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Beijing, China

Choi (KOR) defends 1500m title, Hamelin (CAN) bows out with 5000m Relay gold in Beijing

Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

[Minjeong Choi](#) of Korea and the Canadian Men's Relay Team around [Charles Hamelin](#) raced to victory as the Short Track competition at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games concluded Wednesday with the Women's 1500m and Men's 5000m Relay at the Capital Indoor Stadium.

Korea was the most successful ISU member in Beijing with five medals – two gold and three silver. China, the Netherlands, Italy and Canada won four medals each, with China and the Netherlands taking two gold medals. Hungary got three, ROC two and Belgium one medal – their first Olympic Short Track medal, a bronze, earned by Hanne Desmet in the 1000m.

Choi retains Olympic 1500m title

Choi (KOR) took the gold after a strong performance during the day. [Arianna Fontana](#) of Italy added the silver to her impressive resume while Netherland's [Suzanne Schulting](#) settled for the bronze.

Choi started well into the race in the Final, but then fell to fourth place in lap four before speeding to the lead again in lap seven. The Korean star then did not let it take away from her, skating to victory confidently and defending her 1500m title from PyeongChang 2018.

"Last time in PyeongChang I wasn't experienced at all, but this time I felt I was a reigning Champion and I felt I had to keep the first place and felt the responsibility on my shoulders," Choi noted. "Before the final I made a lot of predictions of what might happen in the competition. I expected that some athletes might start sprinting at the beginning and my predictions helped me to win the race. I tried to put out a good show for the 1500m. It is a very long distance and stamina is really the key. So I made sure that I was at my best physically. That's why I was able to win."

Fontana continues to break records

Fontana started slowly and stayed at the back of the pack, waiting for her chance. It came with three laps to go when the "Blonde Arrow" came out of nowhere to take second place. Schulting was at her heels, but Fontana crossed the line before her.

The Italian added this silver to her impressive medal haul – it was her third in Beijing after gold in the 500m and silver in the Mixed Relay while Schulting (NED) pocketed her fourth medal after gold in the 1000m and 3000m Relay as well as silver in the 500m. Fontana has an 11th Olympic medal on her record and is now the Italian athlete with the most Olympic medals across all sports, winter and summer. It was Schulting's sixth Olympic medal overall.

"After the 1000m (she finished 10th), I really wanted to get on the ice today. It was the last day, I wanted to give it all on the ice," Fontana said. "I took it race by race, I was relaxed, then at the end the plan was to give everything, stay outside, make speed and whatever comes, comes. I crossed the line second." It was a very successful fifth Olympic Games for Fontana. "I did not know what was going to happen, there are a lot of good Women here, but I knew I can fight for a medal in every distance. The first step was to be in every final. I wanted to finish in a good mood today, it was pretty big how it ended. This time I got two silver and one gold, so it is better than four years ago."

Schulting (NED) shed a few tears of disappointment. "I had hoped for more. I felt super strong today. I think I felt most relaxed compared to all 1500m races I've done this season. I was very calm and could

trust how good I was today,” she explained. In the Final, she caught [Yuntong Han](#) (CHN), who sprinted ahead. “I reeled in the Chinese Han Yutong, because I knew that if I wouldn’t do it, no one would and she would go home with the gold. That was just not going to happen. So I caught up with the Chinese, I got her quickly. If you reel in the Chinese in the beginning, and you’re pushed wide later, losing all your pace, and then you still manage to only finish 0.03s outside silver, you know you could have won gold.”

[Hanne Desmet](#) (BEL) finished fourth ahead of Xandra Velzenboer (NED). Sumire Kikuchi (JPN) won the B-Final.

Canada sees off Hamelin with Men’s 5000m Relay gold

Team Canada skated off with gold in an exciting Men’s 5000m Relay Final – a perfect ending of the spectacular career of [Charles Hamelin](#) who bows out of competition. Korea claimed the silver and Italy captured the bronze.

The Canadians led by five-time Olympian Hamelin and two-time Beijing individual medalist [Steven Dubois](#) stood in third and fourth positions the first half of the race before making their move in the 28th lap, taking the lead and never relinquishing it until Dubois crossed the finish line first. [Pascal Dion](#) and [Jordan Pierre-Gilles](#) raced also in the Final, while [Maxime Laoun](#) was on the team as well. Veteran Hamelin, 37, won his sixth Olympic medal – and his second gold in the Relay after 2010. Dubois took his third medal in Beijing.

“The Relay is the last event for the Men and it is fun to save that for last because it is really exciting. We were five teams and we did a perfect relay, no stress on the ice, we felt very comfortable and we proved that we are the best team in the world” Hamelin said. “Coming back home with a gold medal is the best thing I could have dreamed of. It is difficult to rank them (the Olympic medals). I would say my two Relay (gold) medals (are on top), because they show how strong the teams are in Canada,” he added.

Dubois brought it home as the last Skater. “I knew the Koreans were tired because they did a lot of races. I had only one job – to go fast. I went as fast as I could,” he commented.

Koreans claim silver, Italy edges ROC for bronze

1500m Olympic Champion [Daeheon Hwang](#) led the Korean team to the silver medal. The Koreans were in the lead early on and remained in medal position throughout. [Juneseo Lee](#), [Yoongy Kwak](#) and [Janghyuk Park](#) raced with Hwang.

“I’m just so grateful and happy at the moment. There’s something more valuable in this than the color of the medal, like how we were able to join our efforts as a team, how our fans have been cheering for us and encouraging us throughout the Games,” Hwang shared. “I just wanted to say thank you and I’ll repay that with better performances in the future.”

It was a tight battle for bronze between Italy and ROC. In the end, the Italians with [Pietro Sighel](#), [Yuri Confortola](#), [Tommaso Dotti](#), [Andrea Cassinelli](#) edged the ROC Men for the medal. Sighel and Confortola had already won silver in the Mixed Relay.

“We are a good team, in my opinion. We tried to fight for the medal and we did (achieve) the goal,” Sighel said. “We did our best and that’s important for us. The medal was the goal. The gold is the best goal, but a medal is a medal.”

ROC came fourth and China with Beijing Olympic Champions [Dajing Wu](#) and [Ziwei Ren](#) was only fifth after [Long Sun](#) fell with 11 laps to go.

There were five teams in the A-Final after the Chinese were advanced from the semifinal. 2018 Olympic Champions Hungary won the B-Final.

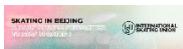
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