

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2015/16 – Inzell (GER) Day 3

Alexis Contin (FRA) took the first ever French World Cup win in speed skating history when he crossed the line first in the Men's Mass Start in Inzell on Sunday. Denis Yuskov (RUS) won the Men's 1500m in a new track record of 1:44.21 on the final day of competition in the Max-Aicher-Arena.

Brittany Bowe won the Ladies' 1500m and Sang-Hwa Lee took gold in the Ladies 500m and Artur Waś (POL) won the Men's 500m. Irene Schouten (NED) sprinted to victory in the Ladies' Mass Start. With six different nationalities winning six different races, it was truly an international day.

The statistics harvest of the entire weekend was 2 TRs in the ladies' distances and 2 TR's and 8 Pbs in the men's distances, next to TR's in both Team Pursuit races.

Big gap between USA and the rest

Two women reign the Ladies' 1500m this season. Both Brittany Bowe and Heather Richardson-Bergsma (USA) won a 1500m World Cup race, with Richardson taking the world record in Salt Lake City two weeks ago. In the Max Aicher Arena Richardson started faster than Bowe and she had the lead at the split after 300m, 700m and 1100m. Bowe stayed close however, and managed to catch her compatriot with a superb final lap. Bowe clocked 1:54.68, just ahead of Richardson's 1:54.94. They went away with gold and silver again.

The gap between the American Ladies and the rest of the field was almost a full second. Marrit Leenstra (NED) was best of the rest with 1:55.79, to complete the podium behind Bowe and Richardson. In the penultimate pair Leenstra defeated Martina Sáblíková (CZE), who took the 1500m bronze in Calgary and Salt Lake City. Sáblíková finished in 1:56.17 to take fifth place. Norway's Ida Njåtun finished fourth in 1:55.99.

Bowe leads the World Cup with 280 points, followed by Richardson-Bergsma with 260. Sáblíková follows with 190, Leenstra has 180.

Yuskov hits back with track record

Denis Yuskov took revenge for his disqualification in the 1500m of Salt Lake City two weeks ago, when he forgot to wear his transponder during the race. On the final racing day in Inzell the Russian clocked 1:44.21 in the penultimate pair of the 1500m. He broke Brian Hansen's (USA) track record of 1:44.58.

After Yuskov, Kjeld Nuis (NED), who took gold in Salt Lake City, faced Joey Mantia (USA) in the final pair. The Dutchman went for an all or nothing race and started with 23.4 versus Yuskov's 23.8 in the first 300m. Nuis, who left Mantia far behind, also set a quicker first full lap with 25.6 versus 25.7 for Yuskov, but he had to pay heavily in the last two laps. In the final lap Mantia almost caught Nuis back, but he came 0.05 seconds short to beat the Dutchman. Nuis finished in 1:45.20 to take silver and Mantia took his second bronze medal of the season in 1:45.25.

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Nuis kept the lead in the World Cup standings with 240 points. Mantia is second with 220 points and Yuskov climbed to third place with 200 points.

Lee takes second gold

After she set a new 500m track record (37.33) on Friday, Sang-Hwa Lee was far ahead of the rest in the second 500m on Sunday too. Lee defeated Heather Richardson in the final pair and finished in 37.36. Her American pair mate clocked 37.84 and no other skater set a time below 38 seconds.

In the penultimate pair Heather McLean (CAN) set 38.02 to complete the podium. After the Canadian Team Sprint bronze of Calgary three weeks ago, this was McLean's first individual World Cup medal.

Lee kept the lead in the 500m World Cup standings with 520 points. Richardson is second with 410 and Hong Zhang, who was absent in Inzell, dropped to third place with 380 points.

Gold for confident Waś

Artur Waś knew he was fast in Sunday's 500m. The Polish skater clocked 34.65 in his pair against Alex Boisvert-Lacroix (CAN), who finished in 34.74. Waś cheered when he crossed the finish line as if he knew that the last two pairs would not be able to beat his time. His confidence proved just because none of the four skaters in the last two pairs came close. Boisvert-Lacroix' time proved to be good enough for silver and Kai Verbij (NED), who had finished in 34.80 in the fifth pair, completed the podium.

William Dutton (CAN) was not able to take advantage of Pavel Kulizhnikov's absence to push the Russian from the top of the World Cup rankings. The Canadian had his first World Cup weekend without medals this season, finishing 14th in 35.04 on Sunday.

Despite being absent, Kulizhnikov kept the lead in the World Cup standings with 400 points. Dutton is second with 324 and Gilmore Junio, who won Friday's 500m race in Inzell and finished fourth today, is third with 285 points, only 5 points ahead of Waś.

Dutch play out team tactics well

The Netherlands played out their tactics well in the Ladies' Mass Start on Sunday. Janneke Ensing (NED) tried to escape from the pack a couple of times and Irene Schouten let her rivals chase her down time and again. Four laps from the finish Ensing set up in a breakaway with Miho Takagi (JAP) but the couple were caught just before the final lap.

Schouten now had to deal with Ivanie Blondin (CAN) in the final sprint. The Dutchwoman went in the lead full pace into the finale corner with the Canadian in her back. Blondin came shoulder to shoulder on the final straight, but Schouten countered well and took her second consecutive World Cup gold. Korea's Do-Young Park finished third ahead of Martina Sáblíková.

Schouten strengthened her lead in the World Cup and leads with 280 points. Blondin is second with 230 points and Ensing, who finished seventh in Inzell, is third with 132 points.

Contin takes first ever French World Cup win

Alexis Contin (FRA) took the first French World Cup gold in the Men's Mass Start. Contin has

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already won the 2012 overall Mass Start World Cup, but he had never won a single World Cup race before.

The Dutchmen tried to play the same team tactics as the Ladies, but the pack split in two parts and the two Dutchmen were separated. Jorrit Bergsma (NED) was in the first group trying to pave the way for Arjan Stroetinga (NED), who had won the Mass Start in Salt Lake City. Stroetinga was too far back in the second group however and Bergsma's energy was spent in vain. Once Bergsma found out that his team mate was not able to sprint for victory, he tried to jump away from the first group. Contin went after Bergsma and took advantage of the slipstream to sprint to victory. Bergsma took silver and Italy's Fabio Francolini sprinted to the bronze medal.

Stroetinga finished fifth and kept the lead in the World Cup standings with 200 points. Bergsma equalled Stroetinga's 200 points, but he is second because he did not win a race. Francolini is third with 178 points and Contin climbed to fifth place with 160 points and former leader Bart Swings (BEL) was absent and dropped to fourth.

Grand World Cup

After this third weekend Heather Richardson-Bergsma leads the Grand World Cup with 765 points, followed by Bowe with 740 and Šabliková with 610. With 490 points Kjeld Nuis holds the lead in the men's Grand World Cup, followed by Bergsma with 410 and Swings with 400. This Friday the skaters will compete again, in Heerenveen, the Netherlands.

Additional information

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

1500m Ladies

1	Brittany Bowe	USA	1:54.68
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	1:54.94
3	Marrit Leenstra	NED	1:55.79

1500m Men

1	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:44.21 TR
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2	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:45.20
3	Joey Mantia	USA	1:45.25

500m Ladies

1	Sang-Hwa Lee	KOR	37.36
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	37.84
3	Heather McLean	CAN	38.02

500m Men

1	Artur Waś	POL	34.65
2	Alex Boisvert-Lacroix	CAN	34.74
3	Kai Verbij	NED	34.80

Mass Start Ladies

1	Irene Schouten	NED	8:18.41
2	Ivanie Blondin	CAN	8:18.43
3	Do-Young Park	KOR	8:18.61

Mass Start Men

1	Alexis Contin	FRA	7:33.37
2	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	7:33.76
3	Fabio Francolini	ITA	7:34.06