



Press release

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Girard stays clear to win 1000m gold

Samuel Girard (CAN) took gold in the Men's 1000m after an eventful evening at the Gangneung Ice Arena on Saturday. The Canadian planned to stay out of trouble in the final, and managed to stay clear of a big crash. John-Henry Krueger (USA) also kept the troubles behind him and took silver. World champion Yira Seo (KOR) was the first to get back on his feet, to secure a bronze medal for the home nation.

Key to the race

Girard started fast in the A-final. "This was a good race, with many strong skaters," he said. "My plan was to stay up front and keep up a good pace to put everyone else in trouble. That was the key to the race. Everyone wanted to be in the front, one guy passed me and I went back right away. Everyone wants to be on the podium and it was my time to go and to shine."

That was easier said than done, agreed Krueger: "I was trying to do the same thing, but he was doing it a little bit better than I did. We both stayed up in the front and it paid off for both of us."

Krueger advanced from the quarter-finals after a penalty for Sjinkie Knegt (NED). "That quarter final was nerve-wrecking," he said. "The most important thing about Short Track is keeping your composure and keeping your calm. After the quarter final I decided with my coach and with myself, that I needed to skate up front, be confident, and what I been training for. It's definitely harder to skate up front, but it pays off in the end."

Heir to the throne

Girard had advanced to the final after his mentor and team-mate Charles Hamelin (CAN) got penalized in the semis, but the veteran had no hard feelings about it and encouraged his successor going into the final: "Just before the race Charles said to me: 'Just go, you can do this, and he gave me a pat on the back when I got onto the ice.'"

Winning Olympic gold 21-year-old Girard seems to be the rightful heir to Hamelin's throne. He joined his 33-year-old team-mate and Marc Gagnon as the only Canadian men to win an individual gold medal in short track at the Games. Hamelin already announced his retirement from the sport after PyeongChang 2018.

Tenth Korean 1000m medal

While Krueger and Girard were battling their A-final up front, Korea's Hyonjun Lim and Yira Seo were waiting to make a move in third and fourth place. with Shaolin Sandor Liu (HUN) sitting on the back. Halfway the Hungarian tried to jump into a small gap on the inside of the two Koreans, but there was no gap and all three skaters went down. While Girard and Krueger went on to the finish line, Seo



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got up quick to finish third. Lim took fourth place and Liu got penalized for impeding. The bronze medalist won Republic of Korea's tenth medal in the men's 1000m, which makes the home nation the first country to win ten medals in a single Short Track event at the Winter Games.

Seo was happy to be on the podium: "I fell but I managed to get back up. I wasn't that proud at the time but then I thought, 'Oh I got third place'. I have waited four years for this. Although it is not a gold medal, I am still very happy."

Good calls and bad calls

Sjinkie Knegt (NED) and Dajing Wu (CHN) were the biggest names to drop out in the quarter finals. Knegt had to work his way up to second place in the third heat and tried to push himself between leader Semen Elistratov (RUS) and John Henry Krueger (USA), pushing the American to the side. The Dutch 1500m silver medalist finished second, but got penalized and Krueger advanced with heat winner Elistratov. Krueger advanced to the semis.

"I thought I was clearly past him but no I didn't, the referee decided I didn't, so be it. It is part of the sport," Knegt said. The Dutchman still felt that he was done injustice, however: "I bumped into the American and that is it. He came to the inside, had his hands in the air. He made the referees look at the video replay..."

Krueger, who got a penalty in the semifinals of the 1500m, when asked about the incident with Knegt reacted: "It's like I said earlier: in the 1500m there was a call that I disagreed with, but short track is about taking the good calls and the bad calls. During the 1500m I took the bad call, and during the 1000 I took the good call."

China's last man out in quarters

Dajing Wu got penalized for impeding in the final heat of the quarter finals. Coming from the outside he tried to push himself in front of Shaolin Sandor Lui (HUN) in the final curve. Wu was the final Chinese hope for a medal, but he finished fifth and got penalized.

The Short Track competition continues on February 20 with the Ladies 1000m and Men's 500m heats, and the Ladies 3000m Relay.

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.