

Press release

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Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Dordrecht, NED, Day 2

On a day in which four-time world champion Sjinkie Knegt (NED) sent the crowd crazy with a first Dutch victory, a number of major medal contenders for the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games flexed their muscles as the Audi ISU World Cup Short Track event in Dordrecht drew to a close.

After a number of near misses on Saturday, the home crowd finally got what they so desperately wanted when Knegt executed the perfect race strategy to power past rival and long-time leader Samuel Girard (CAN) to grab the glory in the men's 1000m. Seo Yi Ra (KOR), the 2017 ISU 1000m world champion, also showed a welcome return to form, taking bronze.

Remarkably, it was 28-year-old Knegt's first ISU World Cup triumph over 1000m.

"It's great to get my first 1000m win. I felt good the whole time and I always felt I could pass him (Girard), but everything has to be done at the right moment," he said.

In a message that will worry his rivals, the Olympic 1000m bronze medallist revealed that he expects to see plenty of improvement over the coming months.

"I didn't have quick acceleration this weekend," he said. "It was all endurance. I can definitely do much better. It will come with more racing."

Girard, the Dordrecht 500m champion, was candid in his assessment of the race, admitting that the Dutchman was "just too fast". However, the Canadian, who has looked in fine fettle all weekend, was delighted to get some practice in front of a truly partisan crowd.

"We have to get used to this kind of support with the Olympics coming up in Korea. You have to use it and get a boost from it," he said.

The Canadian men's team certainly did that in the final of the 5000m relay. After a second successive comprehensive win, the quartet of Girard, Charles Hamelin, Charle Cournoyer and Pascal Dion already look like the team to beat in PyeongChang in February.

"To stay in front on the ice, and mentally, is really important," Girard said. "It's pretty cool racing with these guys and we have to go away now and train hard and come back even stronger for the Asian legs (of the Audi ISU World Cup, in November)."

The Dutch finished a relatively distant second in the relay with the Chinese taking bronze.



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Matters are far less clear in the women's 3000m relay, with China shocking the previously unstoppable-looking Republic of Korea to claim gold in a thrilling finale.

Ladies' 1500m champion and four-time gold medal winning star of the opening World Cup event in Budapest, Choi Min Jeong (KOR), was refreshingly honest about the setback.

"We are a bit disappointed, we really focus on the relay," Choi said. "It is so frustrating. We would like to have gone a lot quicker for sure. The relay gold is a big aim for the Olympics."

For China it was a welcome first gold in the Audi ISU World Cup this season and may prove to be a springboard for further success in Shanghai and Seoul in November.

Intriguingly, the bronze medal-winning Canadian team feel they are coming to the boil at just the right moment.

"It's very satisfying, it all seems to be going the right way," Kasandra Bradette (CAN) said. "We have been training really hard to gel together on the ice and as our individual performances have got better so our team has improved."

Watch this space – the ladies' 3000m relay looks like being one of the highlights of the Olympic Games.

Sochi 2014 Olympic 3000m relay gold medallist Shim Suk Hee (KOR) was another to show a well-timed return to form. After missing out on a medal in the ladies' 1000m in Budapest, the world record holder stormed to victory in the day's opening final.

In a race featuring two inspired Dutch skaters, Shim shut out the crowd and maintained a commanding lead from the gun.

"I really enjoyed the atmosphere. I didn't let it affect me, it was great," Shim said.

In comparison, Suzanne Schulting (NED) fed off the raucous noise inside the Dordrecht arena, pushing her illustrious rival to the end.

"I love the crowds here and in Rotterdam, they are so loud, so passionate, they are amazing," said the silver medallist.

Shim's teammate Lee Yu Bin (KOR) won bronze in a photo-finish from the Netherlands' Yara van Kerkhof.

All eyes now turn to the east, with the next Audi ISU World Cup Short Track event taking place in Shanghai, China from 9-12 November, followed by 16-19 November in Seoul, Republic of Korea. If this week's extraordinary cocktail of excitement, passion and intrigue is anything to go by, bring it on.



Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#WCShortTrack** and **#ShortTrackSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

About Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating 2017/18 Series and qualification system for PyeongChang 2018

The Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating consists of four events during the Olympic season; Budapest (September 28-October 1), Dordrecht (October 5-8), Shanghai (November 9-12) and Seoul (November 16-19). The 2017/18 Series is also the Olympic Qualifying events for the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games.

The competitions have a single distance character and are held in separate sessions. The first two days of the event are dedicated to all Qualifying Rounds. On the third and fourth days the last Qualifying Rounds take place before the World Cup session. A and B Finals are held for each distance 500m, 1000m and 1500m. Skaters qualify for A and B Finals only through the Semi-Finals. Men and Ladies also compete in the Team Relay races, 3000m for Ladies and 5000m for Men. Each team consists of four competing Skaters. Skaters gain World Cup points from each distance they compete in during the Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating series. The Skater with the most World Cup points at the end of the season wins the distance World Cup.

A total of 110 Olympic spaces are up for grabs during the four Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating events. As the host country, the Republic of Korea automatically qualifies five Ladies and five Men. However, all other ISU Members must compete in the Audi ISU World Cup series in order to qualify up to five Ladies and five Men (quota including a qualified Relay Team), or up to three Ladies and three Men (quota excluding a qualified Relay Team).

Quota places per gender are earned based on the results achieved by the ISU Members competing at the four Audi ISU World Cup Events. Skaters ranked within the top 32 (top eight for the Team Relay) in the World Cup classification of the individual distances will qualify for PyeongChang 2018. If an ISU Member has more than 3 Skaters ranked in the top 32 or decides not to use a spot, skaters on the waiting list will qualify (e.g. athlete ranked 33 in a distance World Cup Classification will take the next available spot).