

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games Short Track Speed Skating Review

32 athletes from 16 countries competed in the Short Track Speed Skating competitions between February 14 and 20, 2016. Medals were up for grabs in five events including the Ladies and Men 1000m, 500m and the Mixed NOC Team Relay. The crowd were supportive of the YOG athletes competing at Gjøvik Olympic Cavern Hall, which is located inside a mountain in the picturesque lakeside town of Gjøvik.

Out of the 24 Short Track Speed Skating medals awarded at Lillehammer 2016, five (4 gold, 1 silver) were won by Korean skaters. China (1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze), Hungary (2 silver, 1 bronze) and Japan (2 silver, 1 bronze) all tallied three medals. Bulgaria clinched two bronze medals, while Belgium, France and host country Norway all got one gold medal each. Australia and the Netherlands won a silver medal each and finally a bronze medal was awarded to Germany, Kazakhstan and Latvia.

Ladies 1000m

On February 14 Jiyou Kim of Korea waited the second to last lap to make a decisive move to pass her opponents and cross the finish line first. Her teammate Suyoun Lee earned the silver medal. Lee commented "I'm very happy to win gold and silver with my teammate and friend. We have a special style of training and our coaches give us many tips." Germany's Anna Seidel won bronze. "The Koreans were so fast, but my goal was to stay in the third position and it worked," said Seidel. "The Koreans are always very strong, especially on the curves. They just do it all very well. I led a lot and then the Koreans passed and I told myself, 'Just follow them, follow them, follow them, and you will medal.'"

Ladies 500m

A lot of action unfolded in the Ladies 500m on February 16. Koreans Jiyou Kim and Suyoun Lee came into the A final favored to win, however this time they made a mistake that cost them another set of medals. Petra Jaszapati of Hungary was a nanosecond ahead of the three people chasing her as the Ladies began the final sprint to the finish line. Jaszapati crashed just before the finish line. Kim and Lee crossed the line first and second respectively followed by Yize Zang of China. However the Koreans were penalized for impeding and were disqualified. Zang was awarded the gold medal, while Jaszapati took the silver. "I was pretty disappointed because I was in first place," Jaszapati said after the race. "I could feel the contact. I love the sport because it is never boring. There is always contact out there and you have no idea who is going to win." The winner of the B final, Bulgaria's Katrin Manoilova, took the bronze. "I never expected this. When I saw what happened, I turned to my coach and said 'wow'." said Manoilova, before biting her medal to make sure it was real.

Men 1000m

Daeheon Hwang (KOR) won gold in the men's 1000m on February 14. Just like Jiyou Kim in the Ladies' event, he held back until the second-to-last lap to pass and lead the race to the end. He later said "It feels like a dream. I'm happier to get a gold medal at this competition than any other. I was

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quite fast, I was also very patient. That's why it went well." Wei Ma of China finished second earning the silver medal while Shaoang Liu of Hungary got bronze. "I didn't try to pass because my blades were choppy and the ice was breaking. He (Hwang) made it to the lead faster. I knew I could not pass," said Liu.

Men 500m

The Republic of Korea's Daeheon Hwang, the gold medalist over 1000m, moved into the lead in the third lap and crossed the line first but was penalized. His compatriot Kyunghwan Hong won the race "I didn't expect the gold, but the incident of the last corner [which led to Hwang being disqualified] brought me the medal," said Hong "It seems like you never know the result until the very last moment of the race. Hwang and Ma clashed in front of me. I was waiting for my moment, as my coach guided me, and trying not to be in rush." Japan's Kazuki Yoshinaga won silver and China's Ma Wei claimed the bronze.

Mixed NOC Team Relay

Introduced at the Innsbruck 2012 Youth Olympic Games, the Mixed NOC 3000m Team Relay concluded the Short Track Speed Skating competition at Lillehammer 2016. The day started with the semi-finals, the B Final and concluded with the A Final. Mixed team B, featuring Norway's Ane By Farstad, Jiyou Kim of Republic of Korea (Ladies 1000m Champion), Belgium's Stijn Desmet and Quentin Fercoq, of France, took the gold medal. They pipped mixed team C (Hungary's Petra Jaszapati Ladies 500m silver medalist, Julia Moore of Australia, Netherlands' Tjerk de Boer and Japan's Kiichi Shigehiro) to silver. Mixed team F took bronze with a line-up of Bulgaria's Katrin Manoilova (Ladies 500m bronze medalist), Anita Nagay of Kazakhstan, Latvia's Karlis Kruzbergs and Kazuki Yoshinaga of Japan (men's 500m silver medalist).

The communication was not always easy within the teams. "I was in a team with a Chinese guy and a Japanese girl, so we talked mainly through gestures," said Germany's Moritz Kreuzer. "But it was a lot of fun, and it is good to be teammates with people from other countries. You make friends even if you can't really speak."

Gold medalist Farstad, 15, had no complaints. "This has been a dream for me all my life, so I feel great," she said. "It's such an honor to win a gold in front of so many people from Norway."

Getting into position to give your teammate a push in the Team Relay is tough enough when you already know their movements instinctively. Doing it when you've only just met, and don't speak the same language, is an extra challenge. Add a broken arm into the bargain, and things get really tricky. The biggest cheer at the event was reserved for April Shin. The USA skater suffered a fracture in practice earlier in the week, but elected to take part in the two-boy, two-girl relay event anyway, dashing round the track at full throttle in the opening lap. "Pushing the person in front is no good with a broken arm, so I had to go one-handed for that," Shin said afterwards. "I gradually got used to doing it in our trial runs, so today wasn't too bad. I got hurt doing speed laps in training, I fell coming out of a corner. My arm got stuck and I crushed it. It's a risk in a sport like this, but it's actually my first break. The timing wasn't great, but I've enjoyed taking part in the Games anyway."

Additional information

Results: <http://www.lillehammer2016.com/sportresult/>

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