

## Press release

11 November 2017

---

### **Yuskov (RUS) super in 1500m, Japan dominates Ladies events**

Denis Yuskov (RUS) showed blistering form in the Men's 1500m to take gold in 1 minute, 44.42 seconds, while Japan dominated the Ladies events again with three gold medals at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Heerenveen on Saturday. Nao Kodaira (JPN) took her second 500m gold of the weekend, Miho Takagi (JPN) won the Ladies 1500m and Ayano Sato (JPN) clinched gold in the Ladies Mass Start.

#### **Yuskov (RUS) aims for more**

Yuskov was the only man to break the 1:45 barrier in Heerenveen, clocking 1 minute 44.42 seconds in the men's 1500m. Vincent De Haitre (CAN) was more than a second slower to claim silver (1:45.87), with Thomas Krol (NED) taking bronze in 1:45.92.

If he can take his form into the Calgary and Salt Lake City World Cups, Yuskov might get close to the 1500m world record of 1:41.04 set by Shani Davis (USA) in Salt Lake City in 2009. "Yes, I'm thinking of it and hoping for it. But this is sport, not every day is the same."

Yuskov has been training with Koen Verweij (NED) for the past couple of months. The Dutchman finished fourth in 1:46.09 in the first World Cup race of the season. "He skated the team pursuit yesterday, so that may have affected his performance," Yuskov said.

The Russian considers Verweij to be a major opponent this season and enjoys training with the Dutchman: "It was a very interesting experience to train with him and my motivation is bigger right now. I think it's the same for Koen. It's a good experience for the both of us."

Bronze medal winner Krol was self-critical of his own race versus winner Yuskov. "I was a bit sloppy and I didn't do well tactically. After this morning training I thought the ice was very fast and I decided to hold back a little in the opening. That appeared to be a mistake because I had less speed than Yuskov, and then catching up cost me too much energy."

#### **Another maiden victory in Men's 500m**

After Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR) the second men's 500m ended with another first-timer on the top spot of the podium at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Heerenveen on Saturday. Laurent Dubreuil (CAN) took his maiden individual World Cup victory in 34.80 seconds. Jan Smeekens (NED), who was promoted to the A Group after winning the B Group on Friday, took silver in 34.84s and Ronald Mulder (NED) came third in 34.85s.



Dubreuil skated his winning race in the second pairing and, just like Lorentzen the day before, the Canadian had to sit through many races before he knew that the gold was ultimately his. Jan Smeekens, who had to start the World Cup season in the B Group on Friday because he came only fifth in the Dutch National Championships, got close in the fifth pairing, but the reigning World Champion fell 0.04s short.

He was satisfied to be back at the highest level: "I don't feel like I'm too good for the B Group, but I'm happy to be back of course. I was not angry or something, it's my own fault, I should have been better at the National Championships."

### **Kodaria (JPN) reigns 500m**

Nao Kodaira (JPN) confidently won the second Ladies 500m in 37.33 seconds. The World Champion was 0.04 seconds slower than she was on Friday, and the gap between her and the rest of the field was a bit smaller (0.2s). Silver medalist Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) finished in 37.53s and Arisa Go (JPN) was third in 37.88s.

On Friday the gap between winner Kodaira and runner-up Lee had been 0.31s. Although Lee got closer, Kodaira feels that she is far ahead. "My biggest opponent? That's myself," she said.

Kodaira dominated the 500m last season, winning the World Cup and the World title. She believes she has become even better this year. "I trained with the boys in the summer. That was very good for my speed", she said.

Where will that speed carry her, with World Cups at high-altitude tracks in Calgary and Salt Lake City coming up in a couple of weeks? "A world record? I hope so. I have to stay calm and focus on good skating."

### **Japan on top again in Ladies 1500m**

Miho Takagi (JPN) handed Japan gold in the Ladies 1500m. She was the only skater to break the 1 minute, 55-second-barrier, finishing in 1:54.68s. The Dutch ladies completed the podium line-up, with Jorien ter Mors (NED) taking silver in 1:55.44s and Lotte van Beek (NED) grabbing bronze in 1:56.34s.

Takagi could not explain what the secret of the Japanese ladies is. "Ask Johan," she joked, referring to Japan coach Johan de Wit (NED).

Jorien ter Mors was happy with her performance: "It was OK, not super but I'm satisfied," she said. "I suffered from a back injury last week and I was not able to train for three days, so this is quite good."

Ter Mors was not worried about the Japanese ladies being way ahead of the field at the moment: "We don't have to be top just yet. It's the Olympic Games that count."



# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17 - CH 1006 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND  
PHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 FAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL [media@isu.ch](mailto:media@isu.ch)

Takagi, for her part, was not worried about decline towards February, when the Games open in PyeongChang, Republic of Korea: “I had an almost perfect race, but there’s still room for improvement,” the 23-year-old said. “We just keep on working and getting better every race.”

## **Asian dominance in Mass Start events**

While Ayano Sato (JPN) claimed the fifth Japanese gold medal of the weekend so far in the Ladies tournament, winning the Mass Start event, Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR) topped the podium in the Men’s Mass Start.

Reigning World Cup Champion Lee started the defence of his title confidently. The Korean beat World Champion Joey Mantia (USA) with a strong sprint to the line on the final straight. Lee’s compatriot, Jaewon Chung, took the bronze medal.

The Korean team did not have specific race tactics, according to Lee, who said: “We get along quite well but we don’t do anything special. What helps me a lot in the race is my background in Short Track. I use a lot of Short Track techniques in the Mass Start event.”

Lee had come 20th – and last – in the 1500m A Group earlier on Saturday. “I was unhappy with that race and this makes up for my bad 1500m,” the 29-year-old said.

Like the men’s race, the Ladies Mass Start ended up in a bunch sprint.

Ivanie Blondin (CAN) entered the final lap in pole position and stayed in front until the closing straight.

Sato – who was part of Japan’s winning team pursuit quartet yesterday – managed to beat the Canadian by four hundredths of a second in an extremely difficult situation.

Francesca Lollobrigida, of Italy, finished third to take the bronze medal.

Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#WCSpeedSkating** and **#SpeedSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

## **For further information please contact:**

Selina Vanier

ISU Communications Coordinator

[media@isu.ch](mailto:media@isu.ch)

Tel: +41 21 612 66 66

## **About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2017/18 Series**

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating is a series of international Speed Skating competitions which takes place annually. The Series started in 1984 and usually consists of six or seven events including the ISU World Cup



# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17 - CH 1006 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND  
PHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 FAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL [media@isu.ch](mailto:media@isu.ch)

Speed Skating Final. Skaters can earn points at each competition, and the skater who has the most points on a given distance at the end of the series is the World Cup winner of that distance. Skaters also cumulate Grand World Cup points each time they compete in a distance. During the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final, the Lady and the Man with the most Grand World Cup points is crowned the Grand World Cup winner.

The results on the individual distances in the World Cup ranking are the main qualifying method for the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships.

A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season, for Men: 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, combined 5000 m / 10000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint. For Ladies 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, the combined 3000 m / 5000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint.