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For immediate release

## **ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2014/15 - Heerenveen (NED) Day 1**

The Korean men clinched this season's Team Pursuit World Cup, when they won the third and final leg in this event in Heerenveen on Friday. Martina Sáblíková (CZE) defeated Ireen Wüst (NED) in a fierce battle in the Ladies' 3000m and Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) took gold in the 500m for Ladies. Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) dominated the Men's 500m in a personal best time. Ten other skaters set a personal best on Friday and Christian Oberbichler (SWI) even broke the Swiss national record, when he finished his 500m in 35.71.

### **Sáblíková defeats Wüst in 3000m ladies**

After a silver medal in Obihiro and a bronze in Berlin Martina Sáblíková collected the complete medal set for this season in the 3000m in Heerenveen. Ireen Wüst had to settle for silver and Carlijn Achtereekte (NED) took the bronze.

Achtereekte, who set the fastest time in the B-division last week, skated 4:05.95 in the first pair. She managed to drop her lap times towards the end, finishing with two 32,8 laps. Most other skaters saw their lap times go up during the race. Olympic bronze medallist Olga Graf (RUS) finished with a 33.4 lap to end up sixth in 4:08.24.

Ivanie Blondin (CAN) was below Achtereekte's split time with only one lap to go, but then dropped from 32.8 to 33.9 in the final lap to finish in 4:06.33. It was 0.38 short for the podium, but the Canadian finished almost a second ahead of fifth ranked Claudia Pechstein (GER), who reached 4:07.16.

Only in the final pair both skaters kept their lap times below 33 throughout the entire race. Ireen Wüst took the lead, but after 1000m Sáblíková gained a little back every time they crossed the finish line. With an unprecedented 32.5 in the final lap, she handed Wüst a knock-out blow. Sáblíková set 4:02.84 and Wüst had to settle for 4:03.14.

Sáblíková leads the World Cup with 330 points. Wüst, who won two 3000m races this season, is second with 280 and Claudia Pechstein (GER), who took gold in this season's only Ladies' 5000m, is third with 235.

### **Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) just inches ahead of Nao Kodaira (JPN) in 500m**

Only one hundredth of a second separated Sang-Hwa Lee from Nao Kodaira on the finish line of the Ladies 500m. The Korean queen of sprint took her sixth World Cup gold medal of the season and Kodaira collected her fourth silver. In a battle between the two fastest ladies of this season, Kodaira seemed to be on her way to a narrow victory, but in the final metres Lee was just a little bit stronger.

“It is fine. It was a good race. I will try again next time”, Kodaira said.

Lee set 37.69 and Kodaira 37.70. Only two other skaters managed to finish below 38. Judith Hesse (GER) took bronze in 37.88 and Brittany Bowe (USA) finished fourth in 37.95.

Lee increased her World Cup lead. She has 680 points, Kodaira has 550. Margot Boer (NED), who finished seventh in Heerenveen is third with 314 point, just one point ahead of number four Hesse.

### **Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) on top again in 500m**

Pavel Kulizhnikov came back in superior shape after a crash in Berlin last week and grabbed gold in the 500m. Last week's double winner Artur Was (POL) settled for silver and Laurent Dubreuil (CAN) took the bronze.

Mika Poutala (FIN) started competition in the A-division with 35.22, a time that he was visibly happy about. Olympic Champion Michel Mulder (NED) was only 0.03 faster in the third pair and until the seventh pair nobody managed to beat that time.

The first to skate under 35 seconds was Artur Was. Jan Smeekens (NED), who won the first 500m race this season, and 2010 Olympic Champion Tae-Bum Mo (KOR) both disappointed in the penultimate pair, when they skated 35.47 (16<sup>th</sup>) and 35.38 (13<sup>th</sup>) respectively.

Was, Mulder and Poutala were in the medal seats when Kulizhnikov and Dubreuil entered the rink in the final pair. Kulizhnikov powered to 34.63, which was a personal best and the third-fastest time ever on Thialf ice. Dubreuil finished in 35.16 and thus kicked Olympic champion Mulder off the podium.

With 480 points Kulizhnikov retained his lead in the World Cup. Dubreuil is second with 411 and Smeekens third with 341 points, in spite of earning only 12 today. Artur Was moved up to rank 5 behind Tae-Bum Mo (KOR).

### **Korean men win World Cup Team Pursuit**

Seung-Hoon Lee led his Korean team mates Cheol-Min Kim and Byung-Wook Ko to the Team Pursuit gold, ahead of the Dutch team with Douwe de Vries, Arjen Stroetinga and Frank Vreugdenhil. Norway took the bronze with Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Fredrik van der Horst and Håvard Bøkko, who had his first appearance this season.

Korea beat Russia in the penultimate pair and in had a nerve-wrecking wait during the final race, when the Dutch men seemed to be on gold medal course until the final lap. With final split times of 14.3 and 14.1 the Dutch did not show enough stamina to outlast the Korean men, who set two split times of 13.8 in the final lap to finish in 3:44.57. The Netherlands set 3:44.97 and Norway 3:45.52, which was good enough to qualify for the World Championships. Last week's winners Poland finished sixth with 3:47.90.

With their win in the final Team Pursuit Race of the season Korea not only took their first ever gold medal in the Men's team pursuit, they also won the World Cup with 310 points. The Netherlands ended second with 290 and Poland third with 205.

Team Pursuit qualification for the World Single Distance Championships is settled now. The top six ranked teams and the two time-fastest qualified. After the top-3 Russia, Canada and Italy qualified based on ranking. Norway and Germany qualified on time. Germany kicked out Austria, who did not participate because Linus Heidegger, skates at the Junior World Cup in Minsk this weekend, and there were no substitutes available.

For full results of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2014/15 please refer to <http://www.isureults.eu/> and <http://www.isu.org/en/speed-skating/series/isu-world-cup-speed-skating>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series is available as a live stream on the ISU Skating Channel. Please note that geoblocking may be required in certain territories <http://livemanager.eurovision.edgesuite.net/isu/index.html> and you can also follow how

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series continues tomorrow in Heerenveen with the 1000m for Ladies and Men, the Ladies' Team Pursuit and the Men's 5000m.

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### **ISU World Cup Speed Skating Heerenveen (NED) - Medal Winners day 1**

#### **3000 m Ladies**

<b>1</b>	Martina Sáblíková	CZE	4:02.84
<b>2</b>	Ireen Wüst	NED	4:03.14
<b>3</b>	Carlijn Achtereekte	NED	4:05.95

#### **500 m Ladies**

<b>1</b>	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	37.69
<b>2</b>	Nao Kodaira	JPN	37.70
<b>3</b>	Judith Hesse	GER	37.88

#### **500 m Men**

<b>1</b>	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.63 P
<b>2</b>	Artur Was	POL	34.91



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<b>3</b>	Laurent Dubreuil	CAN	35.16
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## **Team Pursuit Men**

<b>1</b>	S.-H. Lee, C.-M. Kim, B.-W. Ko	KOR	3:44.57
<b>2</b>	D. de Vries, A. Stroetinga, F. Vreugdenhil	NED	3:44.97
<b>3</b>	H. Bøkko, F. van der Horst, S. Lunde Pedersen	NOR	3:45.52

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