

December 6, 2019

Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

## **Blondin and Mushtakov break new ice**

[Ivanie Blondin](#) (CAN) surprised even herself with the first 5000m World Cup victory of her career on Day 1 of the third leg of the ISU World Cup speed skating in Nur-Sultan on Friday. [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) took another 1000m win and the Dutch ladies regained their winning ways in the Team Sprint.

In the men's competition [Viktor Mushtakov](#) (RUS) won his career first individual World Cup gold, heading a Russian one-two with compatriot [Ruslan Murashov](#) in the men's 500m. The Netherlands won their third consecutive Team Sprint with yet another different line-up.

### **Bowe strengthens lead with second win**

"Really good," was the first thing [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) said about her 1000m race. The world champion confidently clinched her second World Cup gold medal of the season in her favorite distance. With a time of one minute and 14.28 seconds, she fell just 0.18 seconds short of her own 2015 track record at the Alau Ice Palace.

Bowe was happy with her speed, but say she has work to do when it comes to stamina. "I opened up real fast [and] the first lap came pretty easy," she said. "When I saw [2]7.1 on the board, I was pretty excited.

"It was definitely a tough one at the end. I had to fight that last 300 meters. I was in some pain so I had to stay down in my skating. When I looked up and won by almost half a second, that was a pretty good feeling."

Bowe will also start in Sunday's 1500m, although she has not yet found the distance so favorable this season.

"That's work in progress. The first 700m, I got feeling really good and smooth, [but] that last lap and a half has been really tough for me. I always have to put some money in the bank there. Coming up from the sprinting side, hopefully I can get the first 700 meters in fast, but I need to close out better, so that's the goal and all eyes are set on February (World Single Distance Championships in Salt Lake City).

[Daria Kachanova](#) (RUS) took silver in 1:14.75 and her compatriot [Olga Fatkulina](#) got bronze in 1:15.09. [Jorien ter Mors](#) (NED) retained her second place in the World Cup ranking despite only finishing eighth in a disappointing 1:15.64.

Fatkulina was pleased with her result. Thanks to her podium spot, she has already qualified for the European Single Distance Championships in Heerenveen in January. On Saturday she will defend her leading position in the 500m World Cup. Looking forward to the confrontation with [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) and [Vanessa Herzog](#) (AUT), she said: "Of course I want to win, but my first 100m is not good and tomorrow my legs will be tired from today's race, so even a fourth place would be good."

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 1000m Ladies](#)

### **Blondin takes gold with different mindset**

[Ivanie Blondin](#) (CAN) won her career first 5000m World Cup race, edging out [Martina Sáblíková](#) (CZE) by 0.05 seconds.

The Canadian is a specialist in the Mass Start, in which she has already collected six gold medals. Last season she won her first World Cup race in a classic distance, when she took 3000m gold in Erfurt.

"It's a different mindset," Blondin said, comparing classic races and the Mass Start. "I'm a little more nervous for individual races than I am for Mass Start races. [In the] Mass Start I'm more comfortable. I know that I'm the main target but it also gives me comfort that I'm one of the strongest ones. Yesterday Rimmelt [coach Rimmelt Eldering, NED] said that I'm still a five-kilometer skater.

"I surprised myself today. I knew that I was strong based on yesterday's training. I knew I was going to be in the mix for a top three spot."

Blondin had already broken the Czech world champion's track record by almost five seconds with 6:54.94 in the fourth of six pairings, before [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED) and [Esmee Visser](#) (NED) took the ice in the penultimate pair. Olympic champion Visser came 1.40 short of Blondin's time and De Jong was 8.35 behind.

The Dutch ladies had to settle for fourth and seventh place after the final pair between Blondin's team-mate [Isabelle Weidemann](#) and Sáblíková had finished. "[It was] really, really cool," said Weidemann. "I hadn't raced Martina since last year and she's the best in the world, so I was really excited. She's always been someone I looked up to growing up in speed skating. It's awesome to race a hero."

The Canadian and the Czech contested an intense battle, swapping the lead a couple of times before Sáblíková came out on top. It was not enough for gold, but Sáblíková was happy to take silver and Weidemann settled for bronze.

Sáblíková said she had not looked at the clock. "I didn't think about time," she said. "I had a great fight with Isabelle. I was just thinking about winning this race between us. It was really close with Ivanie. I'm so happy for her."

The Czech world champion had been sick just ahead of the World Cup in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Poland, two weeks ago, but she was fully recovered in Nur-Sultan.

"Today was the first day that I went full gas, [the past two weeks] I skated in Inzell with my team, but always behind someone's back. I really enjoyed today, I've got such a positive mind and I'm so happy to skate."

Sáblíková, Weidemann and Blondin are first, second and third in a tight long distance World Cup ranking. They will meet again in the 3000m in Nagano next week.

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings long distance Ladies](#)

### **Dutch revert to winning line-up**

In the Team Sprint the Dutch ladies returned to winning ways by reverting to line-up that was successful in Minsk, with [Letitia de Jong](#) (NED) instead of [Sanneke de Neeling](#) (NED) as third skater.

After finishing second in Poland at the second leg of the World Cup, the Netherlands kept silver medalists Russia at bay by more than a second, finishing in 1:27.95 versus 1:29.70. Poland took bronze in 1:30.09.

Letitia de Jong said: "I was absent in Poland, but that's not a big issue. We all get along very well. It's good to win by such a big margin and now that we are sure of a slot at the World Single Distance Championships we can experiment with more different line-ups."

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings Team Sprint Ladies](#)

### **Russian double in 500m**

World record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) had decided not to start, having missed the first two World Cups in Minsk and Tomaszów Mazowiecki already. World Cup leader [Tatsuya Shinhama](#) (JPN) was absent too, so all eyes were on [Jun-Ho Kim](#) (KOR), who had won the first World Cup race of the season.

Kim was paired with Mushtakov and couldn't keep up with the Russian, who opened 0.03 faster and kept on increasing his lead in the full lap. Mushtakov clocked 34.63, and Kim finished in 34.86 for fifth place, enough to take a clear lead in the World Cup ranking.

Murashov entered the rink straight after his compatriot and opened 0.04 faster in 9.59. Despite having the draft advantage in the back-stretch coming from the outer lane, he couldn't match Mushtakov's blistering 25.03 full lap, clocking 34.64 for silver.

[Alex Boisvert-Lacroix](#) (CAN) had the fastest opener of the field in 9.55, but eventually finished in 34.73 to take bronze. It was his first World Cup medal since a third place in Erfurt in November 2018. "I'm happy to be back on the podium," the Canadian said.

"I had a lower-back injury last year, that kept me off the podium and even out of the international circuit for a while. I did a lot of rehab this summer.

"I had the perfect pair, up against the biggest guy in the field ([Lennart Velema](#), NED). My plan was clear. I had to do a really good start and chase on the back-stretch and I had the best start of the field so my plan was well executed. I can still improve my full lap, I was running a bit (instead of skating), but in general it was a good race."

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 500m Men](#)

### **Dutch win 'bowling contest'**

The men's Team Sprint did not go well for Canada when their third man [David La Rue](#) crashed after touching the blade of second in line [Laurent Dubreuil](#). Start skater Boisvert-Lacroix said: "It's unfortunate, because we had a chance to be back on the podium (after two bronze medals earlier this season), but these things happen. We'll be back in Nagano for sure (at the fourth leg of the World Cup next week)."

Canada were not the only team to crash out of the race, with Russia, Germany and China all taking a tumble. "This looked more like a bowling contest than a speed skating race," said [Ronald Mulder](#) (NED). The Dutch starting skater led his team to their third gold medal of the season, this time with [Kai Verbij](#) and [Thomas Krol](#) as second and third skaters.

Mulder is the only one to have skated in all three victories for the Dutch. "It's nice to be part of the winning team every time," he said. "But I still have a bitter taste in my mouth after the 500m." Mulder finished 18<sup>th</sup> in the individual sprint on Friday. "Of course, we only got here [Nur-Sultan] late and we've kept on training instead of taking rest for competition, but I don't like excuses. I've skated three World Cup races this season and those were all bad."

The Dutchman will get another chance in Nagano next week. "According to our training program, I should be better next week," he said. Mulder will start tapering towards the Dutch national Single Distance Championships, which are held as trials for the World Championships in February.

He said: "I still want to skate all the World Cups, because I think that's important too."

"But I prefer the classic distances. I'd rather have two 500m races in a World Cup weekend than more team events."

Norway and Switzerland finished second and third in the Team Sprint competition in Nur-Sultan, which brought a hesitant smile back to [Håvard Lorentzen](#)'s face. He said: "The Norwegian team has not delivered this year and people don't really understand why, me neither. I feel OK, it's weird and frustrating. We're searching for that good feeling. After the 500m today we were all a bit down, but our Team Sprint was OK."

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings Team Sprint Men](#)

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit the [Series Page](#) on ISU.org. Click [here for results](#).

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### ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2019/20:

[Minsk \(BLR\) - Nov 15 – 17](#)

[Tomaszów Mazowiecki \(POL\) – Nov 22 – 24](#)

[Nur-Sultan \(KAZ\) – Dec 6 – 8](#)

[Nagano \(JPN\) – Dec 13 – 15](#)

[Calgary \(CAN\) – Feb 7 – 8](#)

[Final – Heerenveen \(NED\) – Mar 7 - 8](#)

**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](http://isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating).