

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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**Press release**

**Calgary, 26 February, 2017**

## **ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships**

### **#SprintSpeed**

Nao Kodaira became the first Japanese lady to win the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships in Calgary on Sunday. Kai Verbij (NED) survived a nerve wrecking miss stroke in the final 1000m to grab his first career World Sprint Title. Both Kodaira and Verbij skated a World Record in the sprint combination.

#### **Kodaira in league of her own**

Nao Kodaira started the second day of the championships with a 0.69 advantage over Heather Bergsma at the start of the second 500m. The 31-year-old Japanese sprinter increased her lead, being the only one to break the 37 second barrier again on Sunday. Czech European Sprint Champion Karolina Erbanova came second in the 500m in 37.23 and Kodaira's compatriot Maki Tsuji was third in 37.28.

Heading into the final 1000m, Kodaira had a 2.48 lead over second ranked Heather Bergsma (USA), who finished fifth in the second 500m. Kodaira was out of reach, but both Erbanova and Jorien ter Mors (NED) still chased Bergsma for silver. The Czech Lady was only 0.02 behind the American, and the Dutchwoman had to make up 0.32 seconds for second place.

Bergsma and Ter Mors met in the penultimate pair of the 1000m, with the American coming out on top. Ter Mors, who skated a Dutch record with a superb final lap on Saturday (1:12.53), could not match that performance on Sunday, finishing in 1:12.58. Bergsma went all-out from the start on Sunday, and managed to stay well ahead of Ter Mors going in to the final lap. With 1:12.18 she smashed her own track record (1:12.51).

Kodaira did not have to go all out in the final pair of Sunday's 1000m, but Erbanova had to fight for a podium spot. The Czech skater did not manage to keep Bergsma and Ter Mors behind. She stopped the clock at 1:13.83 to come fourth in the 1000m. With two second places in the 500m and two fourth places in the 1000m Erbanova ended up fourth in the final classification. Kodaira added a third place in the 1000m in 1:13.17 to secure the title, after having won the first three distances. Bergsma held on to second place and Ter Mors grabbed the bronze medal.

After the 30 personal and 10 national records on Saturday, the Ladies added five personal bests in the 500m and 13 PB's and two NR's in the 1000m.

#### **Verbij escapes crash scare in final race**

Kai Verbij had a tight 0.11 second lead over Nico Ihle (GER) heading into Day 2 of the championships. The Dutch European Sprint Champion clocked a personal best of 34.25 for fourth place in the second 500m, to increase his lead in the classification. Ihle messed up his 500m on Sunday, coming 22<sup>nd</sup> in 35.03.

Kjeld Nuis also disappointed in the second 500m, with 34.84 for 16<sup>th</sup> place. Ronald Mulder, who won Saturday's 500m in a new Dutch record, shaved another 0.10 seconds off his record to take 500m gold on Sunday too. He climbed to second place in the classification. Roman Krech

**Official Series Hashtag: #WorldSpeed**

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(KAZ) managed another 500m second place finish on Sunday, but he was too far behind to challenge Verbij for the title. Mika Poutala skated a Finnish record in 34.23 to climb to fourth in the classification, behind Norway's Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen, who came 10<sup>th</sup> in Sunday's 500m.

Nuis had set his sights on the World Record in the final 1000m. Heading into the race in ninth place, the Dutch 1000m World Champion put the pressure on his rivals when he clocked 1:06.51, just 0.09 above Shani Davis' (USA) World Record. Ruslan Murashov (RUS) withdrew from the competition in the 1000m and Mitchell Whitmore (USA), Laurent Dubreuil (CAN), and Mika Poutala did not manage to stay ahead of Nuis in the classification.

With only two pairs to go, Nuis was still on top, but Lorentzen clocked 1:07.38 for third place to keep Nuis behind. Verbij defended a 0.40 second lead over Ronald Mulder in the final pair and he had a 0.99 second lead over Lorentzen.

Safe as he might have seemed, Verbij had a tough time to control his nerves. The Dutchman almost crashed when he had a miss stroke heading into the final lap. Although Verbij lost speed, he managed to stay ahead of Mulder, who finished in 1:08.23 for eighth place in the final 1000m and dropped to fourth place overall. Verbij's 1:07.94 was enough to keep Lorentzen at bay. The Norwegian skater did win silver, with Nuis taking the overall bronze.

Canada's Vincent De Haitre came second in the final 1000m with 1:07.23, but he was too far behind in both his 500m races to be a podium contender.

Like Kodaira in the Ladies' tournament, Verbij set a new World Record in the Sprint Combination: 136.065. There were 9 PB's and 2 NR's in the Men's 500m and 11 PB's and one NR in the Men's 1000m on Sunday.

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	36.80
2	Karolina Erbanova	CZE	37.23
3	Maki Tsuji	JPN	37.28 PB

## 1000m Ladies

1	Heather Bergsma	USA	1:12.28 TR
2	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:12.58
3	Nao Kodaira	JPN	1:13.17

## Classification Ladies

1	Nao Kodaira	JPN	146.390 WR
2	Heather Bergsma	USA	147.185
3	Jorien ter Mors	NED	147.495

## 500m Men

1	Ronald Mulder	NED	34.08 NR
2	Roman Krech	KAZ	34.21
3	Mika Poutala	FIN	34.23 NR

## 1000m Men

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:06.51
2	Vincent De Haitre	CAN	1:07.23
3	Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen	NOR	1:07.38

## Classification Men

1	Kai Verbij	NED	136.065
2	Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen	NOR	136.280
3	Kjeld Nuis	NED	136.300