

November 16, 2018

Obihiro, Japan

Japanese ladies dominate, Russian men surprise

The Japanese ladies gave the home crowd something to cheer for when they won the Team Pursuit at the start of the 2018-2019 ISU World Cup Speed Skating season in Obihiro on Friday. Russia took a surprise win in the Men's Team Pursuit. Olympic 500m Champions [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) and [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR) took 500m gold.

Representing Japan, [Ayano Sato](#) and the Takagi-sisters [Miho](#) and [Nana](#), skated like a well-oiled machine versus Germany in the final pair of the Team Pursuit, The Olympic Champions skated were more than a second faster than Germany in each half lap and chased their opponents down quickly, to even overtake them in the final lap. It was Japan's eighth consecutive Team Pursuit victory in the World Cup. The last World Cup race Japan did not win, was when they came second to the Netherlands in Nagano 2016. After Russia and the Netherlands had already set new track records, the home team brought the Obihiro mark down to 2 minutes and 57.80 seconds.

The Dutch ladies came second in 3:00.13. [Ireen Wüst](#) was the only lady in the team who also skated in the silver medal PyeongChang Olympic squad. She was accompanied by [Lotte van Beek](#) and youngster Joy Beune. The orange team defeated Canada, who came fourth in 3:01.46. Russia ([Yevgenia Lalenkova](#), [Natalya Voronina](#) and [Elizaveta Kazelina](#)) came third in 3:01.11.

Miss-stroke doesn't hurt Kodaira

Kodaira confirmed her status as empress of the ladies' sprint, winning the 500m in 37.49. The Olympic Champion hammered out a 10.34 second opener and despite a miss-stroke on the final straight she concluded with a 27.1 second full lap to come out on top.

[Vanessa Herzog](#) (AUT) was the only other lady to break the 38 second barrier. With 27.0 the European 500m Champion had a faster full lap than Kodaira, but it was not enough to make up for the time she lost in her 10.59 opener. With 10.33 [Maki Tsuji](#) (JPN) had the fastest opener of the day. She followed up with a 27.7 full lap to end up in third place.

Russian surprise

Russia's [Aleksandr Rumyantsev](#), [Danila Semerikov](#) and [Sergey Trofimov](#) have surprisingly won the first Team Pursuit race of the 2018-2019 ISU World Cup Speed Skating season in Obihiro.

Russia came tenth in last season's Team Pursuit World Cup, but they seem to have done some good work over the summer. Skating versus Poland in the third pair Rumyantsev, Semerikov and Trofimov started cautiously, but they were the only team to keep all 200m split times under 14 seconds to break the track record in 3:41.26.

In the final pair versus Italy, Olympic Champions Norway ([Håvard Bøkko](#), [Sverre Lunde Pedersen](#) and [Simen Spieler Nilsen](#)) were faster than Russia in the first three laps, but they eventually had to settle for third place in 3:42.770. The Netherlands ([Douwe de Vries](#), Marcel Bosker and Chris Huizinga), who skated in the fourth pair, had a slower start than Norway, but they paced their race better to finish in 3:42.14.

Lorentzen nails first 500m win

Håvard Lorentzen (NOR) was the fastest man on the shortest distance. The Olympic Champions continued where he left off last season. After having won last year's 500m World Cup, the Olympic Champion grabbed the first gold World Cup medal of the season in Obihiro, when he beat world record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) in the penultimate pair. Lorentzen clocked 34.73 to stay 0.04 seconds ahead of the Russian world record holder, who took silver. Japan's [Tatsuya Shinhama](#) came third in 34.87 to take his first career World Cup medal on home soil.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit: isu.org/speed-skating. Results are [here](#) and you can follow the discussion on social media by using #WCSpeedSkating and #SpeedSkating.

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series will be available on in some countries on the ISU Skating Channel.

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating is a Series of international Speed Skating competitions which takes place annually. The Series started in 1984 and usually consists of six or seven Events including the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final. Skaters can earn points at each competition, and the Skater who has the most points on a given distance at the end of the Series is the World Cup winner of that distance. The World Cup Competitions held from November to December serve as qualifying events for entry quotas at the ISU European, World Single Distances, World Sprint and World Allround Speed Skating Championships. A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season; For Men: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, combined 5000m / 10,000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For Ladies 500m, 1000m, 1500m, the combined 3000m / 5000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For further information please visit isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating.