

November 20, 2021

Debrecen, Hungary

Birthday celebrations for Liu (HUN) and Schulting (NED) looking invincible

Shaolin Sandor Liu (HUN) celebrated his 26th birthday with a win in the Men's 500m final on Day 1 of the ISU World Cup Short Track in Debrecen, as Ren Ziwei (CHN) continued his impressive season with victory in the Men's 1500m. In the Women's events it was all about Suzanne Schulting (NED) who topped the podium in both the 500m and 1500m, setting high expectations for the 1000m on the final day.

Birthday and 500m celebrations

"I think I deserve a cake," said Shaolin Sandor Liu (HUN) as he came off the ice on Saturday at the ISU World Cup Short Track in Debrecen – and the local hero will certainly never forget his 26th birthday. On home soil, the Hungarian star won one of the strangest Short Track races of recent years.

The 500m final was packed with talent: in-form ace Ren Ziwei (CHN), Olympic 500m gold medalist Wu Dajing (CHN), two-time 500m World Champion Hwang Daeheon (KOR) – and Shaolin Sandor's brother Shaoang Liu (HUN), the 2020-21 overall World Champion.

Halfway through the battle, however, a crash caused by Hwang took the two Chinese skaters, and himself, out of the equation.

The Hungarian siblings were left as the only men standing, circling the track uncontested, before finally deciding to make a race of it at the end. Shaolin Sandor edged the gold by one tenth of a second. Ren eventually got up and coasted around for the bronze.

If it had got any louder at a packed Fonix Arena as the crowd reacted to this local one-two, the roof would have come off.

"I only saw the crash on the screen and I didn't know how many had fell, so I stayed calm," said Shaolin. "I tried to max it out."

"Me and my brother always try to race each other, but he was nice, he gave me the gold medal. I'm really happy and so proud. It was a really nice present."

Shaolin Sandor almost hadn't qualified for the end game in the first place, scraping in by two hundredths of a second in a scrappy semifinal.

"Yes, I almost didn't make it, it was tight," he said. "The races were close from quarterfinal to semi to final. But this is the wonder of the sport, it's a challenge. I like to make a show and I like to make you guys nervous."

Ren dominates 1500m

In the 1500m, meanwhile, Ren Ziwei (CHN) continued his impressive season.

The Chinese racer switched places with [Pascal Dion](#) (CAN), eventually pulling ahead of the Canadian to take his second gold medal of the World Cup season, following his fine 1000m win in Beijing.

"I always dream of winning the gold medal in every race I'm in," said Ren. "I made every effort today. It's a fight, because every race is feisty, really tough. So I had to try and not make any mistakes.

"My target at the moment is to qualify for all the categories for Beijing. I want to win as many medals as possible."

Dion, the surprise leader in the 1000m standings so far this season, was also happy to continue his run of form and grab a silver medal.

"I feel great, it was a crazy race with a lot of passes," he said. "I raced it so well, I wasn't afraid to go in front when it hurt my legs, and it paid off in the end.

"I would never have expected this at the start of the season, but I have raced so confidently. Every move I do, I'm convinced it is going to work."

[Park Jang Hyuk](#) (KOR) won bronze, his first World Cup medal, in his debut Senior season. The day, however, belonged to the Lius and the Hungarian public.

"It's really nice to be racing in front of this crowd," said Shaolin Sandor. "They give us a lot of power. We couldn't make it without them. It's been one and a half years where we didn't race with a crowd, so it's a huge thing and it makes us happy.

"Hopefully in Beijing the Chinese will help us, too."

As for a birthday celebration? "I don't know if there will be a party. I am so tired, I just need to rest and have my dinner."

Dominant style for Schulting

[Suzanne Schulting](#) (NED) is a skater who seemingly can do no wrong. At the 2020-21 World Championships, she elevated herself to another level up from her rivals, winning all three individual gold medals – the 1500m, 1000m and 500m. It was an extraordinary feat, and a rarity in a sport where most athletes specialize. And yet at the ISU World Cup in Debrecen, she looks on track to do it again.

Schulting took the 1500m gold in dominant style, before adding the 500m a couple of hours later. She will go into tomorrow's 1000m feeling bullish.

"I did some awesome things, it was a great day," she said. "I'm super happy and I feel really great right now."

In the 1500m, up against the highest quality field available, including eight-time Olympic medalist [Arianna Fontana](#) (ITA), Women's 1500m standings leader [Lee Yubin](#) (KOR), three-time overall World Champion [Choi Min Jeong](#) (KOR) and in-form [Kristen Santos](#) (USA), Schulting started at the front and couldn't be caught.

A world-class Speed Skater as well as Short Tracker, increasingly her tactics have been to get to the front early and use raw power to simply not allow opponents to get close. It eliminates the need for passing and risk of crashing.

"I choose to do the tactical plan where you skate from the front, because I'm really strong," she said. "I'm also able to come from the back, but with the quality of skaters, everyone can skate fast, it's really hard. So skating from the front is good."

"I was just watching the Koreans coming up, so I just kept accelerating to keep them on the outside."

Yubin came second, and remains top of the 1500m rankings by the slimmest of margins. [Courtney Lee Sarault](#) (CAN), ever improving, got the bronze medal.

Schulting adds 500m title

The 500m was perhaps even more impressive for Schulting, however. She may be World Champion in the distance, but her win in that race at the end of last season was something of a novelty.

In a final containing 500m World Record holder [Kim Boutin](#) (CAN) and 500m Olympic Champion Fontana, Schulting put in a late charge to take the title.

The lightning-fast Boutin had led most of the way round, but veteran Fontana overtook her at the end to win silver and leave the Canadian third.

Schulting was particularly pleased with the race. "I really want to keep skating like this," she said. "The 500m is a special distance. A lot of skaters are doing well and (Poland's) [Natalia Maliszewska](#) was missing from the A final, too, and she is skating well."

"So there are a lot of really fast skaters, and that makes me really happy that I won. I stayed really calm."

"The final was such a high quality race and that's what you want before the Olympics. You want to skate as many quality finals as you can, and you will learn the most."

Her rivals were magnanimous in defeat. "Suzanne has worked hard to get better in the 500m because it wasn't her distance, but I think it's great," said Fontana. "More competition in the 500m makes it more exciting for us, and for everyone watching."

"I was skating in front of her but you know she can come for you," added Boutin. "I just need to focus on trying to get further in front, but I'm happy for now."

One question remains. Is Schulting invincible? She insists she isn't. "I do have insecurities," she said. "It's really hard, it's four long days and you have to stay focused all the time. But today was really nice for me."

World Cup Classification - Men

[Men 500m](#)

[Men 1000m](#)

[Men 1500m](#)

[Men 5000m Relay](#)

World Cup Classification - Women

[Women 500m](#)

[Women 1000m](#)

[Women 1500m](#)

[Women 3000m Relay](#)

World Cup Classification – Mixed Relay

[Mixed Relay](#)

Where to watch and follow the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating 2021/22?

Viewers will be able to watch the Saturday and Sunday afternoon (local time) World Cup sessions via their national broadcaster/channel. For countries where there are no broadcasters and for the qualification and repechage races, 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](#).

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and the “Where to Watch” news. You can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams start or new videos are published.

Highlights, clips, interviews, behind the scenes:

YouTube: [ISU Skating](#)

IG: [@isuspeedskating](#)

Facebook: [@ISUShortTrackSpeedSkating](#)

Twitter: [@ISU_Speed](#)

Follow the conversation with #ShortTrackSkating.

For further information on ISU Short Track Speed Skating visit: <https://www.isu.org/short-track>.

ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating Series events 2021:

[Beijing, CHN October 21 – 24, 2021](#)

[Nagoya, JPN - October 28 – 31, 2021](#)

[Debrecen, HUN - November 18 – 21, 2021](#)

[Dordrecht, NED - November 25 – 28, 2021](#)

About ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating Series

The World Cup series consists of nine distances 500, 1000 and 1500 meters for Women and Men, Women

3000 meters Team Relay, Men 5000 meters Team Relay and a Mixed Gender Relay over 2000 meters.

The competitions have a single distance character and are held in separate sessions over four days. Day 1 and 2 are dedicated to all Qualifying Rounds. Days 3 and 4 the last Qualifying Rounds (if necessary) take place, followed by the World Cup sessions.

For the Mixed Gender Relay Teams (2 Women & 2 Men), the Women 3000 meters Relay races and Men 5000 meters Relay races a maximum of four Skaters shall compete and must belong to the same ISU Member.

During the Olympic season there are four ISU World Cup Short Track events that also serve at the Olympic qualifying events.