

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

Calgary, 25 February, 2017

ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships

#SprintSpeed

The Olympic Oval in Calgary confirmed its status as one of the fastest ice rinks in the World with 59 personal best times and 20 national records on Day 1 of the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships. Nao Kodaira set two big steps towards her career first World Sprint Title, winning both the 500m and the 1000m. The Men's tournament is very close. Kai Verbij (NED) is in pole position, with a 0.11 lead over Germany's Nico Ihle.

Kodaira on course for Maiden World Sprint Title

Nao Kodaira was immaculate on Day 1. The fresh 500m World Champion from Gangneung was the only one to beat the 37 second barrier in the 500m in Calgary with 36.75, just 0.01 above the 2013 track record by Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR). In the 1000m, Kodaira equaled the track record with 1:12.51, to take a 0.690 point lead in the classification.

European Champion Karolina Erbanova (CZE) came second in the 500m, in a Czech record of 37.06, beating her previous national best by 0.61 seconds. Heather Bergsma (USA) took the 500m bronze in 37.22.

Erbanova came fourth in the 1000m, again breaking her own Czech national record when she set 1:13.53. Despite her personal best, she was pushed from the top three in the classification by Jorien ter Mors. The Dutchwoman, who had come fifth in the 500m (37.55), set the 1000m bar high with a Dutch record of 1:12.53 in the second last pair. Only Kodaira was able to beat Ter Mors. Bergsma, who saw Kodaira equalling her 2015 track record, came third in 1:12.95. Bergsma trails Kodaira 0.69 seconds in Sunday's 500m and Ter Mors is 0.81 behind.

Behind the top three and number four Erbanova, many skaters set personal bests and national records. Both in the Ladies' 500m and the 1000m, 15 personal bests and 5 national records were broken. Kodaira broke both the 500m and the 1000m Championships records, and looks to be on course for Heather Bergsma's 2013 World Sprint points record of 147,735. Bergsma herself, Ter Mors and Erbanova will also beat that record, if they equal Saturday's performances on Sunday.

Tight lead for Verbij

As solid as Nao Kodaira's lead is in the Ladies' tournament, as close is the battle in the Men's classification. Kai Verbij leads the pack, but the top six skaters are all within 0.50 from the leader in Sunday's 500m. Nico Ihle (GER) is 0.11 seconds behind in second place, and Norway's Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen is 0.13 behind in third place.

Apart from Verbij's third place in the 1000m, none of the top three riders in the classification managed to grab a podium place in one of the separate distances. Verbij finished ninth in the 500m, Ihle took fifth place in both the 500m and the 1000m, and Lorentzen was sixth in the 500m and fourth in the 1000m.

Ronald Mulder was the big man in the shortest distance in Saturday. The Dutchman stopped the clock at 34.18 to skate a new Dutch 500m record and a new Championships record. Roman

Official Series Hashtag: #WorldSpeed

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Krech came second in a new Kazak record (34.21) and Ruslan Murashov (RUS) was third in a personal best of 34.29.

With 1:06.73 Kai Verbij set a new track, and Dutch record in the 1000m, but he lost both records within ten minutes. Vincent De Haitre bettered Verbij by 0.01, setting a Canadian record and taking the Calgary track record back to a home skater. But De Haitre also lost his track record a few minutes later, when 1000m World Champion Kjeld Nuis hammered home in 1:06.61. Nuis is fourth in the classification, after a disappointing 18th place in the 500m. He is just 0.36 behind Verbij however, and still in contention for the title. Mulder, who came tenth in the 1000m, is 0.37 behind in fifth place. De Haitre blew his start in the 500m, which spoiled his championship chances. The Canadian is 0.56 behind in eighth place.

Just like in the Ladies' field, a lot of personal bests and national records were broken in the male competition: 15 PB's and 5 NR's in the 500m, and 14 PB's and 5 NR's in the 1000m. In the Men's tournament the top six ranked skaters are on course to break Michel Mulder's (NED) current World Sprint record of 136,790.

For full results of the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships 2017 please refer to <http://www.isureults.eu/>

About ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships 2017

The 48th ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships are held on the what is considered the "fastest ice in the world" at the Calgary Olympic Oval in Canada, which hosts these Championships for the fifth time. The ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships is a four race tournament, in which skaters compete in two 500m races and two 1000m races over two days, to decide the champion in an overall classification.

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500m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	36.75 NR
2	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	37.06 NR
3	Heather Bergsma	USA	37.22

1000m Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	1:12.51 NR
2	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:12.53 NR
3	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:12.95

Classification Ladies

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1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	73.005
2	Heather Bergsma	USA	73.695
3	Jorien ter Mors	NED	73.815

500m Men

1	Ronald Mulder	NED	34.18 NR
2	Roman Krech	KAZ	34.21 NR
3	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	34.29 PB

1000m Men

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:06.61 NR
2	Vincent De Haitre	CAN	1:06.72 NR
3	Kai Verbij	NED	1:06.73 PB

Classification Men

1	Kai Verbij	NED	67.845
2	Nico Ihle	GER	67.950
3	Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen	NOR	67.970