

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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February 15, 2014

2014 Sochi Olympic Winter Games **Short Track Speed Skating Ladies 1500 m**

Zhou Yang (CHN) won the ladies 1500m for the second time in a row, Shim Suk-Hee (KOR) finished in second place and Arianna Fontana (ITA) won bronze. With three races in one day for those who reached the final, it was a tough day.

In the heats all of the favourites went through to the next round but Elise Christie (GBR) as she was declared a non-finisher after the race for having crossed outside the finish-line parameters. It was the second successive time she had been ejected by the referees, following her disqualification in the 500m final on Thursday. 2010 Bronze medalist Park Seung-Hi (KOR) did not start due to an injury suffered in the 500m final. Christie said: "I have no idea what happened. I did a pretty clean race." Russian Valeria Reznik also got a penalty, and Veronique Pierron (FRA) was advanced by the referee. In the final heat, Tatiana Borodulina (RUS) got a penalty and Zsafia Konya (HUN) fell leaving the qualification spots for Scott (USA), Kim (KOR) and Windisch (AUT).

In the first race of the semi-finals, Zhou and Shim easily qualified for the A-final, while Marie-Eve Drolet (CAN) and Jessica Smith (USA) went to the B-final. The second semi-final had Fontana and Jorien ter Mors (NED) making it to the A-final as European representatives, with Bernadett Heidum (HUN) and Veronique Pierron (FRA) to Final B. In the last semi-final, 500m gold medallist LI Jianrou (CHN) took the first spot, and Kim Alang (KOR) was second. Emily Scott was advanced to the A-final after being pushed back by Korean Cho Ha-Ri who received a penalty for impeding. Valerie Maltais (CAN) and Veronika Windisch (AUT) qualified for B-final.

In the B-final, Maltais with three laps to go went off, flying ahead far in front of the pack who was previously led by Jessica Smith (USA). Smith did not have the speed to bridge the gap, nor did any of the other skaters. Maltais moved on to win the B-final Smith was second with followed by Drolet.

The A-final of the Ladies 1500m had 7 strong participants: Zhou, Shim, Fontana, Ter Mors, Li, Kim and Scott. The American tried to settle on the lead quickly but Fontana soon reacted. A fall brought three skaters down, Li, Scott and Kim. Kim was later penalized, Li did not finish, and Scott continued to finish in fifth. In the front, the order did not change any more: Yang Zhou took the gold, Suk-Hee Shim silver and Arianna Fontana a bronze after her silver two days earlier in the 500m. Jorien Ter Mors, who did not seem to have enough power to attack, was fourth.

Zhou Yang, who got her second gold medal in row at the same Olympic event said: "I think this gold medal is for four years of hard work. It means I'm able to top the podium."

The young Korean skater, Shim Suk Hee commented on her silver medal: "I am disappointed I was not able to overtake in the last moment, but overall I am satisfied. It would be a lie to say I did not feel the pressure, but rather than focusing on that... I am sorry I didn't fulfil the expectations of people who were cheering for me."

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Arianna Fontana became the first European to win four Olympic medals: “My goal was to get into the final and once there to try to do something. With five laps to go, I started to get tired, but I wanted to win that medal. This Olympic atmosphere was just amazing.”

Jorien ter Mors, fourth place: “I skated well, but I just finished off the medals. To be only 0.02 behind is sore. I felt strong and relaxed. I did look at the men’s final after my race, but I am in my own world. I have to switch the button and tomorrow I have another chance, in long track.”

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.sochi2014.com and www.isu.org

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