

Press release

16 February 2018

Bloemen hands Canada speed skating gold

Ted-Jan Bloemen grabbed the first non-Dutch speed skating gold in a new Olympic 10000m record of 12:39.77 at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Games. The Canadian world record holder caused a big upset in the Dutch camp, when he kept Sven Kramer (NED) off the only title he missed, and still misses, in his trophy cabinet. Jorrit Bergsma (NED) took silver and Nicola Tumolero (ITA) grabbed a surprise bronze as Kramer collapsed in the final pairing to finish sixth in 13:01.02.

Bergsma's bar

The order of the draw made up for perfect suspense. Defending champion Bergsma was the first to take the ice in the final three pairs after the break. The Dutchman had to set a bar the others would not be able to jump. Bergsma skated on average around 30.4 laps and accelerated in the final 3000m to close off with eight sub-30 laps and break his own 2014 Sochi Olympic record by 2.47 seconds with 12:41.98. He felt that he had left it all on the track: "This was the maximum I could do today. Earlier this week my legs felt a little bit better. I would like to have skated a little flatter. I was skating 30.4 laps and I really would have liked to have done 30. But the laps just didn't come easy enough." Bergsma had mixed feelings about the color of his medal. "Silver, yeah. Probably I'm going to be proud of it eventually, but for now I really would have liked to have won the gold. "

Bloemen's confidence

Bloemen stepped on the ice confidently: "Of course Bergsma's time was fast and I still had to prove that I could do it, but I expected a time like that from him." The world record holder was just slightly faster throughout almost every lap until the 6800m split, when Bergsma accelerated. He was 3,4 seconds ahead, but conceded a couple of tenths in the following three laps only to speed up himself a little later. With 29.81, the second-fastest last lap of the field, he took another 2.21 seconds off Bergsma's new Olympic record in 12:39.77.

Tumolero's disbelief

Almost unnoticed Tumolero crossed the line in 12:54.32. With Kramer yet to come, the third ranked Italian never expected to be on the podium, but he was "It is unbelievable", he said. "Actually the 5000m is my preferred distance, but I was so excited, these are my first Olympics and I was scared. This is really unexpected for me. I came into this race with no expectations, I just wanted to do my best."

Kramer's downfall

Kramer won last year's ISU World Single Distances title in the 10000m in 12:38.89, faster than Bloemen, but he knew beforehand that it was going to be tough. "If you look back at the 6:09 I skated in the 5000m... Everybody is faster than last year and I really had to fight for that 6:09. The real form and the flow I had last year, it's just not been there all year, and I already felt that in October,

November, December. You always hope to find that little bit extra. I was lucky enough to be strong enough physically to hammer through that 5000m on pure strength, but 25 laps is too long for that.” Kramer was on schedule for the first eight laps, but deteriorated quickly thereafter. “If you keep skating like that and lower the lap times towards the end, it’s still possible”, he said. “But I never felt that I could even hold that pace and to be honest, I don’t want to go to medal plaza for a silver or a bronze. I won’t say that I let go, but I saw that I was not able to win and then this is what happens.” Kramer clocked plus-31 laps after 5600m and plus-32 from 7600m, to finish it off with a 30.75 in 13:01.02.

Bloemen already knew he had won halfway through Kramer’s race. “When he entered the 31-laps, I started believing,” he said. Actually, Bloemen thanked his Olympic title to the unrelenting belief in his own abilities on the ice: “Since my world record in the 10000m in 2015, I knew I could do this, and actually I’ve always believed that I could do special things on the ice.”

Korean cheer for Lee

Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR) was the fastest man before the ice-cleaning break. The Vancouver 2010 Olympic 10000m Champion started out cautiously in the third pair. Bart Swings (BEL) and Jordan Belchos (CAN) set the pace in the first and the second pair. Swings skated a flat schedule on lap times around 30.8 seconds, only to slow down a little at the 8000m split. His last lap times went up quickly to from 31.8 at the 8800m split to 33.4 in the final lap to finish in 13:03.53. Belchos was faster throughout the race, but his advantage started shrinking after the halfway point, when his lap times went up to 31. The Canadian however, managed to keep his pace throughout the final laps to stay clear of Swings in and clock the first time under 13 minutes in 12:59.51.

The crowd went wild when Lee entered the rink versus Moritz Geisreiter (GER) in the third pair. The duo put up a good fight switching the lead often in the first 6000m. They were more than ten seconds behind Belchos’ split times, when Lee accelerated. After the 6000m split the Korean only skated sub-30 laps, with the public getting more enthusiastic lap-by-lap. Lee took back a second per lap and quickly reeled in on Belchos. After closing off with 29.74 in the final lap he finished in 12:55.54 to eventually take fourth place. Belchos finished sixth.

For more information, schedules, full entries and results please refer to the [ISU website](#) and the [official website](#) of the Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang.