

April 10, 2022

Montreal, Canada

## **ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships - Montreal (CAN) - Review Day 2**

**Min Jeong Choi (KOR) won gold in the Women's 1000m and 3000m Super-Final on Sunday to be crowned overall champion at the 2022 ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships at the Maurice-Richard Arena, Montreal. Shaoang Liu (HUN) won gold in the Men's 1000m race, adding to his 500m and 1500m titles on Saturday, to capture the Men's overall crown.**

**Short Track Speed Skating legend Charles Hamelin (CAN) capped off his remarkable career by claiming a bronze medal in his final event, the 5000m relay, to the delight of his hometown fans.**

### **Min Jeong Choi (KOR) claims fourth overall title**

The highest heights can be a scary place. Not for [Min Jeong Choi](#) (KOR).

The decorated skater raced her way to the fourth overall title of her career at the World Short Track Speed Skating Championships on Sunday in Montreal.

Choi took gold in the 1000m and won the 3000m Super-final to clinch the crown, after starting the day second in the overall standings behind [Kim Boutin](#) (CAN). Choi won gold in the 1500m race on Saturday.

To cap it all off, Choi stormed around the final curve of the 3000m relay with an incredible move, securing gold for the Republic of Korea in a photo finish. Once again, she eclipsed Boutin, with Canada settling for silver. The Netherlands claimed bronze.

Choi's fourth overall title puts her just two behind the record six won by Yang Yang (CHN).

"I have four now. I am looking to go for more and open the door for more possible titles. I am going to try my best and get myself to always try and achieve something new," said Choi, 23.

As for her move in the relay that stunned the Canadian crowd, Choi has less of an explanation.

"It was a very unexpected moment, but I managed to cross the line first. This is the charm of Short Track skating, unexpected things happen," said Choi.

Boutin anchored the Canadian team and was also shocked by Choi's late charge. "I fought and then I finished and saw Choi on the outside and was so devastated. I was like, 'oh!' But it happens. She was strong," said Boutin.

The remarkable weekend is a form of redemption for Choi, who struggled by her own account at the Winter Olympic Games in Beijing, winning one gold and two silver medals.

"Frankly speaking, in Beijing I was not satisfied. That made me want to be a better skater and achieve more. That motivation gave me more power to skate on the ice this weekend," said Choi.

The world champion was pushed all weekend by Boutin, who performed well in front of the home crowd.

Always the bridesmaid, Boutin finished second in all five finals races in Montreal, as well as in the overall standings.

"I am pretty happy. The year was pretty strong for me. So to stay that way and get the second place just gives me the little 'ehhh' to push for the win next time," she said.

[Xandra Velzeboer](#) (NED) added to her medal tally with a bronze in the 1000m on Sunday, to go along with her gold in the 500m on Saturday. The Dutch youngster, who is only 20 years old, finished third in the overall standings.

All three medalists ended their triumphant day with a champagne shower on the podium, as Short Track legend [Charles Hamelin](#) (CAN) marked the final race of his career with a post-race ceremony.

"It was such a great honor for me to be out there with such a legendary skater at his retirement ceremony. It will be a forever memorable experience for me," said Choi.

### **'Today was special': Shaoang Liu (HUN) goes back-to-back as overall champion**

Back to back: it's the goal of every athlete attempting to defend a title at a world championships. Add [Shaoang Liu](#) (HUN) to the list of athletes who have achieved it.

Liu's dominance continued on Sunday, as he won the 1000m final at the World Short Track Speed Skating Championships in Montreal, clinching the overall title for the second year in a row.

The Hungarian won every individual race he skated on the weekend, aside from the 3000m Super-final, which took place after he had clinched first overall.

Liu made it look easy with his graceful style, always finding a way to make a late move to cross first if he sat towards the back of the pack.

But it was not as easy as it looked for the champ.

"I think (the 1000m final) was the hardest race I ever had in my life. I had to keep my head 100 percent focused. Today was special because I didn't have a good sleep or good recovery. I had to keep calm in my mind," said Liu.

As smooth as he is on the ice and as serene as he is off it, Liu is always on the move. During the event, he often could be seen running in the parking lot, pulling off wild box-jump workouts, or jogging in the underbelly of the arena between his victories on the ice.

"I put my headphones in and just put the music as loud as possible so I couldn't fall asleep. Staying focused all the time is super hard but I managed it, and that is amazing," said Liu.

The 24-year-old Hungarian was not the only previous world champion to make his mark in Montreal this weekend.

[Charles Hamelin](#) (CAN), the 2018 overall world champion, ended his storied career in front of adoring fans by leading Canada to a bronze medal in the 5000m relay. Hamelin is a legend in the sport, with 14 world championship titles and four Olympic gold medals to his name.

The hometown hero took time after his final race to skate one last lap with his young daughter in his arms, a moment that was perhaps more important than any medal.

"It means a lot to me. I was searching for that for a long time since she was born. She is a little older, but maybe she didn't understand what was happening. But I am sure she enjoyed the moment with me. It was one of the things I wanted to do, and I am glad it happened here in Montreal," said Hamelin.

Despite not going out with gold, this weekend was memorable for Hamelin.

“It is one of the best things that happened to me. The chance to finish at home, with my family in the stands, is the greatest feeling. It is almost like any Olympics I went to,” he said.

Hamelin capped his weekend with a Formula 1-style champagne shower on the podium with the Canadian, Dutch and Korean relay medalists.

It is easy to wonder if it has been nerve-wracking for Hamelin to contemplate trading the cheering crowds and thrills of victory for watching cartoons and making sandwiches as a full-time dad.

“No, I just can’t wait,” Hamelin said.

The bronze for Hamelin and the Canadians came in a thrilling relay race that saw the Korean team charge back to win over the final laps. The Netherlands took silver.

The Koreans did not have much time to build chemistry, missing key members due to Covid-19.

“I worried a lot about this relay because some of our teammates tested positive and did not come to the world championships, so we didn’t practise too much with this team. But how we did it? I don’t know, but we made it. Wow. It is a crazy day,” said [Yoon-Gy Kwak](#) (KOR), who anchored the final leg.

Kwak also took bronze in the 1000m, with teammate [June Seo Lee](#) (KOR) winning silver.

[Pascal Dion](#) (CAN) won the 3000m Super-final to clinch second place in the overall standings. Lee, who finished second in the 3000m ahead of [Sjinkie Knegt](#) (NED), was third overall.

\* Following the IOC recommendation, in order to protect the integrity of ice skating competitions and for the safety of all the participants of international ice skating competitions, the ISU Council based on Article 17.1.q) i) of the ISU Constitution, agreed that with immediate effect and until further notice, no Skaters belonging to the ISU Members in Russia (Russian Skating Union and the Figure Skating Federation of Russia) and Belarus (Skating Union of Belarus) shall be invited or allowed to participate in international ice skating Competitions including ISU Championships and other ISU Events (Full [Statement](#) to be read on ISU website).

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