

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

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ISU Speed Skating World Cup Harbin Day 2 #WCSpeed

Roman Krech (KAZ) surprised the pack when he took 500m gold on the second day of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Harbin. Heather Bergsma (USA) won the Ladies' 1000m and Kjeld Nuis (NED) defeated Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) to win the 1000m. The Netherlands took gold in both the Ladies' and the Men's Team Pursuit.

Maiden World Cup win for Krech in 500m

Krech started in the first pair of the Men's 500m and set a bar no one could reach with 35.07. The Kazak skater took his first career World Cup podium. After three broken track records on Friday, Kang-Seok Lee's (KOR) 2006 Harbin best of 34.82 seemed to be at stake, but one after another had to bow his head for Krech's 35.07, and the track record stayed safe.

Kai Verbij (NED) came close to Krech in the second pair. With 35.19 he was still in second place when Ruslan Murashov took the ice in the penultimate pair, but the Russian skater was disqualified because of a double false start. His opponent Alex Boisvert-Lacroix (CAN) set a disappointing 36.33 to end up in 19th place.

Everyone expected Pavel Kulizhnikov to beat the 34 second barrier in the final pair versus Mika Poutala (FIN). The Russian world record holder beat Verbij with 35.10, but had to settle for silver, 0.03 seconds behind Krech. The bronze went to Verbij. The Kazak skater was the first to win a World Cup 500m race without beating the 35 second barrier, since Artur Was (POL) took gold with 35.04 in Berlin in December 2014.

Bergsma wins 1000m in track record

Heather Bergsma was the only one to skate under 1:16 in the Ladies 1000m, when she broke the 2002 track record of 1:16.48 by Monique Garbrecht-Enfeldt. Pair-mate Marrit Leenstra (NED) managed to keep close to the American sprinter, crossing the line in 1:16.55 to grab silver.

Before Bergsma and Leenstra took the ice in the penultimate pair, Nao Kodaira (JPN), who had already won Friday's 500m, was the first to skate under 1:17, when she clocked 1:16.99. Kodaira ended up winning bronze.

Bergsma won her career 15th World Cup gold in the 1000m and took her 29th 1000m podium. Bergsma's compatriot and rival Brittany Bowe, who won last season's 1000m World Cup, was absent due to a concussion.

Nuis beats Kulizhnikov in 1000m

The Men's 1000m built up to a showdown between Kjeld Nuis and Pavel Kulizhnikov in the final pair. Until the Dutch and the Russian entered the rink, Mika Poutala was the only one who had skated under 1:10, with 1:09.83 in the fifth pair. Prior to the final pair Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR) was second behind Poutala, with 1:10.09. Kai Verbij, who had surprisingly

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beaten Nuis at the Dutch trials in October, was in bronze medal position with 1:10.13 in the penultimate pair. Lorentzen and Verbij eventually had to settle for fourth and fifth place.

Last season's big rivals Nuis and Kulizhnikov fought a tight battle with the Russian starting faster. At the 600m split Kulizhnikov still held a 0.34 second-advantage, but Nuis chased his prey down at the last crossing and overhauled him in the last inner turn to finish in 1:09.57. He came 0.40 short of the track record, but was 0.39 faster than Kulizhnikov. The Russian ended up taking the bronze, 0.13 seconds behind Poutala. The Finnish sprinter took his first career World Cup 1000m silver and his second career World Cup 1000m podium, after a bronze medal in 2009.

Men's Team Pursuit

The Netherlands successfully started to defend their Team Pursuit World Cup with a confident win in Harbin. Last year the Dutch crashed out of the season's first Team Pursuit race, but Sven Kramer, Douwe de Vries, Patrick Roest did not make the same mistake on Saturday. With a new track record of 3:45.33, they beat Norway's Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen and Sindre Henriksen, who stopped the clock at 3:48.50.

Norway only barely managed to stay ahead of Korea. Hyong-Jun Joo, Min Seok Kim, Seung-Hoon Lee convincingly beat Russia in the third pair, and they managed to maintain a higher pace than Norway in their final lap. Norway held on to their previously built advantage however, and Korea finished third in 3:48.72.

Ladies' Team Pursuit

With defending World Cup champions Japan absent in Harbin, the Dutch ladies followed the example of their male compatriots to take gold with a track record in the Team Pursuit. Ireen Wüst, Marrit Leenstra and Antoinette de Jong clocked 3:04.01 and were almost three seconds faster than Russia in the final pair. Natalia Voronina, Elizaveta Kazelina and Olga Graf finished in 3:06.84 to take silver. Korea's Ji Woo Park, Seon-Yeong Noh and Bo-Reum Kim took bronze in 3:07.91.

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series continues tomorrow with the second Ladies' and Men's 500m, the Ladies' and Men's 1500-m and the Ladies' and Men's Mass Start.

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

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 27-19 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

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ISU World Cup Speed Skating Harbin (CHN) medalists

500m Men

1	Roman Krech	KAZ	35.07
2	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	35.10
3	Kai Verbij	NED	35.19

1000m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:15.94
2	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:16.55
3	Nao Kodaira	JPN	1:16.99

1000m Men

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:09.57
2	Mika Poutala	FIN	1:09.83
3	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	1:09.96

Team Pursuit Men

1	Netherlands (Sven Kramer, Douwe de Vries, Patrick Roest)	NED	3:45.33
2	Norway (Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen, Sindre Henriksen)	NOR	3:48.50
3	Korea (Hyong-Jun Joo, Min Seok Kim, Seung-Hoon Lee)	KOR	3:48.72

Team Pursuit Ladies

1	Netherlands (Ireen Wüst, Marrit Leenstra, Antoinette de Jong)	NED	3:04.01
2	Russia (Natalia Voronina, Elizaveta Kazelina, Olga Graf)	RUS	3:06.84
3	Korea (Ji Woo Park, Seon-Yeong Noh and Bo-Reum Kim)	KOR	3:07.91