

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final 2015/16 – Heerenveen (NED) Day 1

Brittany Bowe (USA) started the World Cup Final with another victory in the 500m in Heerenveen on Friday. In the Men's 500m Ruslan Murashov (RUS) grabbed gold in Thialf Stadium. Despite being absent Martina Sáblíková (CZE) won a milestone 3000/5000m World Cup, with Natalya Voronina (RUS) winning the final race of the season. The Dutch men took Team Pursuit victory to secure the overall World Cup and the Chinese ladies were the first ever to win the overall Team Sprint World Cup after beating Japan and the Netherlands.

Bowe dominates in sprint

Brittany Bowe was the only lady to finish the first Ladies' 500m race of the World Cup Final within 38 seconds. The World Sprint Champion stopped the clock at 37.84 to win the shortest distance on Friday. Hong Zhang (CHN) finished fifth in 38.27 and thus retained her lead in the 500m World Cup. Bowe is fourth in the 500m ranking, which was not her focus this season. "I used the 500m strategically for the 1000m this season. It hasn't been my goal for this season, but obviously when I'm on the ice I want to win," she said.

Heather Richardson-Bergsma (USA) came second in the 500m. She skated 38.02 in the final pair versus Hong Zhang from China. With 10.70 for Richardson and 10.94 for Zhang the two ladies had the slowest openers of the field after an initial false start. "My glove was a little slippery. The start was ok, but not good enough for the 500m," said Richardson. She did not have a good preparation. "I went down in the warm-up and maybe I was a little shaky because of that," she said.

Jorien ter Mors finished third with 38.20. "I skate these 500m races to learn", she said. "My opener was all-right today, but my first corner was not, so with a better full lap I hope to come a little closer to the American ladies tomorrow."

In spite of Richardson (728 points) overtaking the absent Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR, 680 points) in the 500m World Cup ranking, Zhang is still in the lead with 766 points. With one more race to go both are still within reach of the 500m World Cup.

Murashov defends Russian honor

Ruslan Murashov took care of the Russian honor in the men's 500m. In absence of World Cup leader Pavel Kulizhnikov he won the penultimate 500m race of the 2015/2016 season, thus keeping his chance to win the overall 500m World Cup alive. Kulizhnikov has 705 points and Murashov 585, with a possible 150 points to win in the final race on Sunday.

Murashov was the only man to skate below 35 seconds with 34.96. Ronald Mulder (NED) crossed the finish line after 35.05 seconds to take silver. "Mentally it was a very strange race because everyone could win in absence of Kulizhnikov," Mulder said.

With 35.12 Gilmore Junio (CAN) took his second podium place in the 500m this season. After gold in Inzell he took bronze in the first race of the final weekend. "It was probably my best race of the season," he said. Junio is third in the World Cup ranking and aims at a podium spot in the overall

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standings. "That's something I've been working on for my whole career", he said. With 561 points he could even still win the Cup.

Mika Poutala (FIN) also skated 35.12, but he got rank four. Despite just missing the podium, he was satisfied with his performance. "This has been a very stable season for me, second-best. I have shown the Finnish Olympic Committee that I was worth the money."

Milestone for Sábliková

The queen of the long distances was absent in Heerenveen. Martina Sábliková won all five 3000/5000m World Cup races this season and already had an unassailable lead in the 3000/5000m World Cup standings. She grabbed the 3000/5000m World Cup for the tenth consecutive season and now equaled Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann (GER) on a record tenth win.

Meanwhile Natalya Voronina won the final 3000m race of the season in 4:08.15. "I am satisfied with my race and good shape, and I know I have won, but it doesn't feel like a victory because Sábliková and Wüst were not here," she said. Voronina finished second in the 3000/5000 World Cup standings ahead of Irene Schouten (NED), who finished fifth in 4:08.91.

The tight 3000m had six skaters finishing in 4:08. Jorien Voorhuis (NED) came second in 4:08.18 and Olga Graf (RUS) was third in 4:08.40. Voorhuis had mixed feelings: "I am happy to stand on the podium this last World Cup. It's a pity that it is 0.03 short of gold. It fits in my season, I was fourth twice, missing the podium with a similarly small margin. But I can't see where I could have gained those hundredths,"

Graf was especially happy to have a couple of new youngsters in the Russian team this season: "Natalia (Voronina) is strong. She works very hard. With her 21 years she may have skated too many competitions. She helped me and I helped her. Because of her hard work, I worked harder too this season, together with Elizabeta Kazelina, who is at the Junior Worlds."

Team Pursuit Men

Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries, Arjan Stroetinga secured the Team Pursuit World Cup with 350 points, after winning with 3:42.28 on home ice. After Stroetinga crashed in this season's first Team Pursuit race in Calgary, the Dutch men won the remaining three Team Pursuit events in Inzell and twice in Heerenveen.

Norway (Håvard Bøkko, Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen) came second after having beaten Italy (Andrea Giovannini, Nicola Tumolero, Michele Malfatti) in the first pair. They finished in 3:43.42. The Italians finished fourth in 3:47.20. Poland (Zbigniew Bródka, Jan Szymanski, Konrad Niedzwiedzki) took the bronze medal in 3:47.03. Norway overtook Poland to finish second in the World Cup rankings with 280 points, Poland was third with 279 points.

Team Sprint Ladies

China conquered the inaugural ladies' Team Sprint World Cup. Jing Yu, Hong Zhang and Qishi Li set 1:28.98 in their race against the Netherlands (Bo van der Werff, Janine Smit, Margot Boer), who finished in 1:30.04. Japan raced on their own, because Russia withdrew for the final weekend. Maki Tsuji, Erina Kamiya and Nao Kodaira set the third time in 1:29.98. The result of the final race was

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similar to the final World Cup ranking. China gathered 330 points, the Netherlands 314 and Japan 290.

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Friday, medal winners

500m Ladies

1	Brittany Bowe	USA	37.84
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	38.02
3	Jorien ter Mors	NED	38.20

500m Men

1	Ruslan Murashov	RUS	34.96
2	Ronald Mulder	NED	35.05
3	Gilmore Junio	CAN	35.12

3000m Ladies

1	Natalya Voronina	RUS	4:08.15
2	Jorien Voorhuis	NED	4:08.18
3	Olga Graf	RUS	4:08.40

Team Pursuit Men

1	Jan Blokhuijsen, Douwe de Vries, Arjan Stroetinga	NED	3:42.28
2	Håvard Bøkko, Sverre Lunde Pedersen, Simen Spieler Nilsen	NOR	3:43.42
3	Zbigniew Bródka, Jan Szymanski, Konrad Niedzwiedzki	POL	3:47.03

Team Sprint Ladies

1	Jing Yu, Hong Zhang, Qishi Li	CHN	1:28.98
2	Bo van der Werff, Janine Smit, Margot Boer	NED	1:29.98
3	Maki Tsuji, Erina Kamiya, Nao Kodaira	JPN	1:30.04

Additional information

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