

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2015/16 – Calgary (CAN) Day 3

Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) broke the 500m world record on the final day of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Calgary and set a mark of 34.00. Brittany Bowe (USA) skated a 1500m world record on the superfast ice of the Canadian Olympic Oval on Sunday: 1:51.59.

Hong Zhang (CHN) defeated Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR) in the Ladies' 500m and Denis Yuskov (RUS) won the Men's 1500m in a Russian national record. Bo-Reum Kim won the Ladies' Mass Start after a waiting game in the final sprint and Belgian Bart Swings took gold in the more exciting Men's Mass start.

The Canadian ice preparation was perfect this weekend. The final Calgary World Cup day led to two world records, 16 national records and 83 personal bests.

Kulizhnikov takes 500m to the 34 edge

Despite not even skating a perfect race Pavel Kulizhnikov managed to beat Jeremy Wotherspoon's (CAN) eight-year-old world record of 34.03. "It was not flawless, so it could be possible to skate faster", he said. Kulizhnikov left something to look out for next week in Salt Lake City because he did not yet manage to break the 34 second barrier. "It will be my first visit to Salt Lake City", he said. "Everything depends on the ice quality, but I'll do my best."

The Men's 500m started chaotic with a crash of Nico Ihle (GER) and Alexandre St-Jean (CAN) in the first pair. St-Jean's compatriots had more luck and finished 2nd, 3rd and 4th. William Dutton (34.25) defeated Ronald Mulder (NED) in the penultimate pair to take silver and Alex Boisvert-Lacroix took bronze in 34.30. Gilmore Junio also skated 34.30 but Boisvert-Lacroix was four thousandths of a second faster. Mika Poutala (FIN), who finished 2nd in the first 500m on Friday, only saw Kulizhnikov at the start of the final pair. He finished almost half a second behind the Russian in 34.44 to end up eighth.

In the B Division there were national records for Espen Aarnes Hvammen (NOR, 34.67), Roman Krech (KAZ, 34.75) and David Bosa (ITA, 34.80).

Revenge for Bowe in 1500m

Brittany Bowe was a class of her own in the Ladies' 1500m. After improving her 1000m world record and then losing it to compatriot Heather Richardson-Bergsma within a few minutes on Saturday, Bowe was frustrated. "I tried to channel all that energy and focus on good technique and solid racing", she said. Skating in the final pair of the 1500m she faced the tough task of beating Richardson's new national record time of 1:52.27.

Bowe started slower than her compatriot but she was faster in the first two full laps and managed to finish in 1:51.59, which was 0.20 faster than Cindy Klassen's ten-year-old world record. "Cindy is a legend and I did my best to come out on top today and to have a world record attached to that race is a great honour", she said. Behind Richardson Czech long distance champion Martina Sáblíková finished third improving her own national record to 1:54.18.

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In the B Division Vanessa Bittner (1:56.30-) set an Austrian record taking the last distance from 1994 Olympic Champion Emese Hunyady and Saskia Alusalu skated an Estonian record in 2:02.49.

Yuskov takes track record in 1500m

Denis Yuskov skated in the fourth pair of the 1500m. The Russian managed to break the 1:42 barrier for the first time in his career to set a Russian record and a track record: 1:41.88. No one else was faster than 1:42, but Bart Swings (BEL), Joey Mantia (USA) and Kjeld Nuis (NED) kept their times below 1:43. Swings and Mantia both set 1:42.48, but Swings took the silver medal because he edged out his Team Stressless by two thousandths of a second. Nuis started faster than Yuskov and was still ahead at 700m, but he lost too much in the last two laps and had to settle for fourth place in 1:42.89.

Swings' time was a Belgian record. Bailin Li (CHN) also took the national record, in 1:44.50. There were NRs for Belarus (Vitalij Mikhailov, 1:45.86), Denmark (Viktor Hald Thorup, 1:47.92) and Switzerland (Livio Wenger, 1:48.04) too.

Sven Kramer (NED) finished 19th after a disappointing 1:46.91. The Dutch endurance specialist was slowed down as pair mate Min Seok Kim (KOR) crashed out of the first inner turn. "I got distracted a little and then it's very difficult to get back into the race. My main goal is the 10,000m next week in Salt Lake City", Kramer said.

Hong Zhang beats Sang-Hwa Lee

Heather Richardson got a chance for revenge on her 1500m loss against Bowe when the two American ladies faced each other in the penultimate pair of the 500m. Richardson edged out her compatriot with 37.06 versus a personal best of 37.12 for Bowe. At that moment the US Ladies were first and second, but both Sang-Hwa Lee and Hong Zhang managed times below 37 seconds in the final pair. Lee opened in 10.32 versus 10.76, but Zhang skated a superb full lap in 26.1 to finish in 36.94, which was just 0.05 ahead of Lee (36.99).

Jing Yu (CHN), the 2014 World Sprint Champion, finished in 37.32 to end up fourth and Jorien ter Mors (NED) showed her renewed power this season when she took 0.32 of her personal record to end up fifth in 37.50.

In the B group Elina Risku set a new Finnish national record in 38.70.

Kim takes advantage of early Blondin attack

The Mass start for Ladies turned out to be a waiting game. Heather Richardson won the first intermediate sprint and Martina Sáblíková won the second with a half-hearted attempt to break away. Claudia Pechstein (GER) tried to attack after the third intermediate sprint, but Ivanie Blondin (CAN) chased her down with Irene Schouten (NED) in her slipstream. Blondin then tried an early surprise attack in the final lap, but she got caught by Bo-Reum Kim (KOR), who crossed the finish line first to take gold. Schouten also overhauled Blondin in the finale metres to take silver and the Canadian lady had to settle for bronze.

Mass Start Men

Jorrit Bergsma (NED) wanted a tough race and didn't hide his intentions. The Dutchman tried to escape after the first intermediate sprint, but Bart Swings kept an eye on everything and did not let

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Bergsma get away easy. When Bergsma straightened up after his failed attack Reyon Kay (NZL) and Livio Wenger (SUI) escaped from the pack. They almost seemed to be able to stay away, but Wenger couldn't keep up the pace. When he was caught he slightly hindered Bergsma, who was hunting down Kay. Bergsma couldn't close the gap with Swings in the final straight, but he managed to catch Kay. Swings grabbed gold, Bergsma silver and Kay handed New-Zealand its first ever World Cup Speed Skating medal when he claimed the Mass Start bronze.

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For further information please contact

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ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2015/16 – Calgary (CAN) Day 3, medal winners

1500m Ladies

1	Brittany Bowe	USA	1:51.59 WR
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	1:52.27 N
3	Martina Sáblíková	CZE	1:54.18 N

1500m Men

1	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:41.88 N, TR
2	Bart Swings	BEL	1:42.48 (0) N
3	Joey Mantia	USA	1:42.48 (2) P

500m Ladies

1	Hong Zhang	CHN	36.94 P
2	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	36.99
3	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	37.06

500m Men

1	Pavel Kulizhnikov	RUS	34.00 WR
2	William Dutton	CAN	34.25 P

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3	Alex Boisvert-Lacroix	CAN	34.30 P
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Mass Start Ladies

1	Bo-Reum Kim	KOR
2	Irene Schouten	NED
3	Ivanie Blondin	CAN

Mass Start Men

1	Bart Swings	BEL
2	Jorrit Bergsma	NED
3	Reyon Kay	NZL