patrick Roest)	NED	3:43.04
3	Italy (Nicola Tumolero, Michele Malfatti, Luca Stefani)	ITA	3:43.53

For full results of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isuresults.eu/> and <http://www.isu.org/en/speed-skating/series/isu-world-cup-speed-skating>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Heerenveen (NED) continues tomorrow with the Ladies' and Men's 1500m, the Men's and Ladies' Team Sprint and the Ladies' and Men's Mass Start Finals.

## About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2016/17 Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating circuit consists of six events across Asia and Europe. The series starts in Harbin (CHN) on November 11-13 and moves to Nagano (JPN) on November 18-20. In December the Series goes to Europe stopping in Astana (KAZ) on December 2-4 and to Heerenveen (NED) on December 9-11. On January 27-19 2017 the fifth leg of the event will be in Berlin (GER) and the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will take place in Chelyabinsk (RUS) on March 10-12. The full ISU Calendar of Events is available here:

<http://www.isu.org/en/news-and-events/calendar-of-events>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series is available as a live stream on the ISU Skating Channel. Please note that geoblocking may be required in certain territories

<http://livemanager.eurovision.edgesuite.net/isu/index.html>

## ISU World Cup Speed Skating Heerenveen (NED) medalists

### 500m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	37.69
2	Jing Yu	CHN	37.81
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	37.97

### 500m Men

1	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	34.50
2	Artur Waś	POL	34.79
3	Mitchell Whitmore	USA	34.81

### Team Pursuit Ladies

1	Japan (Miho Takagi, Ayano Sato, Nana Takagi)	JPN	2:59.51
2	Germany (Gabriele Hirschbichler, Roxanne Dufter, Isabell Ost)	GER	3:02.47
3	Poland (Katarzyna Wozniak, Natalia Czerwonka, Katarzyna Bachleda-Curus)	POL	3:03.50

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## Team Pursuit Men

1	Norway (Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen, Sindre Henriksen)	NOR	3:42.43
2	Netherlands (Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries, Patrick Roest)	NED	3:43.04
3	Italy (Nicola Tumolero, Michele Malfatti, Luca Stefani)	ITA	3:43.53

## World Cup Ranking

### 500m Ladies

1	Jing Yu	CHN	452
2	Nao Kodaira	JPN	400
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	395

### 500m Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	425
2	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	305
3	Dai Dai Ntab	NED	248

### Team Pursuit Ladies

1	Netherlands	NED	310
2	Japan	JPN	280
3	Russia	RUS	280

### Team Pursuit Men

1	Netherlands	NED	280
2	Norway	NOR	270
3	Japan	JPN	270