

Press release

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Korea lights up the Gangneung Ice Arena

Saturday's Short Track Speed Skating program in the Gangneung Ice Arena promised to be another exciting day of racing and it delivered with the Ladies 1500m Final and Men's 1000m Final.

Following the Short Track Speed Skating competitions of February 10, 13 and 17 a total of 34 penalties were given to 12 different countries. Penalties were for impeding and off track.

Final showdown between Korea, China and Canada

Seven skaters from six countries went to the start line for the final 1500m showdown. Minjeong Choi (KOR), Alang Kim (KOR), Kim Boutin (CAN), Petra Jaszapati (HUN), Jinyu Li (CHN), Jorien ter Mors (NED) and Arianna Fontana (ITA) all made their way through the heats and semi-finals today, booking their ticket to the Final A.

Fontana tried to sit at the front of the pack, but Boutin was also keen to take the lead. The Koreans sat together in fourth and fifth place for seven laps and with three laps to go, they made their move. The decibels in the Ice Arena went up. Choi moved to the front and left the rest of the pack behind her holding her position until the end, winning a record third gold medal for Republic of Korea in the ladies' 1500m, surpassing China on two. "It was the biggest dream of mine for four years, I can't put it into words. I am so proud of it. Physically I am so burned out but inside I am so happy, so proud of my whole country," said Choi. The President of the Republic of Korea, Jae-in Moon, witnessed Choi's achievement and said she was very excited.

Li made her move with two laps to go, moving from fifth to third and finishing in second to take the silver medal. When asked about how she kept her cool, she said: "My facial expression is relaxed, because I am always relaxed. I get no pressure from my coach and team members." But she was impressed by Choi's performance: "I can learn a lot from Choi, she has a strong mind set, good tactics and overtaking strategy. She is a really great performer."

Boutin managed to stay within the top three throughout the entire race to end up third, winning her second medal at PyeongChang 2018, following her bronze in the ladies' 500m on Tuesday 13 February. She is the first Canadian lady to win multiple individual short track medals at an Olympic Winter Games. She was very content with her performance: "It is a pretty awesome day, it's unbelievable to win a second bronze medal." When asked what her secret was, she just said: "I don't have a strategy, I just feel the race and if an opportunity opens up to me, I take it."

In the Final B, Yang Zhou (CHN) finished first followed by compatriot Yutong Han and promising Dutch skater Schulting.

Heartache and euphoria in the semifinals

In the first semifinal Alang Kim (KOR) and Tuesday's 500m bronze medalist Kim Bontin (CAN) qualified for the Final A. Marianne St Gelais got a penalty for skating off track. Yutong Han (CHN) and Martina Valcepina (ITA) headed to the Final B.

In the second semifinal, the 1000m Speed Skating Olympic Champion from the Netherlands, Jorien ter Mors, crossed the line first qualifying for the Final A. A photo finish between Arianna Fontana and Sumire Kikuchi (JPN) had to determine who would join ter Mors in the Final A and the photo showed that the newly crowned 500m Olympic Champion, Fontana, finished just ahead of Sumire Kikuchi of Japan.

In the last semifinal, Korean Minjeong Choi skated to the Final A to the delight of the home crowd, however, in the last lap a collusion between the Brit Elise Christie and Chinese Jinyu Li made them both fall. Christie, the world champion in the 1000m, got carried off by the medical team. A spokesperson from Team Great Britain said: "Following the race Elise was taken to hospital. She has had an X-ray on her right ankle, which has shown that there are no broken bones. Team GB medical staff will continue to assess her over the coming days." Christie was given a penalty for impeding. Li, who was in second place before the fall, was consequently advanced to the Final A. Petra Jaszapati slalomed around the falling skaters to finish second. She also made her way to the Final A. Yang Zhou from China joined the Final B.

Heats

Having won three medals at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games, 21-year-old Korean Sukhee Shim (KOR), had high hopes, but she fell in the first heat ending her 1500m medal quest. Team USA's hope to have a skater in the next rounds came to a halt when no American woman managed to qualify for the quarter final.

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.