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Beijing, China

Krol upgrades to gold in 1000m as Dubreuil thanks Verbij for 'classy move'

Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

After his 1500m silver, [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) took another step up to the podium, seizing the Olympic 1000m title in Beijing. The Dutchman finished in 1 minute 7.92s, to keep [Laurent Dubreuil](#) (CAN) 0.40s behind. The Canadian landed silver after an act of true selfless sportsmanship by Krol's long-time friend [Kai Verbij](#) (NED), who made way for Dubreuil after the pair ended up level on the final backstretch of their exhilarating race. [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR) followed up his 2018 silver with bronze at the Beijing 2022 Olympics.

Dream coming true

Before racing at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, Krol (NED) said he wanted to show his best, and during last week's 1500m he did, only to end up with a silver medal. With his 1:07.92s in the 1000m, Krol finished 0.74s outside the 2002 Olympic record, and he was less content crossing the line. But when it turned out to be good enough for gold, he couldn't care less. "In the 1500m I thought I had it, but I hadn't and now I thought I didn't have it, but I did. Maybe it wasn't the perfect race, but it was a really good solid race. And of course the gold medal is just a huge dream come true."

Long journey

Krol (NED) made his Olympic debut in Beijing at age 29. Finally having achieved what he'd always strived for, the Dutchman looked back on his long journey: "It hasn't always been easy, because this is my third attempt to go to the Olympics. Two times I failed, one time I wasn't fast enough, one time I was, but actually Kai Verbij got my place, my best friend. So that was pretty strange. I was going for revenge in the last four years, I grew as a person. I made a lot of steps mentally and physically. I became a different Skater. My new team (Krol switched commercial teams) helped me with that, and my coach (Jac Orié) has the best program in my opinion. I stepped up a level and now I can be here in the Olympics and win a gold medal, and a silver of course."

Solid race

Krol (NED) entered the rink in the third-last pair, when [Piotr Michalski](#) (POL) still had the fastest time on the board in 1:08.56s. World record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS), who hasn't had a very prolific season so far and therefore came on early in the draw, couldn't match the European 500m Champion. Skating in the sixth pair already, Kulizhnikov ended up in 11th place in 1:08.87s at his Olympic debut.

World Cup leader Krol was happy not to have drawn the final pairing "because last pair is always a little bit more nerve wracking than the earlier in the program," he said. "I knew I had to set a really fast time. I did pretty much (I) had a really solid race. I did nothing really wrong. But I expected it to be a bit faster so when I crossed the line I wasn't expecting it to be enough."

Lorentzen (NOR) only finished 0.56 behind Krol to eventually take the bronze. He explained his strategy. "After the first nine pairs I saw that everybody lost speed, so I tried to pace myself not to burn out too much energy in the first 600m and have a lot of energy to work with in the last lap. That paid off for me. It's been a while since I was this tired after a race. I almost puked watching the last pairs." He cherished the bronze, edging out Michalski by 0.08s. "I'm glad it went my way this time, I had three times fourth place in the World Championships the last three years, so really happy to be back on the podium."

No grip

Lorentzen (NOR) and Krol (NED) had to watch two nerve wracking pairs before they knew the final ranking. In the penultimate pair [Hein Otterspeer](#) (NED) blew his chances straight at the start. "My skate slipped away when I got into position for the start," he explained. "I thought of asking for a restart, but then the gun went and I just got into survival mode. But it's difficult to make pace if you don't have grip." His opponent [Ning Zhongyan](#) (CHN) didn't beat the podium times either, clocking 1:08.60s for fifth place. "I am quite satisfied with my performance," he said. "I performed better today than in the 1500m (on Tuesday when he finished seventh). I am in a better condition today. I have an advantage in the 1000m because the distance is shorter."

Verbij's classy move

[Laurent Dubreuil](#) (CAN) did make it to the podium in the final pairing, making amends for coming fourth place in his favorite 500m last Saturday. The Canadian exploded from the start taking a 0.51s margin over Krol in the opener and extending it to a 0.73 lead after a first full lap in 24.73s. His pair-mate Verbij (NED) was also 0.01s ahead of Krol at the 600m split, and as a result the two ended up level on the final backstretch. Coming from the inner lane, Verbij came upright. "At that exact moment, I knew it was over," the reigning World Champion said. "When I skated in the corner, I knew that I would end up right next to him, and I knew I had to give way. I could have tried to give a bit more speed, but I think that wouldn't have worked out, and I didn't want to mess up someone else's Olympic performance."

Dubreuil was grateful, saying: "It's unfortunate for us to be tied like this with 250m to go. My race plan was not to be there, I thought I would get right behind him and have a draft on that straight, but I went faster than I've ever gotten into 600m and I was ahead of what I would have been in my race plan." The Canadian had not had the time to speak to Verbij after the race yet: "I'm pretty sure he's disappointed. He's World Champion in the 1000m like I was in the 500m, and to not get on the podium, I know exactly how it feels. I can't say thank you enough to him. It was a really professional and classy move to do, in an Olympic race. He's a friend, so when he'll get over it, I'll give him some time, but I'll thank him for sure."

"It's just sport"

Despite Verbij (NED) giving way, Dubreuil (CAN) was not able to hold on to his lead over Krol in the excruciating final lap. He ended up 0.40s adrift in 1:08.32s, but getting silver felt like victory after his fourth place in the 500m. "It was not a fun week", he said. "But I felt like I had really good legs. If you'd told me I would win one silver and one fourth place, I would have bet on the other way round." His family back home made him to put his fourth place into perspective: "My daughter especially helped me. She is just three years old and she doesn't care about my results. Seeing her not even 1% sad after my race, when I called them, she was running around and having so much fun, running and jumping and yelling. It made me realize, it's just sport. I didn't need a medal to be happy."

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Women's Mass Start, Semifinals, 15:45 (local time)

Men's Mass Start Final, 16:30 (local time)

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