

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships – Kolomna (RUS) Day 2

Denis Yuskov retained his crown in the Race of Kings. The Russian took 1500m gold on home ice and became the first male speed skater to win three consecutive world titles in the 1500m. It was a spectacular second day of the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships 2016 in Kolomna, with 1000m gold for Jorien ter Mors (NED), Martina Sáblíková (CZE) taking a record extending eighth 5000m title and the Dutch men winning Team Pursuit gold.

Ter Mors beats American favorites

Whether it's short-track or long-track Jorien ter Mors (NED) is fast either way. After winning the World Cup 1000m in Stavanger (NOR) two weeks ago, Ter Mors turned out on top at the World Single Distances Championships again. Heather Richardson-Bergsma (USA) and Brittany Bowe (USA) had to settle for silver and bronze.

Ireen Wüst (NED) set a track record of 1:15.71 in the first pair and she was still the fastest, when Ter Mors entered the rink in the seventh pair. Ter Mors started faster and pulled through in the first full lap. Although Wüst had a better final lap, Ter Mors crushed her compatriot's time with 1:14.73. Wüst eventually ended up sixth.

With three pairs yet to come Ter Mors was all but sure of a medal. Vanessa Bittner (AUT) was the first to challenge Ter Mors. She managed to stay close until 600 meters, but the last lap was too much. Bittner finished in 1:15.51 (fourth). Russian Olga Fatkulina skated a disappointing 1:16.35 (twelfth) in the tenth pair, just before Richardson-Bergsma took the ice in the penultimate pair. The American easily set pair mate Hong Zhang aside and she was only 0.03 behind Ter Mors heading into the final lap. On the finish line the gap had widened and Richardson clocked 1:14.94, Zhang still managed to stay 0.01 in front of Wüst.

Bowe and Marrit Leenstra (NED) took the ice in the final pair and the American world record holder managed to go into the final lap with a 0.16 advantage over Ter Mors' time. But Bowe couldn't match Ter Mors' final lap of 29.3. With 1:15.01 she even had to bow for Richardson-Bergsma. Ter Mors could breathe finally again: "I thought after my race 'it's not enough'. I know what Bowe and Heather can skate. It was f*** heavy. But in the end you see everybody has problems with that last lap, that is why I won."

Yuskov handles pressure with help of crowd

After having won the two previous world titles in the 1500m Denis Yuskov was the man to beat on home ice. The Russian started in the final pair versus Thomas Krol (NED). Kjeld Nuis (NED) had just set the bar at 1:45.66 in the penultimate pair. The Dutchman collided with pair mate Joey Mantia (USA) at the crossover, but both men stayed on their feet. Nuis could pull through at maximum pace, but Mantia had to hold back. The American was disqualified because coming from the inner turn he had failed to give priority to Nuis.

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In the final pair Thomas Krol daringly opened faster than Yuskov. The Dutchman wanted to skate his own race, but he knew that his Russian pair mate was going to catch him at some point. "It's difficult to skate against Yuskov because you know he'll pass you superfast in the inner turn. "I managed to keep him in sight though", Krol said. Yuskov indeed caught him and was the only one to finish below 1:45 with 1:44.13. Krol crossed the line in 1:45.75 to grab bronze behind Nuis.

Yuskov was relieved after his race: "Last week was difficult, because the media wanted to talk to me a lot. I felt the pressure after my good results this season. But the crowd was fantastic today. They really helped me and carried me to the finish line."

For Krol it was his first medal at the World Single Distances Championships, whereas Yuskov took his third consecutive 1500m gold to equal Shani Davis (USA) in first place in the men's gold medal table in this event. Davis won the world title in 2004, 2007 and 2009. In Kolomna the American was fifth in 1:46.49. Bart Swings ended up fourth. The Belgian almost crashed due to a clumsy miss-stroke in his final lap but cleverly stayed on his feet and finished in 1:46.21.

Sáblíková strikes again

Martina Sáblíková had won all long distance races held so far this World Cup season and she also took gold in Thursday's 3000m. However, Claudia Pechstein (GER) and Carien Kleibeuker (NED) did not plan to surrender without a battle. The veteran German was the first to finish below seven minutes when she skated 6:58.99 in the third pair.

Pechstein's time still stood when Kleibeuker took on Natalya Voronina (RUS) in the penultimate pair. The Dutch bronze medalist from the Sochi Olympic Games managed to keep her lap times well under Pechstein's in a steady race with a 31.8 lap followed by four consecutive 32.5 laps, four consecutive 32.9 laps and three 33 laps. Her final time was 6:54.96, which was still over a second slower than Sáblíková's track record from 2008.

Sáblíková faced Irene Schouten (NED) in the final pair. The Czech managed to keep all laps under 33 seconds to break her own track record in 6:51.09. With the title she extended her record of most gold medals (8) in a single event (either gender) at the World Single Distance Championships. In Sáblíková's slipstream Schouten skated to a personal best of 6:55.93 to edge out Pechstein for the bronze medal. Bente Kraus (7th, GER) and Isabelle Weidemann (5th, CAN) skated personal bests too.

Eight out of nine for Dutch Men

To conclude the second day of the ISU World Single Distances Championships, the Netherlands grabbed their eighth Team Pursuit World title. Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries and Arjan Stroetinga managed to stay together and skate consistent lap times throughout their race to clock 3:40.04. They beat Italy, who missed the podium by only 0.01 second in 3:43.29, in the penultimate race of the day. Netherlands have now won eight of all nine world titles in the men's team pursuit.

Håvard Bøkko, Sverre Lunde Pedersen and Simen Spieler Nilsen seized silver for Norway. They took on Canada in the first Team Pursuit race. Jordan Belchos, Ted-Jan Bloemen and Benjamin Donnelly led halfway, but they couldn't keep up with their Norwegian counterparts in the second part of the race. Norway clocked 3:41.26 versus 3:43.28 for Canada, which was enough for bronze.

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Friday, medal winners

1000m Ladies

1	Jorien ter Mors	NED	1:14.73 TR
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	1:14.94
3	Brittany Bowe	USA	1:15.01

1500m Men

1	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:44.13 TR
2	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:45.66
3	Thomas Krol	NED	1:45.75

5000m Ladies

1	Martina Sáblíková	CZE	6:51.09 TR
2	Carien Kleibeuker	NED	6:54.96
3	Irene Schouten	NED	6:55.93 P

Team Pursuit Men

1	Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries and Arjan Stroetinga	NED	3:40.04 TR
2	Håvard Bøkko, Sverre Lunde Pedersen and Simen Spieler Nilsen	NOR	3:41.26 TR
3	Jordan Belchos, Ted-Jan Bloemen and Benjamin Donnelly	CAN	3:43.28

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