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Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

Voronina and Kulizhnikov blow away rivals

On the last 10 occasions it has been contested, [Martina Sáblíková](#) (CZE) has won the Ladies' 5000m title at the ISU World Single Distances Championships, so when she clocked a world record over the distance on Saturday in Salt Lake City, it seemed only a miracle could keep her from claiming an 11th consecutive gold. That miracle went by the name of [Natalya Voronina](#). After Sáblíková's 6:41.18, the 25-year-old Russian broke the 6:40 barrier with 6:39.02 to seize her first major international title. In the 1000m 21-year-old [Jutta Leerdam](#) grabbed her first world title, and the first individual gold for the Netherlands, three days into the tournament.

In the men's 1000m [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) left the rest of the field shattered. The fastest man ever in the 500m broke the 1:06 barrier in the double sprint distance to add another world record to his tally. The man whose mark he beat, [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED), conceded more than a second to take silver. Canada's [Laurent Dubreuil](#) earned bronze after [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) was disqualified. To conclude Saturday's action, the Netherlands won their seventh consecutive Men's Team Pursuit title in a world-record time, with Japan coming second to grab their first ever world championships medal in this event.

Ladies' 5000m: Records tumble as Sáblíková bows to Voronina

After her victory in Thursday's 3000m, the great [Martina Sáblíková](#) faced [Esmee Visser](#) (NED) in the fourth of six pairs in Saturday's 5000m.

The Czech superstar set out at world-record pace and never let up. With 6:41.18 she overhauled her own March 2019 mark of 6:42.01.

The last world record in a classic distance that was skated at the 1988 Calgary Olympic Oval had moved to Salt Lake City, underlining the Utah Olympic Oval's claim of having 'the fastest ice on the planet'.

"My race was optimal," Sáblíková said. "Every lap was the same [time], I'm very satisfied."

Satisfied or not, the 10-time world champion in the 5000m still had to hand over her title to Russia's flying [Natalya Voronina](#).

After Canadian duo [Ivanie Blondin](#) and [Isabelle Weidemann](#) had not been able to match the fresh world's-best time, Voronina took on [Marina Zueva](#) of Belarus in the final pair.

Despite having seen numerous skaters wearing themselves out too early in the endurance races over the first two days of the tournament, the Russian set out even faster than Sáblíková had done and maintained her incredible pace to take gold in a world-record time of 6:39.02.

"If you don't take any risks, you'll never win," her proud coach Pawel Abratkiewicz (POL) said afterwards.

"She was third in last Thursday's 3000m and had taken bronze medals in the 3000 and the 5000m previously. I said to her: 'your time will come', and there it is."

Voronina was confident she would not blow out before the end of the race, as so many had before her.

"When I saw 30.1 after my first full lap I knew that it was fast," she said. "But the speed came easy so I thought I could keep it up."

"I did not realize that I was faster than Martina. It was only when my coach shouted that I was 2.5 seconds faster after 4600m, that I knew it could be a world record. I thought, 'if I don't fall, the title is mine'."

Sáblíková was the first to congratulate Voronina after the race.

"This was an incredible competition. I was going to lose this title sooner or later and I'm very happy for her [Voronina]," the 32-year-old said.

"I told her that she's my hero. She skated under 6:40. I've tried to do that five times before and never managed."

Visser, who had followed Sáblíková at a distance in the fourth pairing, took bronze in 6:46.68.

Unlike the top two on the podium, the Olympic champion was not able to pull off a personal best.

"I was not able to coordinate my feet well. It's not the legs it's something in the coordination of my lower legs," she said. "I don't know why."

"This season has been mediocre for me. I'm going to have to look into it. The gap [towards silver and gold] is just too big."

Ladies' 1000m: Leerdam's golden month goes on

It's been a good few weeks for young Dutch skater [Jutta Leerdam](#).

Having won the European 1000m title on home ice in Heerenveen in January, and played a part in the Netherlands' Team Sprint gold here on Thursday, the 21-year-old added a first individual world title to her resumé.

The five-time silver medal winner in the 2018 World Junior Championships was the only one who finished below 1:12 at the Utah Olympic Oval on Saturday, stopping the clock at 1:11.84.

[Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS) took silver in a personal best 1:12.33 while [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) finished 0.01 seconds slower to come third.

Fatkulina, who also took bronze in Friday's 500m, last won an individual title at the World Single Distances Championships in 2013 when she took gold in the 1000m.

The 30-year-old Russian was disappointed not to repeat that feat in 2020 but admitted that watching Leerdam brought back some fond memories.

"I think I can skate at world-record level, but today it just was not good enough," she said.

"Leerdam's a young and very talented skater. She seems to be a very emotional girl, which reminds me of the skater I was when I was 20 years old."

The Dutch champion was honored by the comparison.

"I've got to admit that I haven't seen Fatkulina as a young skater. I was very young at the time and I played field hockey. I only started skating when I was 11," she said.

"But I know what results Fatkulina has set in the past, so I consider [that comparison] to be a real compliment."

On a day of multiple world-record times on the Salt Lake City ice, Leerdam fell just 0.23 seconds short of [Brittany Bowe](#)'s (USA) leading time of 1.11.61.

"I could have skated [the world record] today," she said. "The race went well, but there was a mishap entering one of the corners. If I had done that better... but hey, we've got to save something for the future."

Men's 1000m: Calm Kulizhnikov can't be topped

Last week [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) predicted a sub-1:06 time in the 1000m, but the combination of pure power and cool composure with which the Russian rocket pulled it off stunned the crowd in Salt Lake City anyway.

With the almost-inconceivable sequence of a 16.17 opener followed by 24.19 and 25.33 laps, the Russian stopped the clock at a rub-your-eyes 1:05.69.

Kulizhnikov was in the fourth pair on the ice, skating before the other favorites entered the rink, and none of the others was able to even come close.

[Kjeld Nuis](#) finished more than a second down in 1:06.73, [Thomas Krol](#) posted 1:06.74 and [Laurent Dubreuil](#) clocked 1:06.76.

"Maybe it [the time gap] was because I skated before the others. It could be a mental thing," Kulizhnikov said.

Nuis, who surrendered the world record he set on this ice little more than 12 months ago, did not skate a perfect race.

"I was too eager at the start," he said. "I missed every stroke in the opener, it's a real shame. I only started skating after 200m. The last two laps were good, but when you start those laps 1.5 km/h slower, there's just no chance.

"But [even if the opener had been better] I would have skated 1:06.2 or something. It would not have made any difference. Pavel [Kulizhnikov] is in a league of his own."

Krol finished third fastest, but was disqualified after swerving out of the inner corner and hindering his pair-mate [Viktor Mushtakov](#) (RUS).

"I have to respect the result, but I skated that time. I'm gutted," Krol said.

As a result of Krol's calamity, Dubreuil stepped up to the podium. The Canadian admitted he sympathized with his Dutch rival, having been disqualified himself after having set the fastest time with [Gilmore Junio](#) and [Antoine Gélinas-Beaulieu](#) in the Team Sprint on Thursday.

"I feel for Thomas," Dubreuil said. "I was there two days ago and it was not a fun day after that. Thomas is an amazing skater and I hope he bounces back and wins tomorrow in the 1500m.

"Nonetheless, I'm happy about my race... more than half-a-second off my personal best. I skated maybe the best race of my life and I got lucky as well.

"If you told me before the race I could get a 1:06.7 I would have said 'yes, where do I sign?'. But after seeing my start 16.2, my first lap 24.2, I knew I had a shot and with a bit of draft off Kai [pair mate [Kai Verbij](#), NED], I knew it was going to be my best last lap as well."

Men's Team Pursuit: Dutch dominate despite Roest withdrawal

With substitute [Marcel Bosker](#) stepping in for [Patrick Roest](#), the Dutch trio that also included [Sven Kramer](#) and [Douwe de Vries](#) finished the Men's Team Pursuit with a world record 3:34.68 and a seventh successive world title.

Japan's [Seitaro Ichinohe](#), [Riku Tsuchiya](#) and [Shane Williamson](#) finished in 3:36.41 to take silver.

With their first-ever medal in the Team Pursuit the Japanese men follow in the footsteps of their female compatriots, who have dominated this event over recent years and retained their title in world-record time on Friday.

Russia's [Aleksandr Rumyantsev](#), [Danila Semerikov](#) and [Sergey Trofimov](#) repeated last year's bronze medal in 3:37.24.

"This was a race by the book," De Vries said, despite the Dutch skating in a different line-up to the one they had planned.

National coach Jan Coopmans (NED) had decided to field reserve Bosker on Saturday morning, following Roest's disappointing displays in the 5000m and the 10000m.

"We discussed it last night, and this morning I looked Patrick in the eye and I thought we just shouldn't do this to him, nor should we do it to the team."

It is a sign of the strength in depth within the Dutch team that the loss of such a high-profile figure did not derail their plans.

"It's a pity for Patrick," Bosker said. "But I'm grateful for the chance to skate a world record here."

Kramer said: "It's the national coach who takes that decision, but we all agreed. We all like each other just the same and I'm glad it's the coach who has the final word, so we skaters can look each other straight in the eye."

"We have four good skaters in the team. Unfortunately, only three can skate but all four have the ability to skate a world record."

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Single Distance Speed Skating Championships please visit the [Championships Page](#) on ISU.org. Click [here for results](#).

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About ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships 2020

The ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships consists of single distance races. The 2020 Championships take place in Salt Lake City (USA). The Ladies will compete in the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m and 5000m, Team Sprint, Team Pursuit and Mass Start race over 16 laps. The Men's competitions are the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 5000m, 10000m, Team Sprint, Team Pursuit and Mass start race over 16 laps.