



Press release

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Korean men fastest into semifinals of Team Pursuit

Republic of Korea made a mark in the Men's Team Pursuit quarterfinals on Sunday night. Seung-Hoon Lee, Jaewon Chun and Min Seok Kim finished their eight laps versus Italy in 3:39.29 to advance to the finals with the fastest time. The Netherlands came second in 3:40.03. Norway (3:40.09) and New-Zealand (3:41.18) grabbed the remaining semifinal tickets.

Henriksen barely holds on for Norway

Norway and New Zealand were the first to skate in the Team Pursuit. Sindre Henriksen, Simen Spieler Nilsen and Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR) started fast, but their 200m split times gradually went up from 13.11 after the first full lap, to 14.04 and 14.33 in the final lap, with Henriksen barely hanging on. Despite a decrease in pace at the end, Pedersen was happy with the performance: "It went well, we had a good start. The first part was good. We had some problems towards the end but still managed to get a good time."

New Zealand still in contention for unique medal

With anchor Peter Michael joined by Shane Dobbin and Reyon Kay, New Zealand managed to control the damage and they even won some time back in the last lap. They lost the race, but the fastest four teams qualify for the final, and their time stood fourth after the competition was over, so they still have an historic speed skating medal for New Zealand in sight.

Michael feels the pressure to win the unique medal, which would be the second in the NOC's history at the Olympic Winter Games: "I think we're dealing quite well. We obviously have a lot of pressure on us. But we put a lot on ourselves. We expect nothing but the best. So that's why we're always going to be striving for more. I think it's good how we're going."

The New Zealand anchor is looking forward to the semifinal in which they will face the host nation: "It's going to be a tough run to go against Korea, but we do hype up for the crowd. I'm probably the most immature and just imagine them cheering for me, but that definitely works in my favor, so I'm pretty hyped for that."

No one able to beat Korea

Korea started in the second pairing versus Italy. The Koreans were slightly slower than Norway in the first half of the race, but started winning time back in the second part. Whereas Norway almost fell apart in the final lap, the Koreans stayed close together to finish with 13.46 and 13.47 split times to beat Norway by an 0.80 margin.

Japan and Canada were not able to challenge Korea, Norway and New Zealand. Shane Williamson, Shota nakamura and Sietaro Ichinohe (JPN) skated 3:41.62 to end up 5th and fresh 10000m Olympic

champion Ted-Jan Bloemen was not able to drag teammates Jordan Belchos and Denny Morrison any further than seventh place in 3:41.73.

Dutch trouble in the final laps

The Netherlands faced the United States in the final pairing. Sven Kramer, Jan Blokhuijsen and Koen Verweij had to bow their head surprisingly for Korea, with Kramer pushing an exhausted Koen Verweij to the line in the final lap. America's Brian Hansen, Emey Lehman and Joey Mantia finished well behind to end up last in 3:42.98.

Kramer was not worried about the struggling Verweij in the final part of the race: "We always want to win, also the heat, but we had too much troubles in the end. But I think there are a lot of opportunities to fix that. We are pretty confident, especially with the first six laps. We were getting a bit in trouble in the last two laps. But I think we really stuck together and we managed to get in the final (second fastest), and that was the most important thing today."

The Team Pursuit Final will take place on Wednesday February 21 in the Gangneung Ice Arena.

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.