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Calgary, Canada

Christ (CAN) takes tough women's gold as Morozov (KAZ) completes the men's medal set

Kali Christ (CAN) took the long road back from injury to win her first international title with gold in the 1500m at the ISU Four Continents Championships in Calgary. In the men's events on day 2, Dmitry Morozov (KAZ) edged out home favorite Ted-Jan Bloemen (CAN) by 0.33 of a second in the 1500m to complete his medal set at the Four Continents.

Love the pain

In the final pairing, Christ was up against Sarah Warren (USA), who had the faster opening, but the Canadian quickly caught up and was able to maintain her pace much better.

Warren lost almost two seconds in the final lap and finished in 2:00.41 to take silver.

"The last lap is always pretty tough, especially being a little bit tired, but I really like it because that's where your heart can come out," Warren said.

"It hurt pretty badly and my pair (Christ) was having a really good one today, so it was nice being able to chase her. It definitely hurt, but you've got to love the pain if you're going to be a speed skater."

Christ knows everything about pain. Her path to a career-first international title had definitely not been easy.

"This is one of the first races in three or four years that I've felt good again," she explained. "I know how I got here, and I'm really glad how it turned out.

"I've been having this hip problem since 2016. It's pretty good (now), but it does take me a bit of time to get into the skating in the season.

"And in June 2019, I ended up with a concussion that put me out for a good six or seven months. Then Covid hits and I didn't have a chance to race again the year after that.

"So I just haven't had a lot of racing experience over the last couple of years. It's take a toll on me and now it's starting to feel real. I feel like myself again."

In two weeks' time, Christ will be fighting for an Olympic ticket at the Canadian skate-off: "It will be an uphill battle, but as long as I go there and have fun I will be happy with what I achieve."

Before Christ and Warren took to the ice, Jamie Jurak (USA) had set the fastest time in the penultimate pairing. She skated alone clocking 2:01.89, after her opponent and title favorite Nadezhda Morozova (KAZ) got disqualified for a second false start.

"I really wasn't expecting anything," Jurak says. "Because I haven't been training the 1500m. So I was like, well, I'm just gonna go out and do the best that I can. I guess it was good enough for third."

Waiting game pays off for Park in Mass Start

Korea and the USA had a numerical advantage, with two skaters on the ice in the women's Mass Start race, but the two strongest teams decided to make it a 16-lap waiting game.

"We're just trying to stay safe, not getting in any trouble and see what decisions other people would make during the race," [Dessie Weigel](#) (USA) said.

[Laura Gómez](#) (COL) and [Zul Altan-Ochir](#) (MGL) did not want to play along, fighting for intermediate sprint points, and Gómez even tried to escape the pack halfway through the race.

In the end, though, the pace of the USA women heading into the final two laps was too much.

[Jurak](#) (USA) and Weigel seemed on their way to US one-two, but [Park Chaewon](#) (KOR) pipped them to the line.

"I was waiting for the last lap, and the sprint went very well," the 19-year-old said. In November, Park came second twice in the Junior World Cup Mass Start races.

The Four Continents Championships are something different, she said: "(Racing in the) seniors is harder than the Junior World Cup. But it was a lot of fun for me."

Jurak has no regrets about coming in second, as she completed the medal set after gold in Wednesday's 3000m and bronze in Thursday's 1500m.

"It's really cool that I could do that," she smiled.

Weigel eventually took bronze. The 27-year-old fell in the first half of the race but was able to get back quickly because the pace was slow.

Favorite Kim disappoints

[Kim Min-Seok](#) (KOR) started the 1500m as favorite, having won a gold and a silver medal in the distance at the first two World Cups this season. The 2018 Olympic bronze medal winner had the fastest personal best of the field by more than a second over Morozov.

When Kim took the ice, endurance specialist Bloemen had already set a time of 1 minute and 45.66 seconds.

Kim's intermediate times were faster than Bloemen's up to the 1100m split, but the Korean lacked the stamina to match Bloemen's 27.81s final lap and finished in 1:46.47.

"I was feeling very bad, after six weeks and four World Cups, I'm tired," Kim said, after finishing nearly four seconds slower than his personal best. "I'm not satisfied with the time. I can do better and I will show it to everyone at the Beijing Olympics."

Bloemen warms up for Team Pursuit

Bloemen, who hardly ever races at 1500m, was happy to see that Kim couldn't match him and with only one pair to go, he knew he would medal. That was not what he had come for, however.

"I used this 1500m race as speed training for the Team Pursuit, when the pace is faster (than in the 5000m)," the Olympic 10,000m champion explained.

“I’m content. The second lap was not great with a little hiccup in the corner. When you skate so few 1500m races, you can’t expect everything to be smooth.”

As an endurance specialist, Bloemen was able to follow up his second lap with two 27-second laps, while none of the other skaters were able to set a final sub-28 second lap.

Morozov holds on

Morozov couldn’t match Bloemen’s final lap either, but the Kazak skater had a 1.24s lead over the Canadian at the 1100m split and had just enough left in the tank to maintain a small gap.

He had not been looking at the scoreboard during his race.

“I just skate and I don’t think about time,” he explained, happy to take gold after already collecting silver and bronze two years ago.

“That’s good, but my 1500m was not easy, after skating the World Cups, it was very hard.”

Bloemen did look at the scoreboard when Morozov skated his final lap, and despite having considered it a training race, he was disappointed:

“I always like to win. I’m not really interested in second and third places, so when I saw the time, I thought: only three tenths, I could have won three tenths of a seconds somewhere down the line.”

Um win second title with commanding sprint

[Cheon-Ho Um](#) (KOR) won the men’s Mass Start after Kazaks [Bakdaulet Sagatov](#) and [Vitaliy Chshigolev](#), and Colombian [Daniel Zapata](#) had tried to make it a tough race, engaging in intermediate sprints and trying to get away from the pack.

Chshigolev staged a final attack on the penultimate lap, but Um countered heading into the final lap and sprinted to a convincing Four Continents title, his second.

[Hayden Mayeur](#) (CAN) and [Zach Stoppelmoor](#) (USA) took silver and bronze respectively.

“I’m just kind of relaxed through the whole first 11 laps of it, and then just start thinking about positioning myself,” Stoppelmoor said of his tactics.

“The positioning was good. (I) just didn’t quite have the path that I needed to for the win, but it was still really nice.”

Where to Watch

Viewers will be able to watch either via their national broadcaster / channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#). You will find the full list in the [Where to Watch news here](#).

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About the ISU Four Continents Speed Skating Championships

As of season 2019/20 the Four Continents Championships are organized annually. The format for the Championships shall be decided by the ISU Council. The order of races and competitions for each day will be decided by the ISU in consultation with the organizer and the ISU Speed Skating Technical Committee. The format of the 2021/22 ISU World Four Continents Speed Skating Championships will have a Single Distance format.