



Press release

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Kodaira bounces back from crash, Yuskov superfast in 1500m

After crashing in the 1000m on Saturday, [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) hit back with a personal-best 36.53 seconds to grab gold in the 500m at the Calgary Olympic Oval on Sunday. [Denis Yuskov](#) (RUS) won the men's 1500m in the second fastest time ever, while [Miho Takagi](#) grabbed the ladies' 1500m gold in a Japanese national record. [Alex Boisvert-Lacroix](#) (CAN) won the men's 500m.

[Claudia Pechstein](#) (GER) and [Andrea Giovannini](#) (ITA) won the mass start races with impressive solo finishes.

Kodaira bounces back

Nao Kodaira took the ice in the ladies' 500m in the final pair against world record holder and Olympic champion [Sang-Hwa Lee](#) (KOR).

Kodaira had the fastest opener of the field (10.19 seconds) and coming from the inner corner, she had a big gap over Lee on the back stretch.

Lee had opened in 10.35 seconds and was unable to catch Kodaira in the final inner corner, finishing in 36.86 seconds to take silver.

Kodaira enjoyed the race, although she was still suffering from her 1000m crash.

"I had a little pain in my neck, but that did not really matter," she said. "Today I skated like a sort of a robot-cat. But it still is a personal best so that's good.

"Now I'm going to enjoy the podium and then there's always a new challenge."

Sang-Hwa Lee's 2013 world record is 36.36 seconds. Will Kodaira be able to break that next week in Salt Lake City?

"I don't know. First I have to get rid of my neck pain and then we'll see."

Kodaira and Lee were the only ones to break the 37-second barrier in Calgary. [Arisa Go](#) (JPN) took bronze in 37.06, breaking her own personal best by 0.64 seconds.

It was Go's second career podium in the World Cup after her bronze medal in Heerenveen last month.

"I experience the sport in a different way emotionally," Go explained, referring to her improvement on last season.

"I've also become stronger physically. After this summer's training, my body was completely different."



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With a perfect record of five wins and 500 points, Kodaira leads the 500m World Cup standings. Lee is second with 350 points and Vanessa Herzog (AUT) third with 285. The Austrian finished fifth in a personal best of 37.30 in Calgary.

Second fastest 1500m time ever for Yuskov

[Denis Yuskov](#) (RUS) won his second 1500m gold of this World Cup season. The Russian clocked the second fastest 1500m time in speed skating history, finishing in 1 minute 41.33 seconds. Dutchmen [Koen Verweij](#) and [Kjeld Nuis](#) took the silver and bronze.

Yuskov faced Verweij in the eighth pairing. They train together and know each other well. Verweij started faster and was slightly in front all the way to the 1100m mark.

In the final lap, Yuskov pulled off a 26.8-second lap time against 27.5 for Verweij, who finished in a new Netherlands national record of 1:41.95.

Verweij was disappointed not to win but happy with his performance.

“I skated faster than I ever did and that’s unknown territory,” he said. “My speed comes easy and that’s good against an opponent like him.

“It was good until the final 200 metres. In the corner I lost my technique, that’s the fighter in me. It’s trying too hard but I need to control my technique better.”

Verweij considers Yuskov the stronger 1500m skater but feels he is closing the gap.

“I was very close until that last corner but he’s better at the moment. Looking back on my own race, I see a lot of things to improve, in the final lap, but the penultimate lap can still go faster, too.”

Yuskov was only 0.29 seconds away from [Shani Davis](#)’ (USA) 2009 Salt Lake City world record.

Like Yuskov, Verweij does not know whether he will skate the 1500m at next week’s World Cup in Salt Lake City.

“There could be an opportunity for a world record,” Verweij said.

“But I have to focus on being at my top level at the Olympic Games in February and the [Dutch] Olympic qualification tournament later this month.”

Kjeld Nuis clocked 1:42.27 for the bronze medal in the fourth pairing against [Konrad Niedzwiedzki](#) (POL), who ended up 14th in 1:44.48.

Yuskov’s victory enable him to grab the lead in the World Cup standings with 200 points, ahead of [Joey Mantia](#) (USA) on 190 and Verweij with 172 points. Mantia finished fourth in 1:42.54 in Calgary.



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Takagi (JPN) takes third consecutive 1500m gold

[Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) posted her third consecutive 1500m World Cup victory, her winning time of 1 minute 51.79 seconds breaking the Japanese national record by more than two seconds. [Marrit Leenstra](#) (NLD) took silver in a Dutch national record and [Yekaterina Shikhova](#) clinched bronze in a Russian national record.

Leenstra was the first skater to break the 1:53 barrier in Calgary on Sunday. With 1:52.06 she shaved 0.02 seconds off [Ireen Wüst](#)'s 2013 Dutch record in the fourth pairing.

Wüst skated in the seventh pair. She matched Leenstra's pace early but had to give way after the 700m mark and finished in 1:53.89 to take fourth place.

Shikhova clocked 1:53.52 in the sixth pairing, breaking [Yuliya Skokova](#)'s 2013 Russian record of 1:53.87 in the process. Skokova herself had to settle for 1:54.66 and sixth place.

With only Leenstra under 1:53, World Cup leader Takagi took the ice against [Lotte van Beek](#) (NED) in the final pairing.

The Japanese skater headed Van Beek straight away but was slightly behind Leenstra's time at the 700m and 1100m marks. Takagi was the only one to manage a final sub-30-second lap, however, and that was enough for gold.

With 1:51.79 she crushed [Misaki Oshigiri](#)'s 2015 Japanese record of: 1.54.10.

Despite losing by a small margin, Leenstra was satisfied with her performance

"I often felt that I could do better and now I'm very happy that I finally managed to skate a very good race again.

"Last week it really looked as if she [Takagi] was way better than the rest, but now you see that I can be very close if I skate well."

With three wins and 300 points, Takagi leads the 1500m World Cup standings. Van Beek, who came 15th in Calgary, is second with 154 points and [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED), who was seventh in Calgary, is third with 126.

Boisvert-Lacroix (CAN) takes 500m gold amid thrills and spills

[Alex Boisvert-Lacroix](#) (CAN) took gold on home ice in a tumultuous 500m in Calgary on Sunday. [Min-Kyu Cha](#) (KOR) grabbed silver and [Mika Poutala](#) (FIN) bronze.

Boisvert-Lacroix, skating in the third pairing, finished in 34.31 seconds, only 0.01 short of his personal best.



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In the fourth pairing, [Ryohei Haga](#) (JPN) crashed when coming from the inner corner. Sliding towards the boards, he took down [Ruslan Murashov](#) (RUS). The Russian was allowed to skate again but his 34.72 took him no further than 18th place.

In the sixth pairing, [Gilmore Junio](#) (CAN) was leading his race against [Nico Ihle](#) (GER) when he slipped and went down in the final straight.

Ihle, who had difficulties himself in the final inner corner, managed to avoid Junio, but his 34.86 brought him a disappointing 17th place.

Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR), who came fifth in 34.47, stays on top of the World Cup standings with 331 points.

Ronald Mulder (NED), who came fourth in Calgary in 34.43, retained second spot with 306 points, and Hein Otterspeer (NED) is third on 260 points after taking 10th place on Sunday in 34.53.

Pechstein (GER) leaves pack trailing in mass start

After her 5000m gold in Stavanger two weeks ago, veteran [Claudia Pechstein](#) (GER) claimed another World Cup victory when she crossed the line first in the mass start in Calgary on Sunday.

Pechstein took advantage of indecision in the pack when no one wanted to sacrifice their chances in a chase of the escapees.

[Saskia Alusalu](#) (EST) had attacked early on, and halfway through the race, Pechstein, [Mia Manganello](#) (USA) and [Elena Moeller-Rigas](#) (DEN) joined her in front.

In the pack, [Ivanie Blondin](#) (CAN) made an effort to organize a chase together with teammate Keri Morrison, but no one else cooperated and the Canadian efforts came to nothing.

Up front, Pechstein increased the pace heading into the final lap to jump away from her fellow escapees. She maintained the gap to finish half a second ahead of Moeller-Rigas, who took silver.

[Nana Takagi](#) (JPN) grabbed the bronze, overtaking Alusalu on the final straight. Manganello dropped back further and eventually had to settle for sixth place.

“I thought I’d try something,” Pechstein said.

“I know that I cannot win the sprint, so I tried an escape, together with Mia and Elena. We worked together well. It’s a pity for Mia that she couldn’t get a medal, too, but that’s racing.

“It’s incredible to grab another gold aged 45, but everyone can win a mass start when they don’t work together in the pack. They waited too long.”

[Ayano Sato](#) (JPN), who finished 10th in Calgary, retains the World Cup lead with 128 points, ahead of [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) on 120 points and Pechstein with 120.



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Giovannini also exploits indecisive pack

In the men's mass start, the pack also waited too long and [Andrea Giovannini](#) (ITA) took advantage.

The Italian took gold with a 5.31-second advantage over [Reyon Kay](#) from New Zealand. [Hongli Wang](#) (CHN) collected the bronze just behind Kay, while the bunch finished more than 17 seconds behind the winner.

Giovannini attacked with six laps to go. Kay and Wang were the only ones to react but they could not stay with him to the line.

With four laps remaining Giovannini was so far ahead, he could see the back of the bunch on the straights. He easily stayed out of sight, as did Kay and Wang.

Kay took the overall lead in the World Cup men's mass start. The New Zealander has collected 120 points in two races to date. [Seung-Hoon Lee](#)(KOR), who came 13th in Calgary, is second with 118 points and [Joey Mantia](#) (USA) third on 112.

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:

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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 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 accumulate 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.