

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Event 3 of 6

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Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating – Astana (KAZ) – Day 1

The skaters gathered in the Kazakh capital Astana for the third Essent ISU World Cup of this season. Today on the first day track records were improved in all three distances skated: the Ladies' 500m and 5000m as well as in the Men's 1500m. The winning time of 37.27 in the 500m is the fastest ever skated on a low-altitude rink (the previous best was 37.51). There were 14 personal best times, mainly in the longest distance.

Ladies' 500m

Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) once again claimed victory in the Ladies' 500m race, for the 25th time in her career. Six skaters finished in times under 38 seconds. Nao Kodaira (JPN) was the first of them to set a track record, with 37.72. In the next pair Jenny Wolf (GER) beat Olga Fatkulina (RUS), who finished fifth, and took over the lead with 37.70. World record holder Lee raced in the final pair with Heather Richardson (USA). Lee opened in a very strong 10.17 and took the victory in 37.27, the fastest time ever on any rink outside Calgary and Salt Lake City. Richardson just missed the podium with her time of 37.76. Behind Lee, Beixing Wang (CHN) was second in the ranking, but her absence cost her a top-three position, Wolf is now second with 328 points and Richardson third with 310.

Ladies' 5000m

This weekend the program features the longest distance. The main battle was between Martina Sáblíková (CZE) and Claudia Pechstein (GER). This time Pechstein started faster than the world record holder but after 3000m Sáblíková took the lead and continued with low 33 laps to secure her 30th World Cup victory and bring her own track record below seven minutes in 6:59.88. Pechstein finished in 7:01.10. The Dutch did not send De Jong or Wüst, but Yvonne Nauta finished third with 7:04.64, and the top-four finishers in the B-division were also Dutch, with Carlijn Achtereekte winning in 7:03.55, the third-best time of the day, and Carien Kleibeuker also finishing below the time of Nauta. Sáblíková leads in the World Cup ranking with 280 points, 20 more than Pechstein.

Men's 1500m

Five skaters finished in under 1:46. The first of them was Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR) with 1:45.87. In the penultimate pair World Cup winner Zbigniew Bródka (POL) raced with world champion Denis Yuskov (RUS). Bródka opened fast but Yuskov was the strongest in the second half and the only skater to post a 26.8-second lap. His last lap was also the fastest of all, with 27.6. Yuskov broke the track record, which was 1:45.69, and brought it down to 1:45.06, a very strong time here. Bródka finished in 1:45.78. In the final pair winners of the first two World Cup races Shani Davis (USA) and Koen Verweij (NED) had their battle. This time Verweij won with a 27.8 last lap but Yuskov's time was out of reach. Verweij took silver with 1:45.23. Davis's 28.6 last lap dropped him to fifth in the race with a time of 1:45.92.

Kjeld Nuis (NED) and Brian Hansen (USA) dropped out of the top of the ranking due to their absence here. Now Verweij leads the World Cup with 250 points, Davis has 230, and third is Yuskov with 174.

Tomorrow's program has the second 500m and the 1500m for Ladies, and for Men the 500m and the 1000m.

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Essent ISU World Cup Speed Skating – Astana (KAZ) - Medal Winners Friday

500m Ladies

1	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	37.27 TR
2	Jenny Wolf	GER	37.70 TR
3	Nao Kodaira	JPN	37.72 TR

5000m Ladies

1	Martina Sábkliková	CZE	6:59.88 TR
2	Claudia Pechstein	GER	7:01.10
3	Yvonne Nauta	NED	7:04.64

1500m Men

1	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:45.06 TR
2	Koen Verweij	NED	1:45.23
3	Zbigniew Bródka	POL	1:45.78

For details of the Essent ISU World Cup, including complete results see www.isu.org .

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