

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

Astana, December 3, 2016

ISU Speed Skating World Cup Astana Day 2 #WCSpeed

All three individual distances on day 2 of the ISU Speed Skating World Cup in Astana got first time winners. Dutchman Dai Dai Ntab took his maiden victory in the men's 500m, Japanese Miho Takagi did the same in the Ladies' 1000m, as did Canadian Vincent De Haitre in the Men's 1000m.

Track record and maiden win for Ntab

Ntab surprised himself and the world's sprint elite with his career first World Cup gold. With 34.52, the 22-year-old Dutchman not only crushed his personal best (34.96), he also beat Pavel Kulizhnikov's 2015 track record (34.56). The Russian World Champion finished third in 34.61, with compatriot Ruslan Murashov in second place with 34.57.

Ntab opened with 9.54 on the first straight. Only Polish Artur Was (9.51) and China's Tingyu Gao (9.52) were faster in the first 100m. Ntab was able to pull through with 24.9 in the full lap, whereas Was and Gao clocked 25.1 and 25.2 respectively. Was ended up fourth in 34.62 and Gao fifth in 34.72. Apart from Ntab only Murashov and Kulizhnikov managed a 24.9 full lap. The Russians lost too much time in their first straight however. Murashov opened in 9.63 and Kulizhnikov in 9.70.

Kulizhnikov, who has only won one 500m World Cup race yet this season, still leads the World Cup standings with 300 points. Min Kyu Cha (KOR), who finished seventh, is second with 180 points and Mika Poutala (FIN), who came eighth, is third with 176 points. Ntab climbed to fifth place with 167 points.

Takagi follows Ntab's example

After Ntab's maiden World Cup win in the Men's 500m, Miho Takagi took her first individual World Cup Gold in the Ladies' 1000m. The 22-year old Japanese skater clocked 1:15.25 to beat Dutch Jorien ter Mors (1:15.36) and Marrit Leenstra 1:15.82). The first three Ladies were the only ones to beat the 1:16 barrier, but they did not come close to Brittany Bowe's 2015 track record (1.14,10).

The injured Bowe was still absent in Kazakhstan. Her compatriot Heather Bergsma (USA), who won the first two 1000m races of this World Cup season, skipped the Astana World Cup. Japanese Nao Kodaira, who took a silver and a bronze in the first to World Cup legs, was absent too.

Without the top ranked skaters in the World Ranking, Jorien ter Mors seemed first in line to take gold. The 1000m World Champion, who announced that she would give up on short-track to fully focus on long track after having competed in both disciplines for the past seasons, skated in the first pair.

Ter Mors' time of 1:15.36 stood on top until Takagi and Leenstra took the ice in the final pair. Both Takagi and Leenstra were slower at the 600m split. Takagi was the only skater of the field to finish with a sub-29 second lap to beat Ter Mors in extremis. Leenstra was slower than Ter

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Mors in the final lap, but easily kept Olga Fatkulina at bay with 1:15.82). The Russian skater finished fourth in 1:16.31.

Takagi took over the 1000m World Cup lead with 230 points. Bergsma is second with 200 points and Leenstra third with 186 points.

De Haitre celebrates first win too

Another event, another debut winner. In the Men's 1000m Vincent De Haitre handed Canada its first season World Cup win, when he celebrated his career first individual World Cup gold.

Pavel Kulizhnikov took silver and Takuro Oda (JPN) grabbed his career first podium place with the bronze.

The 24-year-old Oda took on Shani Davis in the fourth pair. The 34-year-old American was a little behind his Japanese opponent and tried to chase his prey in the final lap, only to come 0.03 short. Davis clocked 1:09.09 and ended up in fifth place. Oda's 1:09.06 was equaled by Nico Ihle, but the German was 0.007 slower and had to settle for fourth place.

De Haitre, who also represents Canada in track cycling, was the first skater to beat the 1:09 barrier, when he defeated Joey Mantia in the second last pair. The American finished in 1:09.28 to end up seventh.

Kulizhnikov had to skate alone in the final pair, because Kai Verbij (NED) got injured in his 500m race. The Russian, who had finished third in the first two 1000m races this season, was faster than De Haitre at the 200m and the 600m split, but could not match the Canadian's 26.9 final lap. Kulizhnikov crossed the line in 1:08.99.

Kulizhnikov did push Kjeld Nuis from the top rank in the 1000m World Cup classification. The Russian collected 220 points in three races, whereas Nuis, who was absent in Astana, took 200 points from two races. De Haitre climbed to third place with 190 points.

Team Pursuit track record for Japanese Ladies

Miho Takagi, Nana Takagi and Misaki Oshigiri handed Japan a sovereign Team Pursuit victory. Japan was the only team to beat the three-minute-barrier, when they crossed the line in 2:57.75 to beat Canada's 2012 track record (2.58,40).

The Netherlands, who had won the first two World Cup races this season, could not field their strongest line-up with Ireen Wüst absent, and they struggled from the start. Linda de Vries had difficulties to catch up with Marrit Leenstra and Antoinette de Jong in the first lap and the Dutch girls never found a good rhythm. Russia's Natalia Voronina, Yelizaveta Kazelina and Olga Graf stayed close behind, but the Dutch managed to hold on to a small lead. With 3:02.53 the Netherlands was 0.25 faster than Russia. Poland came fourth in 3:03.58.

The Netherlands retained their World Cup lead with 280 points, ahead of Russia with 220 points and Japan with 180 points.

Japan also wins Men's Team Pursuit

The Japanese men followed their female compatriots' example, when they won the Team Pursuit. Shota Nakamura, Ryosuke Tsuchiya, Shane Williamson clocked 3:44.10. Canada (Ted-Jan Bloemen, Jordan Belchos, Denny Morrison) took silver in 3:44.95 and Poland (Konrad Niedzwiedzki, Jan Szymanski, Zbigniew Bródka) grabbed bronze in 3:45.04.

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Ted-Jan Bloemen was Canada's engine, but Denny Morrison, who suffered a stroke following a motor cycle accident in April, proved to be back on track. Poland's Konrad Niedzwiedzki also suffered a traffic accident over the summer. He celebrated his comeback with the bronze medal in Astana.

The Netherlands were less happy. After missing the bus to the ice rink, Jan Blokhuijsen, Evert Hoolwerf and Arjen Stroetinga did not have a proper preparation for the Team Pursuit race. The Dutch, who with a complete different line-up, had won the first two World Cup races this season, were behind Korea halfway the race in the final pair when Hoolwerf crashed out. Korea finished in 3:45.10 to take fourth place.

Japan and Korea both collected 220 points from the first three races and surpassed the Netherlands in the World Cup ranking. The Dutch are third with 200 points.

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

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series continues tomorrow with the second Ladies' and Men's 500m, the Ladies' and Men's 1500m and the Ladies' and Men's Mass Start events.

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>

For further information please contact:

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ISU World Cup Speed Skating Astana (KAZ) medalists

500m Men

1	Dai Dai Ntab	NED	34.52 TR PB
2	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	34.57
3	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.61

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1000m Ladies

1	Miho Takagi	JPN	1:15.25
2	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:15.36
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:15.82

1000m Men

1	Vincent De Haitre	CAN	1:08.90
2	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	1:08.99
3	Takuro Oda	JPN	1:09.06 PB

Team Pursuit Ladies

1	Japan (Miho Takagi, Misaki Oshigiri, Nana Takagi)	JPN	2:57.75 TR
2	Netherlands (Marrit Leenstra, Linda de Vries, Antoinette de Jong)	NED	3:02.53
3	Russia (Natalia Voronina, Yelizaveta Kazelina, Olga Graf)	RUS	3:02.78

Team Pursuit Men

1	Japan (Shota Nakamura, Ryosuke Tsuchiya, Shane Williamson)	JPN	3:44.10
2	Canada (Ted-Jan Bloemen, Jordan Belchos, Denny Morrison)	CAN	3:44.95
3	Poland (Konrad Niedzwiedzki, Jan Szymanski, Zbigniew Bródka)	POL	3:45.04