

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17

CH 1006 LAUSANNE

SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

Press release

Nagano, November 20, 2016

ISU Speed Skating World Cup Nagano, Day 3 #WCSpeed

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Nagano (JPN) ended today with a mix of expected victories and surprises. Heather Bergsma (USA) and Jorrit Bergsma (NED) took one victory each; Nao Kodaira (JPN) gave the home crowd reason for celebration, while Bo-Reum Kim (KOR) won the Ladies' Mass Start. Nico Ihle (GER) took a surprise gold in the 500 m.

Kodaira continues 500 m string

Having already won the first two 500 m World Cups of the season last week-end in Harbin (CHN), Nao Kodaira continued her string of victories. The three skaters who broke the 38-second barrier made up the podium, as Kodaira was followed by Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) and Jing Yu (CHN).

The race was decided in the final three pairs, as Jing Yu (CHN) took the lead with 37.97. Sang-Hwa Lee then fought a close duel with Marsha Hudey (CAN), where the Korean only pulled ahead in the final straight. She took the lead with 37.93, while Hudey clocked 38.04. The final duel was between Kodaira and Maki Tsuji (JPN). Tsuji was marginally ahead at 100 m with 10.41, only 1/100th behind Hudey who had the fastest opener of the day, but Kodaira was close on her heels with 10.46. From then on Kodaira dominated and reached the finishing line in the winning time of 37.75, while Tsuji's time of 38.11 brought her fifth place. Sang-Hwa Lee retained her rink record which stands at 37.60.

With victories in the first three races Kodaira has built a convincing lead in the overall standings with 300 points. She is followed by Sang-Hwa Lee who has 205 points. Tsuji is in third with 200 points, followed by Hudey (180 points) and Jing Yu (172 points).

Mantia convinces on 1500 m

Joey Mantia (USA) became the first skater this week to reach the top of a podium who had not also taken an individual victory in last week's World Cup event. The second place went to Kjelld Nuis (NED) while Shani Davis (USA) was third.

An accident prevented one of the main favorites, Dmitry Yuskov (RUS) from taking part. He posted on social media that he hurt his toe on Friday evening "At that time I didn't pay attention to it as it wasn't too painful. Waking up in the morning I had a hematoma, due to which, even to put on skates turned out to be an extremely painful procedure".

The race of Nuis looked impressive with a 25.5 first full lap, but he faded too much in the final lap and in the end Mantia managed the best combination of a strong opener followed by lap times of 26.1, 27.2 and 28.3 for a final time of 1:45.43 against the 1:45.63 set by Nuis. Shani Davis proved that he should not be counted out, as his 1:46.43 would prove good enough for third.

The final duel between Sven Kramer (NED) and Bart Swings (BEL) brought victory for Swings, but neither of their times could threaten the podium finishers. Swings finished fourth in 1:45.59

Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17

CH 1006 LAUSANNE

SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

while Kramer was sixth in 1:47.02. Between them came Patrick Roest (NED) with 1:46.83. There were three personal bests in the B division, for Shane Williamson (JPN), Viktor Lobas (RUS) and Nils van der Poel (SWE).

This victory also brought Mantia to the top of the overall standings on the 1500 m. He has 150 points; Kramer is only five points behind with 145. Swings stands in third with 130 points, then comes Roest(110 points). Davis has climbed to fifth place ((106 points).

Bergsma powers to rink record and victory

After a disappointing tenth place finish earlier in the day on the 500 m, Heather Bergsma (USA) made up for it by winning the 1500 m ahead of the two Dutch skaters Ireen Wüst and Marrit Leenstra.

The first significant time of the race was set Melissa Wijfje (NED) who improved her personal best to 1:57.43 but would only be good enough for seventh place. A close battle between Martina Sáblíková (CZE) and Miho Takagi (JPN) went to the Czech skater, who took the lead in 1:56.20. This only lasted until Ireen Wüst posted 1:55.50, being the first to break the rink record. Bergsma followed with by far the fastest opener of the day (24.95 followed by a 28.1 lap) she built up an impressive lead. Although she then started losing ground, she managed to hang on and finished in 1:55.29, yet another track record. Her pair mate Leenstra got 1:55.94 which was good enough for third place. In addition to the personal best by Wijfje, there was also a personal best in the B Division by Elena Møller Rigas (DEN).

Bergsma holds the lead in the overall standings on the 1500m with 200 points, followed by Wüst and Leenstra who both have 150.

Ihle brings 500 m surprise

The most surprising winner, and indeed the most surprising podium of the day came in the Men's 500 m, where Nico Ihle (GER) took the gold ahead of Jan Smeekens (NED) and Min-kyu Cha (KOR).

When Ihle set down 34.81 already in the first pair, it was obvious this was a strong time, and as the pairs progressed it started to look like a medal-winning race. Ronald Mulder (NED) made the first serious attack with 35.02, but a bigger challenge came when Smeekens met Min-kyu Cha. Their times were 34.89 for the Dutchman and 34.96 for the Korean. Kai Verbij then followed with 34.97, and as it would turn out none of the remaining challengers could break the 35-second barrier. Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) came closest with 35.01, but the race ended with Ihle still on top of the list. As for Roman Krech (KAZ) last week, the leading time from the first pair had brought victory. There was a personal best for Norway's Håvard Lorentzen who improved to 35.21.

For Ihle, it was his first World Cup victory on the 500 m and his second in total, as he also has a 1000 m win. Smeekens took second place and could return to the 500 m podium after a two-year absence; while for Min-Kyu Cha it was the first World Cup podium ever.

With three different victors in the three World Cup races so far, the overall standings are not dominated by one skater. However, Kulizhnikov has been the most consistent and leads with 230 points. Roman Krech (KAZ) follows with 160; Smeekens has 154 in third place and Verbij 142 in fourth. Today's winner Ihle is in seventh place overall.

Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17

CH 1006 LAUSANNE

SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

Major breakaway brings win for Bergsma

Jorrit Bergsma (NED) won the Men's Mass Start in a convincing manner. KC Boutiette (USA) became the oldest podium finisher ever in the ISU World Cup when he captured the second place ahead of Bart Swings (BEL).

Peter Michael (NZL) broke away for the first intermediate sprint together with 1500 m winner Mantia, but these skaters were too serious contenders for the pack to allow them to escape. Instead, the main breakaway came after Vitaly Mikhailov (BLR) and Dmitry Babenko (KAZ) started getting away aiming for the second sprint. The pack seemed to view this as a lesser challenge, but then the two escapees were joined by Boutiette who stayed in front after the sprint. Bergsma saw the danger and the opportunity for himself and caught up with Boutiette together with Livio Wenger (SUI) and these skaters built up a substantial lead.

Bergsma powered away and eventually caught most of the pack by one lap, so the way to victory was clear. Boutiette followed him, while Swings captured third place. Mantia, Wenger and Mikhailov took places 4-6 thanks to their performances in the intermediate sprints.

A special mention must be made of the second-place finish of 46 year old KC Boutiette. Born in 1970, Boutiette made his World Cup debut in 1994 and has two World Cup victories (one in the small combination and one as a member of a winning pursuit team) from the earlier part of his career. He returned to the World Cup circuit in the 2014/15 season after several years of absence, having his sights set mainly on the Mass Start.

Jorrit Bergsma takes the lead in the Mass Start World Cup with 116 points, just ahead of last week's winner Seung Hoon-Lee (KOR) who has 112 points. Alexis Contin (FRA) follows in third with 101 points, with Boutiette, Swings and Wenger close behind.

Bo Reum-Kim takes Mass Start victory

Bo Reum-Kim (KOR) took the laurels in the Ladies' Mass Start ahead of the only two skaters who beat her last week: Ivania Blondin (CAN) and Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA). The podium finishers thus were the same as in Harbin

Unlike the Men's race this race saw no major breakaway, only some skaters dropping off the back of the pack. Marina Zuyeva (BLR) built up a lead to win the second intermediate sprint, but fell back into the pack. At the final bell there was still about ten skaters in contention for the victory, but entering the final turn Bo-Reum Kim made a major attack which proved to be decisive and brought her the fourth World Cup win of her career.

The three podium finishers today are also at the head of the World Cup standings, but in a different order: Blondin leads with 180 ahead of Bo-Reum Kim who has 170 points and Lollobrigida has 150. They have a gap to fourth-placed Manon Kamminga (NED) who has 105 points.

For full results of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isureults.eu/> and <http://www.isu.org/en/speed-skating/series/isu-world-cup-speed-skating>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series continues in two weeks in Astana (KAZ) on December 2-4.

Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17

CH 1006 LAUSANNE

SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2016/17 Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating circuit consists of six events across Asia and Europe. The series starts in Harbin (CHN) on November 11-13 and moves to Nagano (JPN) on November 18-20. In December the Series goes to Europe stopping in Astana (KAZ) on December 2-4 and to Heerenveen (NED) on December 9-11. On January 27-29 2017 the fifth leg of the event will be in Berlin (GER) and the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will take place in Chelyabinsk (RUS) on March 10-12. The full ISU Calendar of Events is available here:

<http://www.isu.org/en/news-and-events/calendar-of-events>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series is available as a live stream on the ISU Skating Channel. Please note that geoblocking may be required in certain territories <http://livemanager.eurovision.edgesuite.net/isu/index.html>

For further information please contact:

Selina Vanier

ISU Communications Coordinator

E-mail: media@isu.ch

Tel: +41 21 612 66 66

ISU World Cup Speed Skating Nagano (JPN) – Day 3, medalists

500 m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	37.75
2	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	37.93
3	Jing Yu	CHN	37.97

1500 m Men

1	Joey Mantia	USA	1:45.43
2	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:45.63
3	Shani Davis	USA	1:46.43

1500 m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:55.29 TR
2	Ireen Wüst	NED	1:55.50 TR
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:55.94

500 m Men

1	Nico Ihle	GER	34.82
2	Jan Smeeckens	NED	34.89
3	Min-Kyu Cha	KOR	34.96

Mass Start Men

1	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	7:37.72
2	KC Boutiette	USA	7:41.68
3	Bart Swings	BEL	7:41.72

Mass Start Ladies

1	Bo Reum-Kim	KOR	8:15.02
2	Ivanie Blondin	CAN	8:15.29
3	Francesca Lollobrigida	ITA	8:15.42

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17

CH 1006 LAUSANNE

SWITZERLAND

TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66

TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 77

E-MAIL: media@isu.ch

ISU World Cup Speed Skating Ranking

500 m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	300
2	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	205
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	200

1500 m Men

1	Joey Mantia	USA	150
2	Sven Kramer	NED	145
3	Bart Swings	BEL	130

1500 m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	200
2	Ireen Wüst	NED	150
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	150

500 m Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	230
2	Roman Krech	KAZ	160
3	Jan Smeekens	NED	154

Mass Start Men

1	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	118
2	Seung-Hoon Lee	KOR	114
3	Alexis Contin	FRA	104

Mass Start Ladies

1	Ivanie Blondin	CAN	180
2	Bo Reum-Kim	KOR	170
3	Francesca Lollobrigida	ITA	150