

November 23, 2018

Obihiro, Japan

Japanese goldrush in winter wonderland

Japan won three of the four events on the first day of competition in the second leg of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating at the picturesque outdoor Tomakomai Highland Sports Center.

Ninth consecutive gold for Japan

They entered the rink with long winter coats to stay warm, but once the coats were gone they skated like lightning again. Together with [Ayano Sato](#), the Takagi sisters [Miho](#) and [Nana](#) handed Japan a ninth consecutive World Cup win in the Ladies' Team Pursuit on the cold and sunny outdoor ice in Tomakomai.

Japan, skating in the same line-up as in Obihiro last week, took on the Netherlands in the final pairing and they stopped the clock at 3 minutes and 2.37 seconds. With [Antoinette de Jong](#) instead of [Ireen Wüst](#) to accompany Joy Beune and [Lotte van Beek](#), the Dutch were on podium pace in the first half of their race but dropped back to end up fourth in 3:07.93.

Canada's [Ivanie Blondin](#), [Isabelle Weidemann](#) and [Keri Morrison](#), who had come fourth in Obihiro, took silver in 3:05.95 and jumped to joint second place in the World Cup ranking together with the Netherlands. Russia didn't change their line-up either. [Yevgenia Lalenkova](#), [Natalya Voronina](#) and [Elizaveta Kazelina](#) again took bronze in 3:06.69 and dropped to fourth place in the ranking.

Kodaira unattainable

[Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) took her 18th 500m World Cup gold medal leaving her closest rival almost half a second behind. Vanessa Herzog (AUT) came close to Kodaira at last week's World Cup in Obihiro. In Tomakomai, the Austrian European 500m Champion started in the final pairing versus [Angelina Golikova](#) (RUS). She was 0.53 seconds faster than her pair mate, and 0.30 seconds faster than [Daria Kachanova](#) (RUS), who ended up taking the bronze, but Kodaira had set the bar at an unattainable 38.03 seconds in the penultimate pairing. Herzog took her third silver behind the Japanese Empress.

Behind Kodaira and Herzog [Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS) climbed to third in the World Cup ranking after ending up in fourth place with 38.83. Kachanova climbed to joint fourth place with Golikova, who finished sixth in Tomakomai.

Replacement pays off for Netherlands

Once the men started their Team Pursuit competition, dusk had set in and a bit of snow made the Tomakomai Highland Sports Center look like the perfect winter wonderland. After an extra ice cleaning break halfway through the competition, Olympic Champions Norway were eying revenge for last week's defeat at the hands of Russia and the Netherlands. [Håvard Bøkko](#), [Sverre Lunde Pedersen](#) and [Simen Spieler Nilsen](#) edged out Japan by 0.05 seconds when they stopped the clock at 3:47.12 in the penultimate pairing.

Last week's gold and silver medalists, Russia and the Netherlands, met each other in the final pairing. The Dutch had replaced youngster Chris Huizinga by the also still only 22-year-old World Allround Champion [Patrick Roest](#). The replacement payed off. With Roest as their main engine,

Marcel Bosker and [Douwe de Vries](#) set faster split times than Norway and Japan throughout the race to take gold in 3:45.87. Russia also skated faster than Norway for most of the race, but had to bow their heads in the final two laps. They eventually had to settle for fourth place behind Norway and Japan.

Maiden win for Shinhama

After taking his first World Cup medal coming third in last week's first 500m [Tatsuya Shinhama](#) (JPN) clinched his maiden World Cup victory. The 22-year-old sprinter beat pair-mate [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) in the third last pairing and finished in 35.45. With 25.6 he skated the fastest full lap of the field. Kulizhnikov already lost time in the first 100m and eventually finished in 35.80 to end up sixth.

Behind Shinhama his compatriot [Yuma Murakami](#) took silver in 35.53, while World Champion Jan Smeeckens (NED) grabbed the bronze medal in 35.58. Despite ending up sixth Kulizhnikov held on to the World Cup lead with 152 points. Shinhama is second with 144 points and Håvard Lorentzen (NOR) is third with 138 points. The Norwegian Olympic Champion clocked 35.95 and only came eleventh in the very competitive men's 500m field in Tomakomai.

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.