

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final 2015/16 – Heerenveen (NED) Day 2

Brittany Bowe (USA) was the queen of the ice in Heerenveen on Saturday. The World Sprint Champion won both the ladies' 500m and 1500m, with compatriot Heather Richardson-Bergsma coming second on both occasions. Sven Kramer (NED) won the man-to-man battle with compatriot Jorrit Bergsma in the 5000m.

Bowe wins 500m, Richardson takes World Cup

Brittany Bowe won Friday's 500m in 37.84 and shaved another 0.2 seconds of that time when she stopped the clock in 37.64 on Saturday. She enjoyed the Heerenveen public a lot: "It's great to finish the season here in Thialf. I wouldn't want to finish it anywhere else and winning makes it so much sweeter," she said.

Heather Richardson faced Hong Zhang (CHN) in the final pair with the overall 500m World Cup at stake. Richardson was the only one besides Bowe to keep her time within 38 seconds with 37.88. "I did not have issues with my glove at the start like yesterday," she said. "I took a tenth in the opener and a tenth in the lap, so I'm very happy about that."

She was happy winning the World Cup too. She collected 848 points, just edging out Zhang, who finished fifth with 38.24 and dropped to second place with 842 points. Bowe was third in the World Cup 785 points.

It had been a long season for Zhang: "This is the last competition, I'm little tired," she said. Despite having better results in the 500m than in the 1000m this season, the Olympic Champion in the 1000m still likes the double sprint distance better: "I have been training a lot on speed this season, but my heart is with the 1000m."

Nuis does what he came for

Kjeld Nuis (NED) secured the 1000m World Cup when he beat Joey Mantia (USA) in the finale race of the season, finishing in 1:08.94. With Pavel Kulizhnikov absent, Nuis just needed to finish the 1000m because both the Dutchman and the Russian were on 480 points before the final race. Nuis did not settle for anything but gold however. "I came for one thing, and I got it," he said holding the World Cup trophy with a big smile.

Nuis skated an unstable race: "I had a fast opener, but a bit of a slow first full lap. After that I could pull through quite well with a good final lap. It's great to be the only one below 1:09 today." Nuis' fast last lap caused Mantia trouble, because coming from the inner lane he had to hold back to avoid a collision on the final crossing. "I thought ***k, there he comes again," said Nuis. "I thought well you've got to make place. It must be a bummer for him, but that's the way it is."

Another man who had a real bummer at the crossing was Denis Yuskov (RUS). He had to hold back for pair mate Kai Verbij (NED) on the first crossing and lost about half a second. "Kai is faster than me at the start," Yuskov said. "I knew that and expected a problem like that. I was trying to avoid it, but I couldn't. I was surprised that I still got a podium place. Anyway the most important distance for me will be tomorrow [1500m]." The Russian finished in 1:09.22 to take the bronze medal.

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Verbij clocked 1:09.08 to take silver. "I knew that he's not very fast in the opener," Verbij said. "I saw him coming and I accelerated a little to avoid trouble."

Gerben Jorritsma (NED) finished fourth in 1:09.40 to secure third place in the 1000m World Cup ranking with 396 points, behind Kulizhnikov (480) and Nuis (630).

Another win for Bowe

Just an hour after having won the 500m Bowe also took gold in the 1500m. "It's difficult mentally and physically, but that's what we train for. It is what it is," she said. Bowe faced friend and archrival Richardson-Bergsma in the final pair. With 24.79 Richardson had the fastest opener of the field. Bowe opened in 25.27, but she did not worry too much and was faster than others in each lap. "I just stay within myself. We skated together so many times. I know when I'm on the inner I have to open strong not to let her speed take me out of my race plan, so I tried to stay really consistent, solid and relaxed."

"I was in front on the bell. Going into the race I wanted to be in front in that lap because I knew she would have the last chase on the back stretch," Bowe explained her race tactics. She finished in 1:54.34. Richardson-Bergsma took silver in 1:54.90. "The opener was good and I wanted to do a good lap. The second lap was ok, but it became more difficult. I don't know whether it was the fast opener, or maybe the 500m but I got tired towards the finish."

Antoinette de Jong (NED) won bronze in 1:56.32. De Jong was satisfied. "It was a strong race, finally a good 1500m this season. It's a bit frustrating that it's at the end of the season." Bowe and Richardson face each other one last time this season, when they skate the 1000m on Sunday. "We both want to finish on a high note", Richardson looked forward to it.

The 1500m World Cup went to Bowe with 590 points. Richardson came second with 501 and Marrit Leenstra (NED) third with 396. Leenstra skated the fifth time in 1:56.65. Ida Njåtun (NOR) was fourth in 1:56.50.

Kramer wins man-to-man battle

Thialf had been waiting for the final pair of the 5000m the whole afternoon and the crowd got what they wanted: a man-to-man battle between the Dutch long distance rivals Sven Kramer and Jorrit Bergsma. The winner would also take home the 5000/10,000m World Cup. Both men knew that racing against each other would not lead to a superfast time, but they only cared about winning. Being paired to each other suited Kramer better than Bergsma. Kramer said: "Of course I'll skate faster when I'm alone as if in a time trial. The fluctuating lap times are not good for a fast time overall, but I like this better and the crowd loves it too."

Kramer and Bergsma played closely together throwing in some faster laps that were always countered by the other until the 3400 split, then Kramer accelerated to a 29.2 lap. It was no death-blow: Bergsma countered with a 28.9 lap. That was exactly what Kramer needed to step up his game. He countered with 28.3 in the next lap. "When he overtook me I got into this haze and that must have led to this 28.3," Kramer said. Bergsma had to bow his head. "I accelerated and then he accelerated even more. He has simply got more power than I do."

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Kramer won the distance in 6:11.44 and Bergsma came second in 6:12.74. Both men collected a total of 530 points in the World Cup, but Kramer had four wins versus two for Bergsma. They looked back on very different seasons. Kramer said: "I took the allround titles at the European Championships and the World Championships and this World Cup. It's been a fantastic season." Bergsma was less enthusiastic. "This was not such a good season. A couple of downers and no real highlights. But I'm still making progress. It would be frustrating if this was my top level, but there's still a lot to win."

Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR) finished third in 6:16.36 and also took bronze in the World Cup. "It was a pretty good race," he said. "I have a higher level than last year. Those two (SK and JB) are a class of their own. I will keep working hard to get there."

Japanese ladies grab Team Pursuit World Cup

Misaki Oshigiri, Miho Takagi and Nana Takagi handed Japan the Team Pursuit World Cup (430 points), when they won their pair versus Antoinette de Jong, Marrit Leenstra and Ireen Wüst from the Netherlands in 2:58.06. The Dutch ladies came second with 2:58.21 and also took silver in the World Cup with 380 points.

"The team is very good, all members have good condition and tactics," Miho Takagi said. Her sister Nana added: "The plan was to start slow and then gain in the end. It was good that we finished together. This time I skated, and not Ayaka Kikuchi, we are four and the day before the race the coach decides who will race."

Natalia Czerwonka, Katarzyna Wozniak and Luiza Zlotkowska took the bronze in 3:02.34. Russia finished fourth in 3:03.10, but took bronze in the World Cup with 290 points. For the first time Olga Graf and Natalya Voronina skated with Ekaterina Shikhova instead of Elizaveta Kazelina, who became Junior World Champion Allround today in Korea.

Groothuis ends career with victory

Stefan Groothuis finished his speed skating career on a high note. The 34-year-old Sochi 2014 1000m Olympic Champion, who quits professional speed skating after the Heerenveen World Cup final, won the Team Sprint with colleagues Kai Verbij and Ronald Mulder. The Dutch men skated 1:20.40 and also took the inaugural Team Sprint World Cup.

Groothuis skated a lap of honor, carrying his two sons on each arm as his career came to a close. "Before I was really focused on the race," he said. "Nothing more beautiful than to win in a full Thialf, like when I became 1000m World Champion. I am curious what my sons thought of it." His fingers were wrapped in plasters, there were blood stains on his suit: "I hit the back of Kai's skate, and when I finished I saw it was like a bloodbath."

Gilmore Junio, Alexandre St-Jean and Vincent De Haître took silver for Canada in 1:20.41, 0.01 behind the Dutch, and Ruslan Murashov, Aleksey Yesin and Kirill Golubev handed Russia the bronze medal in 1:20.86.

Behind the Dutch, who collected 390 points, Russia came second in the World Cup with 334. Canada was third with 320 points.

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Saturday, medal winners

500m Ladies

1	Brittany Bowe	USA	37.64
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	37.88
3	Heather McLean	NED	38.07

1000m Men

1	Kjeld Nuis	NED	1:08.94
2	Kai Verbij	NED	1:09.08
3	Denis Yuskov	RUS	1:09.22

1500m Ladies

1	Brittany Bowe	USA	1:54.34
2	Heather Richardson-Bergsma	USA	1:54.90
3	Antoinette de Jong	NED	1:56.32

5000m Men

1	Sven Kramer	NED	6:11.44
2	Jorrit Bergsma	NED	6:12.74
3	Sverre Lunde Pedersen	NOR	6:16.36

Team Pursuit Ladies

1	Misaki Oshigiri, Miho Takagi, Nana Takagi	JPN	2:58.06
2	Antoinette de Jong, Marrit Leenstra, Ireen Wüst	NED	2:58.21
3	Natalia Czerwonka, Katarzyna Wozniak, Luiza Zlotkowska	POL	3:02.34

Team Sprint Men

1	Stefan Groothuis, Kai Verbeij, Ronald Mulder	NED	2:58.06
2	Gilmore Junio, Alexandre St-Jean, Vincent De Haître	CAN	2:58.21
3	Ruslan Murashov, Aleksey Yesin, Kirill Golubev	RUS	3:02.34

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