

November 17, 2018

Obihiro, Japan

## Japanese ladies impress again on home soil

With two gold medals and one silver the Japanese ladies showed their overall strength once more on Day 2 of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Obihiro. In the men's competition Denis Yuskov and Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) beat Olympic Champions Kjeld Nuis (NED) and Håvard Lorentzen (NOR).

### Kodaira far ahead of the pack

[Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) took her 18<sup>th</sup> 500m World Cup win on Saturday. With 10.40 seconds the Olympic Champion was slower in the first 100m than she had been on Friday, but she compensated for that with a superb 26.9 second full lap to finish in 39.29 seconds, 0.20 faster than the day before. Starting in the final pair [Vanessa Herzog](#) (AUT) again was best of the rest in 37.65.

[Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS) ended up in third place (37.87). The Russian silver medallist of the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games had won the B division in 38.18 on Friday. In the A Division on Saturday, she was the first to break the 38 second barrier in the seventh pairing. Fatkulina's compatriots [Angelina Golikova](#) (37.89) and [Darya Kachanova](#) (in a personal best of 37.93) also managed to stay under 38 seconds. They took fourth and fifth place.

### Bowe keeps Takagi at bay

Having won all four 1500m World Cup races she started last season, [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) was favourite to win the 1500m on home soil. She started in the final pair straight after Olympic Champion [Ireen Wüst](#) (NED), who took the ice in the penultimate pairing. But first came [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) in the fourth pairing. The American, who had been struggling to come back from a concussion in the Olympic season, smashed Miho Takagi's 2017 track record by more than a second, finishing in 1:55.03.

Bowe was exceptionally fast in the first half of her 1500m and managed to hold on just long enough. Wüst was more than a second behind at the 1100m split, but could only win back half a second in the final lap to finish in 1:55.75. She had to settle for fourth place.

In the final pairing Takagi started a little faster than Wüst, but the World Allround Champion still was 0.71 seconds behind Bowe with 400m to go. Takagi's pair mate [Yekaterina Shikhova](#) (RUS) was trailing her by only 0.08 seconds and the two went flat out in the final lap to beat Bowe's 31.9 final lap. In a last desperate effort Takagi fell over on the finish line, but it did not help. With 1:55.12 she came 0.09 short. Takagi took silver and Shikhova captured the bronze in 1:55.45.

### Familiar faces

The first ladies' Mass Start of the season saw three familiar faces on the podium. Olympic Champion [Nana Takagi](#) (JPN) edged out [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) in the final sprint, with [Bo-Reum Kim](#) (KOR) taking the bronze. At the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games Kim had taken silver and Schouten bronze.

The race in Obihiro started very slow. [Claudia Pechtstein](#) (GER) tried to escape from the pack twice, but never really got away and straightened her back after the second intermediate sprint. [Ivanie Blondin](#) (CAN), Schouten and Takagi were shaping up for the final sprint heading into the final lap, when [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) tried to make a final jump, but the Italian did not

surprise the pack. On the final straight Takagi outsprinted Schouten, while Kim clinched third place, just ahead of Lollobrigida and Blondin.

### **Yuskov beats Olympic Champion**

The first men's 1500m of the season was exciting before the A Division had even started. Japan's [Masaya Yamada](#) won the B Division in a personal best and track record time of 1:45.66. [Sven Kramer](#) (NED) also started in the 1500m B Division, but due to back problems the Dutch Olympic 5000m Champion has not found his form yet this season. He clocked 1:48.10 to end up fourth.

Kramer's 22-year-old team mate [Patrick Roest](#) (NED) was the first to break Yamada's B Division track record when he stopped the clock at 1:45.12. Olympic Champion [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) started out faster than Roest and managed to maintain his speed long enough to stay ahead. With two pairings to go, Nuis led the pack in 1:44.81, but he ended up with a silver medal.

In the final pairing [Denis Yuskov](#) (RUS) beat Nuis with a spectacular final lap of 27.7 seconds. Skating versus [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) Yuskov paced his race superbly. The Russian skated behind Krol's back trailing Nuis' time up till the 1100m split, but none of the other skaters was able to post a sub-28 second lap. Yuskov's thus took gold in a track record time of 1:44.55. Krol took fourth place behind Nuis and Roest in 1:45.36.

With his 1:45.66, B Division winner Yamada would have come fifth in the A division. The A Division's number five and six, [Seitaro Ichinohe](#) (JPN) and [Kim Min-Seok](#) (KOR) were also still faster than Nuis' previous track record time of 1.45,97.

### **Kulizhnikov follows Yuskov's example**

[Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) followed Yuskov's example when he added another gold medal to the Russian tally in the second 500m. The world record holder took revenge for his silver medal behind Olympic Champion [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR) on Day 1. With 34.61 the Russian was 0.12 seconds faster than Lorentzen's winning time and 0.16 faster than he had been himself on Friday.

Lorentzen matched Kulizhnikov's previous 34.77, which got him the bronze medal on Saturday. [Ryohei Haga](#) (JPN) won silver in 34.71, his second World Cup medal after the 500m bronze he won at the 2014 Obihiro World Cup.

### **Men's Mass Start**

[Andrea Giovannini](#) (ITA) won the men's Mass Start in a tight sprint with Simon Schouten (NED) and [Cheon-Ho Um](#) (KOR) after an exhilarating race. Giovannini was one of the first skaters to attack, but he did not manage to breakaway together with [Danila Semerikov](#) (RUS). Chris Huizinga (NED) managed to jump from the pack a little later. He was soon joined by [Viktor Hald Thorup](#) (DEN) and [Ryosuke Tsuchiya](#) (JPN).

The skaters in the pack understood that they couldn't wait any longer, but there was no organised chase. Only some of the strongest skaters managed to bridge the gap, among whom [Bart Swings](#) (BEL) Giovannini, Schouten and Um. Swings led out the final sprint, but was overtaken by Schouten on the inside when he entered the final straight. Giovannini caught up and edged out the Dutchman in extremis, with Um taking third place.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit: [isu.org/speed-skating](https://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](https://isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating)