



Press release

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Lee's apogee on home ice

Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR) gave the home crowd their long awaited first gold medal in Speed Skating at PyeongChang 2018 on the final day at the Gangneung Oval. The 29-year-old Korean won the maiden Olympic men's Mass Start ahead of Bart Swings (BEL) and Koen Verweij (NED).

Lee won Korea's 15th medal in total in PyeongChang 2018, a record for the host nation at the Olympic Winter Games who won 14 medals at the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

"I dreamed about having a gold medal from the Mass Start a lot before the Games started. But I'm really thankful that the dream came true and I'm so delighted," Lee said in a first reaction.

Chung sacrifices himself for Lee

The gold medalist owed a lot to team mate Jaewon Chung (KOR), who did all the work during the 16 lap race, which started slowly. Vitali Mikhailau (BLR) was the first to attack, when the bell rang for the last lap towards the first intermediate sprint. Livio Wenger (SUI), Linus Heidegger (AUT) and Viktor Hald Thorup (DEN) joined him in a breakaway and Chung set himself in front of the pack to chase. The four men stayed ahead, with Heidegger winning the first intermediate sprint, Thorup the second and Wenger the third.

Chung was the only man making pace in the pack from the fourth to the penultimate lap onwards. Heidegger and Mikhailau fell back into the pack, before the last intermediate sprint, but Thorup and Wenger still managed to stay in front. Sven Kramer attacked three laps before the end. He overtook the two leaders, but the inexhaustible Chung made sure Kramer stayed in sight. In the penultimate lap Swings made his jump. The Belgian quickly chased down Kramer and hammered on to the finish line. Lee was the only one, who could overtake him on the final straight and Verweij took third place.

Delayed honeymoon

"I'm really thankful to Jaewon Chung, because he did well as a pacesetter," Lee said. "He helped me to not have a lot of distance to the other athletes, so I'm really thankful to him. Also to all the other people who helped me to get to this gold medal." The champion especially thanked his wife. He got married last July: "Now I'm planning to go on my honeymoon, because I couldn't go on my honeymoon after my wedding, because of the Olympic Games. I'm really thankful to my wife, because she always helped me to do a lot of things, and for her support."

Dream come true for Swings

Swings claimed Belgium's sixth medal at the Winter Games and the first since 1998, when speed skater Bart Veldkamp took bronze in the men's 5000m in Nagano. He said everything worked to plan for him: "I felt strong today. The semifinal was really easy and in the final everything was good for



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me. I knew there were some fast guys, but at 700m I had to go. One guy was faster than me today, but I'm really happy with the silver medal. I was still going all the way for that gold medal, but once I crossed the finish line, I realized I got silver at the Olympics. That's something I worked for such a long time, it's unbelievable."

Dutch plan comes together

For the Dutch everything went according to plan too, only the color of the medal was not what they had planned for. "I was working for Koen, so it doesn't matter whether I am second or 16th. We had a maximum result, those guys were faster in the sprint. We had a good plan and everything went well until the last two laps. Swings closed the gap and did a good sprint." Verweij agreed: "It was a perfect set-up for me today," Verweij said. Me and Sven (Kramer, NED) did a nice race and everything went according to our plan. I was in a perfect position to finish it. This was the best I could do today. I had a really hard start at the beginning of the Olympics because I was really sick, so I'm really satisfied and I couldn't have done better."

The Men's Mass Started concluded the Speed Skating competitions at the Gangneung Oval at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

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.