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Hamar, Norway

Painfree Sáblíková back on top and gold for Pedersen

Martina Sáblíková (CZE) collected her 48th career World Cup win to end a two-year-World Cup draught with a gold medal in the 3000m at Hamar's Vikingskipet on Friday. Natalya Voronina (RUS) took home the silver medal and Marina Zueva (BLR) collected her career second World Cup medal with bronze.

"It's at least two years ago since I last won a World Cup," Sáblíková smiled after her race. The Czech veteran was hampered by a back injury last season and she was happy to have left the medical troubles behind. "I can skate without pain, which is a great feeling.

"I feel very good on the ice, which is a good sign for the 3000m and the 5000m at the World Single Distance Championships in Inzell. But there will be other girls in Inzell, who did not skate here in Hamar, such as Antoinette de Jong and Ireen Wüst (NED)."

With her win Sáblíková also took over the lead in the Ladies' long distance World Cup ranking from her pair-mate Isabelle Weidemann (CAN), whom she left behind from the start. Sáblíková skated solid and steady 31.9 laps in the second part of her race, to finish with a 32.0 lap in 4:02.17.

Weidemann's laps went up to 32 from the third lap onwards and she concluded with 33.0 and 33.3 to stop the clock at 4:08.41 for seventh place.

Voronina clocked 4:03.76 to edge out pair-mate Zueva (4:03.80) in a very close battle for what ended up to be and third and second place. They skated in the second pair from the bottom and Zueva expected to be pushed off the podium by the last four skaters.

"It came as a big surprise to me, with those four strong girls coming after me. It's only my second World Cup podium after my silver medal in the World Cup Final at home in Minsk last year."

Voronina climbed to second place in the World Cup ranking, with Weidemann in third place. Esmee Visser (NED) is only one point behind the Canadian in fourth place. The Dutch Olympic 5000m champion was a little disappointed:

"I would have liked to be on the podium here, but those two girls above me [Voronina and Zueva] had the advantage of skating in the same pair and they pushed each other to a better time. I did not give it my all, however.

"This is a good step towards the World Single Distance Championships. I do also want to be on the podium in the long-distance World Cup ranking at the end of the season. That's why I wanted to skate here."

Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR) took charge in the long-distance World Cup with a solid 5000m win in front of a very enthusiastic home crowd on Friday. The Norwegian was the only one to keep all his lap times under 30 seconds to finish in 6:16.16. Aleksandr Rumyantsev (RUS) took silver and Olympic 10,000m champion Ted-Jan Bloemen (CAN) took bronze to qualify for the World Cup final in Salt Lake City by the skin of his teeth.

Pedersen started in the final pair against Sergey Trofimov (RUS) but the Russian got left behind early on in the race. "My race plan was to skate 29.8 or 29.9 laps and keep it up towards the end. I saw the other guys struggling in the final laps," he said.

Cheered on by happy fans dressed in Norwegian colors, Pedersen managed to finish with a 27.9 lap to stop the clock at 6:16.16. "It was a good race. It's always nice to skate in Hamar. Hopefully we'll have a full house here next year [for the ISU World Allround & Sprint Speed Skating Championships]."

First Pedersen will travel to Inzell for this season's ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships. "This gives me a lot of confidence. I'll focus on the 5000m and the Team Pursuit in Inzell, but I'll also skate the 1500m and we'll see about the 10,000m"

Another skater who's already looking forward to next season is Ted-Jan Bloemen. The Canadian took his first World Cup medal of the season. After having won Olympic 10,000m gold last season he took a break in springtime and did not manage to get back in shape before the Speed Skating season. He was happy to finish third in 6:20.44, which got him to eleventh place in the ranking, and the best twelve skaters qualify for the Final.

"I've worked very hard over the past months after the first four World Cups and this was a little test where I stand right now. It was a good race. Beforehand I had a quick glance at the World Cup ranking and I thought that I had to take at least a podium spot to qualify for the World Cup Final, and it worked out well.

"But to be honest, I don't think I'm good enough to win a title this season. With a good summer I'm aiming to be back next year. For this season I hope to do well at the World Allround Championships in Calgary, not to win, but to skate some good races in front of a home crowd."

Rumyantsev also worked hard these past few months and it paid off when he took silver in 6:19.24. "This is my first race in this calendar year, after a long pause for training, and it's not bad for a first race. I only had a little trouble in the final laps," he said.

Where Pedersen managed to stay under 30 seconds, Rumyantsev's last three laps were above 30 seconds and that was exactly what made the difference. "Hopefully I can improve a little for Inzell. This was a confidence boost, and the whole season has already been good so far, for me and for the whole Russian long-distance team."

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Hamar continues tomorrow with the Ladies and Men 500m and 1000m.

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.