

January 24, 2021

Heerenveen, Netherlands

Track records and maiden gold wrap up World Cup #1 at Heerenveen Hub

[Brittany Bowe](#) (USA), [Femke Kok](#) (NED) and [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) each collected their second gold medal from the first leg of the 2020/2021 World Cup series in Heerenveen, with the latter breaking the 3000m track record. In the men's competition [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) doubled up on Saturday's 1500m gold, winning the 1000m on Sunday, while compatriot [Patrick Roest](#) (NED) smashed his own track record in the 5000m and Russian youngster [Artem Arefyev](#) won his first individual World Cup gold in the 500m.

Historic medal for Kok after eventful 500m

Kok had hoped to beat the 37-second barrier after equaling her personal best of 37.08 on Saturday, but the stars didn't align on Sunday. Dione Voskamp (NED) and [Daria Kachanova](#) (RUS) crashed before Kok faced [Vanessa Herzog](#) in the penultimate pairing, and the Austrian fell in the first 50 meters.

"Those crashes in the run-up caused a little delay, which interferes with the preparation and when Herzog also crashed I thought, oh shit," explained Kok. "I had prepared to skate a nice crossover [drafting behind Herzog's back] and now I had to do it alone. But I'm glad how it eventually worked out and I'm very proud to be the first Dutch lady to win the 500m twice in one weekend."

With 37.27 she was a little slower than the day before, but Russians [Angelina Golikova](#) and [Olga Fatkulina](#) were unable to match it. Golikova came second in 37.30 and Fatkulina third in 37.40.

Fatkulina's preparations for her race had been disrupted when team-mate Kachanova crashed near her. "I went to Daria to make sure she was OK," said Fatkulina. "I didn't see any blood and she appeared to be all right, so I could concentrate on my own race again."

Fatkulina checked on Kachanova again after the race. "She is OK, but the doctor said we'll have to wait for tonight to see if she doesn't have a concussion."

Track record for Schouten in 3000m

After winning the Mass Start on Saturday, [Irene Schouten](#) clocked a time of 3 minutes and 57.15 seconds in the 3000m to set a new personal best and Thialf track record.

"I thought they would beat that time in the remaining pairings," said the Dutch endurance specialist, who raced in the sixth of eight pairings.

But previous track record holder [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED), who was next up, could only manage 3:58.52 and had to settle for silver. [Joy Beune](#) (NED), who had already stopped the clock in 3:58.90, took third place.

Schouten was thrilled to have put her name on the track record board in Heerenveen. "Last year I could only have dreamt about this," she said. "This is the track where all the best skaters in the world compete. When your name is up on that board, that means you can skate pretty good."

Buene's performance earned her a career second World Cup podium after a 1500m bronze in Hamar in 2019. "I was so happy with the podium, I had completely forgotten about that first one... super silly," she said.

Beune finally beat her personal best of 3:59.47, which she skated as a junior at the high altitude rink in Salt Lake in 2018. The time still stands as a junior world record. "I'm really happy with 3.58, but it's still only third so I hope to go even faster and I know I've got it in me," she said.

Bowe in happy sandwich again

"I really wanted that one," Bowe said after winning the 1000m in 1:13.60, ahead of Netherlands' [Jorien ter Mors](#) (1:13.94) and Femke Kok (1:14.07). In Saturday's 1500m Bowe had also stood between two Dutch ladies on the podium, and she joked: "I've been in the Dutch sandwich here the last two days, but I can't say I'm mad about that."

Bowe faced World and European 1000m champion [Jutta Leerdam](#) (NED) in the final pairing and came out 0.55 seconds ahead. "She's definitely the one to beat and [she's got] the target on her back," said Bowe. "I've been in my position, I've been in her position and it's not an easy position to be in. It wasn't the greatest race for her but there's no doubt in my mind that she'll bounce back from that one."

Bowe looks forward to racing again next weekend, but is really focusing on the ISU World Single Distance Championships in February. Meanwhile she enjoys living in the speed skating 'bubble'. "I don't think you'll hear any athlete complaining about hanging around in the hotel," she said. "That's what we like to do: rest hard and race hard."

Maiden victory for Arefyev

After coming ninth in Saturday's 500m, [Artem Arefyev](#) knew he could be in the mix for Sunday's 500m podium. "Yesterday I skated 34.8 with a big mistake in the second corner," he explained. "I analyzed that race and, adding it all up, I knew that I would be able to skate 34.5 or maybe even 34.4 today."

Arefyev ended up with a personal best of 34.45 seconds. Having won a World Cup Team Sprint gold a year ago, he had been focusing on an individual title. "Last year I came fourth by only a 0.01-second margin in a World Cup race, so I sort of expected to be on the podium, I just didn't know when it was going to happen," he said.

"I had not expected to win today already, but you must take into account that [Ruslan Murashov](#) (RUS) crashed today and [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) skated in the B Division [after having crashed on Saturday]."

However, Arefyev is not yet certain of a ticket for the 500m at next month's ISU World Single Distance Championships, given Russia's sprinting strength. "There are three tickets per nation and we have four top sprinters," he said, adding [Viktor Mushtakov](#), who finished seventh, to the mix.

Murashov's crash hampered his pair-mate and Saturday's silver medalist [Laurent Dubreuil](#). The Canadian was handed a re-skate, but finished 15th in 35.13.

Saturday's winner [Dai Dai Ntab](#) (NED) took silver in 34.65 and his 27-year-old compatriot [Lennart Velema](#) grabbed his career first World Cup podium and the bronze medal in 34.74.

Ntab had been cautious because he did not really trust the ice on Sunday. "It was a strange competition with so many crashes in the men's and ladies' 500m," he said. "This [hard] ice may be well-suited for the 5000m, but for sprinters it is dangerous. I had a good opener, but in the first corner my skate broke out a little, so I skated my lap more cautiously."

Roest cashes in on superb conditions

Ntab's observation about the ice's suitability for 5000m skaters was spot on. Norway's [Hallgeir Engebråten](#) had already shown how fast it was earlier when winning the B Division in 6:09.21, just one second short of the track record.

"Of course it's tough to compare the B Division times [to those in the A Division], because they have quartet starts [with more drafting advantage]," Roest said. "But after seeing that, I knew that the ice was fast and I left on a track record time schedule."

Indeed, a few laps into his race, Roest was skating way faster than the track record schedule. "It went well from the start. When I skated my [previous] track record, I slowed down a little too much after the opener. Now I managed to pick up the pace faster with 28-second laps. It's not easy, but I knew that if I could keep that up, it would lead to something beautiful."

And it did. With 6 minutes and 5.14 seconds, the fresh European Allround Champion took 3.07 seconds off his previous best on the Thialf rink. His senior team-mate [Sven Kramer](#) (NED) had to settle for silver in 6:11.80 and [Sergey Trofimov](#) (RUS) took bronze in 6:11.94.

The 25-year-old Russian, who skated in the final pairing, said he did not focus on Roest's record. "Based on what I had seen from the B-group, I knew I could skate about 6-7 seconds faster than last week at the European Championships [6:17.6], so that was my focus.

"Everyone has the same conditions and to come out third today says a lot for my chances at the World Championships."

Two out of two for Krol

[Thomas Krol](#) concluded the first World Cup weekend by adding a gold medal in the 1000m to his 1500m victory on Saturday, beating his friend [Kai Verbij](#) in a tight race. "It's great to have such an intense battle with my team-mate," he said after finishing .09 seconds ahead on 1:07.48. "I could catch him in the final corner because I had a good final lap. We pushed each other to a higher level, but my race was far from perfect today. The best thing to take away from today is that I do not need a perfect race to win."

World record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS), who like Verbij had crashed in the 500m on Saturday, took bronze in 1:07.63.

Where to Watch

Viewers will be able to watch the ISU Speed Skating competitions that will take place within the hub either via their national broadcaster / channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#).

All the information is available in the [Where to Watch](#) which will be updated after each competition. The individual announcements and entry lists will be published under the respective events as soon

as they are available. For further information regarding the ISU Speed Skating Hub please visit: <https://www.isu.org/heerenveen2021>.

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