

December 16, 2018

Heerenveen, Netherlands

Dutch delight as Krol takes career first World Cup gold and Wüst breaks own track record

Thomas Krol (NED) took his career first World Cup win in the Men's 1500m and his compatriot Ireen Wüst took gold in the Ladies' 1500m in a new track record at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Heerenveen on Saturday.

Krol surprises himself

[Thomas Krol](#) (NED) surprised himself and the rest of the world when he stopped the clock at 1:43.78 in the fifth pairing of the men's 1500m. [Joey Mantia](#) (USA) had already set 1:44.09 in the fourth pairing and none of the remaining 10 skaters was able to match Krol or Mantia. [Patrick Roest](#) (NED) came closest with 1:44.12 in the seventh pairing to take the bronze medal.

"1:43 is a very special time here in Thialf," Krol said afterwards. "This morning I would not have thought this was possible.

"I felt that I was very fast from the start. Normally the coaches don't show me the lap times because I always skate the 1500m as if it's a sprint, flat out from the start until I'm totally worn out at the end. For me those lap times have no added value like for an allrounder, who would be able to accelerate, I'm struggling towards the end anyway. But this time the coaches showed me the lap times for my morale.

"I did not expect to be this fast, because we trained for the Dutch championships at the end of the year. I tested new things and I skated on new shoes, so this time really comes as a surprise."

[Denis Yuskov](#) (RUS), who had won the two previous World Cup 1500m races he skated this season, came fourth in 1:44.61 and Olympic champion [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) was fifth in 1:44.62.

Despite finishing 11th in 1:45.23 [Seitaro Ichinohe](#) (JPN) retained the lead in the World Cup ranking, with 167 points. Yuskov is second with 163 points and Nuis third with 154.

Kulizhnikov wins again in 500m

[Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) won his fourth 500m World Cup race of the season. The world record holder had to skate alone, because pair mate [Kai Verbij](#) (NED) pulled out with a groin injury at the last moment.

Kulizhnikov still managed to clock 34.49.

"Maybe I could have been faster if I would have had a race opponent, but I don't know what would have been possible," he said afterward

Japan's [Tsubasa Hasegawa](#) (34.52) and [Yuma Murakami](#) (34.55) took silver and bronze respectively.

[Tatsuya Shinhama](#) (JPN) finished fourth in 34.64 and retained the lead in the World Cup with 339 points. [Kulizhnikov](#) is second with 332 points and [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR), who finished ninth on Saturday, is third with 292 points.

Rep. Korean double in Mass Start

In the Men's Mass Start [Cheonho Um](#) (KOR) and [Jae-Won Chung](#) (KOR) took gold and silver respectively with a perfect team effort in the final lap. The Korean duo took advantage of [Bart Swings](#) (BEL), who started his attack early, but had to settle for bronze.

Swings said: "I took the lead with 700m to go and I heard a lot of things at my back so I expected others to overtake. When I saw that nobody overtook me, I held back a little and I went flat out with 500m to go.

"The Koreans are experienced in short-track and they really know how to skate sharp turns at high speed. They passed me on the inside. Luckily enough, no one else did."

Um kept the lead in the Mass Start World Cup with 475 points. Swings is second with 430 and [Ruslan Zakharov](#) (RUS), who came fourth in Heerenveen, is third with 366 points.

Wüst enjoys sensation of speed

"This sensation of speed feels really good," [Ireen Wüst](#) (NED) said after she shaved 0.01 seconds off her five-year-old 1500m track record in Heerenveen. "After Obihiro, Tomakomai and Tomaszów, Heerenveen feels like you're skating in (the fast high altitude track of) Salt Lake City."

The Olympic 1500m champion clocked 1:53.30 to win gold. She had not expected to be this fast so early in the season.

"This (track record) comes as a pleasant surprise for me. After having skated on slow rinks for four weeks, it's a nice feeling to come home like this.

"I hadn't seen this record coming, but it gives me a lot of confidence on my way to the greater goals this year, which is the 1500m world record."

[Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) took silver in 1:54.00 and [Yekaterina Shikhova](#) (RUS) clinched the bronze medal in 1:54.03. [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) had to settle for fourth place in 1:54.37.

Wüst took over the 1500m World Cup lead from Takagi. The Dutchwoman has collected 217 points in the first four races. Takagi is second with 211 points and Bowe third with 210 points.

Herzog closes in on Kodaira

With 10.33 seconds [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) opened a little slower than she had done when she set the previous 500m track record last year, but with 26.8 she was faster in her full lap. Her 37.17 finish was 0.12 faster than her 2017 record.

[Vanesse Herzog](#) (AUT) was also faster than Kodaira's previous track record when she clocked 37.23 in the final pairing versus [Angelina Golikova](#) (RUS). After winning twice in Kodaira's absence last week in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, the Austrian had to settle for silver again, but she felt satisfied to be closing in on the Olympic Champion, despite having had a difficult week in the run-up to Heerenveen.

"I had the flu last week, so I had to take two days off in training, but in the end it did not bother me too much," Herzog said.

"This race was almost perfect. I improved my opener and my full lap is even a tenth faster than hers (Kodaira). She opened in 10.3 and I did 10.45. I have to be stable with a 10.4 opener."

[Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) took bronze in 37.70 and [Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS) fourth in 37.79. Kodaira climbed to fourth in the World Cup ranking with 300 points. The top three stayed the same with Herzog (390) on top, Fatkulina (315) in second and Bowe (305) in third.

Takagi reigns in Mass Start

[Nana Takagi](#) (JPN) took her second World Cup win of the season in the Mass Start. The Olympic Champion kept [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) at bay in a chaotic final sprint. [Bo-Reum Kim](#) (KOR), who had been leading the World Cup rankings, crashed on the final straight. [Ayano Sato](#) (JPN) and [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) came third and fourth.

[Claudia Pechstein](#) (GER) tried to escape from the pack twice during the race, but she did not manage to put herself out of reach. [Melissa Wijfje](#) (NED) controlled the pack and kept everything together to set up teammate Schouten for the final sprint, but Schouten was not able to finish the job.

"I tried something else than normal," Schouten said.

"Usually I am more in front heading into the final lap, but now I decided to come from behind. Because of that I was enclosed in a group with people all around and it was hard to accelerate."

Whether she would have won with a different tactic, Schouten could not tell, but she paid her respects to Takagi.

"When she won the Olympic title, it was her first Mass Start win and I did not really regard her as the best, but now that she's won these World Cup races this year. She really is the best at the moment."

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit: isu.org/speed-skating. Results are [here](#) and you can follow the discussion on social media by using #WCspeedSkating and #SpeedSkating.

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series will be available on in some countries on the ISU Skating Channel.

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 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. The World Cup Competitions held from November to December serve as qualifying events for entry quotas at the ISU European, World Single Distances, World Sprint and World Allround Speed Skating Championships. A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season; For Men: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, combined 5000m / 10,000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For Ladies 500m, 1000m, 1500m, the combined 3000m / 5000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For further information please visit isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating.