

February 13, 2022

Beijing, China

## **Jackson puts golden end to Olympic fairy tale** **Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games**

[Erin Jackson](#) (USA) first put on skates six years ago and she had trouble to even stay upright, but she turned out to be a quick student. After coming in 24<sup>th</sup> at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Games, the 29-year-old from Florida ran away with gold in the 500m four years later in Beijing. [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) took a surprise silver and world champion [Angelina Golikova](#) (ROC) seized bronze. Jackson could hardly believe she'd pulled it off after her bumpy road towards Beijing.

Jackson, who won four World Cup races early this season, finished in 37.04s. She was the only one who managed to match the staggering 26.71s full lap Takagi had clocked in the fourth pair already. Having opened a mere 0.08 seconds faster, Jackson pushed the Japanese world sprint champion into silver. The fresh champion still thought she did not skate the perfect race, however. "I had a little of a misstep on the backstretch but I just tried to, I wouldn't say recover because it wasn't anything big, but just trying to continue skating. Being the short distance athlete that I am I did get a little tired in the last 150 (m) of the race, but I felt strong, it felt like a good effort."

### **Roller coaster**

Jackson owed her ticket to Beijing to USA teammate, fellow Floridan and long-time friend [Brittany Bowe](#), who gave up her 500m starting slot after World Cup leader Jackson made a rare slip at the US Trials. She explained how she'd experienced the trajectory from not qualifying to winning gold: "It's been a big roller coaster. There's been happiness, stress, happiness. It's been a wild ride but this (gold) makes it even sweeter (...) I came into our Olympic Trials kind of expecting to qualify easily. Unfortunately I didn't qualify. At the time, we only knew of having two Olympic spots (in the 500m) and I placed third. My teammate Brittany Bowe was amazing, very selfless. She sacrificed her spot to help me get on the time. I was really grateful for her doing that."

### **Bowe couldn't be happier**

Thanks to being high up the reserve list, Bowe, who's main target will be the 1000m, eventually got a chance to start herself in the 500m too. She finished sixteenth in 38.04s. "I feel like I just won an Olympic gold medal", she said. Bowe had watched her teammate's race nervously and exploded when it was over: "I think I kind of blacked out. I screamed so loud, I almost passed out. Words can I explain how proud I am of her. I knew she has the chance to do something really special, and she just showed the world why she deserved to be here and she's Olympic champion. I want this moment to be all about her. She went to the start line on her own, and she skated the best 500 of her life to be Olympic champion."

### **Role model**

Jackson became the first woman of color to win Olympic gold in speed skating and she was

happy to be a trailblazer: "I just hope it will do something for the sport. Hopefully more people will see this and will be like 'oh, maybe I should try some of these winter sports'. I just hope to be a good example." Bowe couldn't agree more: "She is a role model for so many people, and I think what she did tonight is going to be a springboard to give so many little girls and boys the opportunity to look up to someone that they haven't been able to look at and relate to. So that goes far beyond what any of us could imagine, how many people, specifically little girls she's going to be touching. She's an incredible human, an incredible athlete."

### **Takagi surprise**

Takagi, who had combined her blistering full lap with a 10.41s opener, finished in 37.12s, being the only one in the field to set a personal best. "I was greatly surprised," she said. "When I first looked up to the screen, I thought that was the result of my opponent." Takagi is on a busy schedule in Beijing. After already having finished sixth in the 3000m and won a silver medal in the 1500m, she's still got the 1000m and the Team Pursuit finals to come. After setting her personal best in the 500m, she initially did not think about the podium: "With such a good result, no matter I get a medal or not in the end, I would be able to race in a better mood."

### **Bronze incentive to keep fighting**

Being a strong contender in almost every distance she skates, Takagi was a bit of an outsider in the 500m. But apart from Jackson, none of the pure sprinters produced the same full lap Takagi did. Angelina Golikova managed a 26.84s lap, which got her bronze after a 10.37s second opener for a final time of 37.21s. "I was really nervous before the race. I felt many emotions as there would be many strong girls on the start and the times would be very close between us all," she said. "I'm happy that I got an Olympic medal. It's what I've been dreaming about. Had I won gold I'd have been even crazier. Maybe then I'd have thought I don't need more. Now I want to fight for the next Olympics. Maybe this was my chance, I don't know."

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What's next ?

**Tuesday, February 15, 2022**

Women's Team Pursuit, Semifinals, 14:30 (local time)

Women's Team Pursuit, Final B, 16:22 (local time)

Women's Team Pursuit, Final A

Men's Team Pursuit, Final B, 16:41 (local time)

Men's Team Pursuit, Final A, 16:47 (local time)

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