

December 11, 2021

Calgary, Canada

## **Canada claims third consecutive World Cup win in Team Pursuit as Hoolwerf secures second Dutch Olympic Mass Start ticket in style**

[Isabelle Weidemann](#), [Ivanie Blondin](#) and [Valérie Maltais](#) secured the third consecutive World Cup trophy in the Women's Team Pursuit for Canada on Saturday. Inspired by the home ice of the Calgary Olympic Oval the trio set a Canadian and a track record in 2:52.06, beating Japan and concluding the season undefeated. [Nao Kodaira](#) handed Japan a 1000m gold and a 500m silver, while [Angelina Golikova](#) (RUS) seized her first World Cup victory of the season in the 500m.

In the Men's competition [Bart Hoolwerf](#) (NED) gloriously saved the second Dutch Olympic slot in the Mass Start with his first World Cup victory. Earlier on Saturday, [Joey Mantia](#) (USA) overcame his fatigue after Salt Lake City last week to win his second consecutive 1500m gold.

### **Victory on merit**

Canada washed away all the mixed feelings they had after last week's win in Salt Lake City when they benefited from Japan crashing out in the final lap while they were almost two seconds ahead in the split times.

"We were much happier with this race," Weidemann said.

"We were a little bit nervous last week. We made some mistakes and obviously Japan fell. So it wasn't as nice of a win for us. But this week, we skated really well together and we fixed a lot of the things that we were working on all week."

Despite the mistakes, Canada set a national record in last week's race, which they broke on the ice of the Calgary Oval, which seemed to be a bit slower than the track in Salt Lake City.

"That's a big evidence for us that we just skated it a lot better. We felt a lot better too. We felt stronger in the last laps, which is how we usually skate."

Blondin explained the difference: "Last weekend, we were really rushed, the pushes, it just wasn't a good execution. We were all a little bit nervous, which transferred into a strategy of the race of how we all skated individually at the front.

"This week, we just focus a lot on good execution and long nice pushes and just focus on keeping it smooth and close together."

Canada skated in the final pair versus the Netherlands, who brought a team of youngsters. [Reina Anema](#), [Sanne in 't Hof](#) and Evelien Vijn – the latter collected five medals over the course of two Junior World Cup weekends in Inzell (Germany) before travelling to Calgary this week – finished sixth in 2:59.54.

Before Canada and the Netherlands took the ice, Japan ([Ayano Sato](#), [Nana Takagi](#), [Miho Takagi](#)) had set the fastest time in 2:52.89, with China (Athena Er Adake, [Han Mei](#), [Li Qishi](#)) coming second in 2:58.42. They were pushed into silver and bronze by the Canadian train.

Skating in the final pair had not been much of an advantage, Weidemann said.

"I didn't even look at it (the split times). We skate a lot better when we're just focused on ourselves. We're not looking around and we know that it's within ourselves. We skated times like this in practice before, we can do it and we just have to really focus only on ourselves."

Carrying home the Team Pursuit Trophy for the third year in a row, gave Canada a confidence boost en route to the 2022 Beijing Olympics.

"Yes, it really shows how much work we've put in as a team. Obviously we want to keep moving forward and keep building on what we've done today, but yeah, it's a really nice thing to check off, and we've been consistent now for quite a few years."

#### **Kodaira takes season first gold**

Before the Team Pursuit, [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) grabbed her first World Cup win of the season, not in her favorite 500m, but in the 1000m.

"Finally," she laughed with a sigh of relief.

"I'm so happy to have won the 1000m, looking forward to the Olympic Games."

The Olympic 500m champion had a busy schedule in the first half of the season, competing in the 500m, the 1000m and the 1500m. She's aiming to race in all three distances at the Olympic Games in February as well.

Kodaira edged out [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) by 0.03 seconds. The American middle distance specialist had skated one minute and 12.54 seconds previously and ended up in second place.

"It's a really solid race. I'm happy how I closed the race out, lacking a little bit of speed there in the opening."

Bowe was the only skater to set a sub-28-second final lap in 27.89s.

"I think that was one of my best finishes I've had. I always want to win but on the bright side, the solid last lap, that's something to be proud of."

Bowe retained the lead in the 1000m World Cup ranking, with Kodaira coming second.

[Olga Fatkulina](#) (RUS) took bronze in 1:13.15. She had skipped the 500m to save energy for the 1000m, in which she was not sure of an Olympic ticket yet.

She was happy to have made her mark although she was not satisfied with her race.

“My first full lap was not good, 26.7s. I need a 26.6 or 26.4 but the result was ok and I secured my Olympic ticket for the 1000m.”

#### **Season first for Golikova**

[Angelina Golikova](#) (RUS) started the day with gold in the 500m and like Kodaira it was a season first for her.

With a staggering 10.19 opener, Golikova set a personal best in 36.66, beating Kodaira by 0.09s.

“My first 100m was very good but my lap was not perfect. In the end it’s a good time for me now. It gives me confidence to know that I can win, even when I’m not skating a perfect race.”

[Erin Jackson](#) (USA) took 500m bronze in 36.92 and retained the lead in the World Cup ranking.

She was happy with her performances in the first four World Cups, having won four out of eight 500m races.

“This is the most I’ve raced in. I don’t even know how long, so it’s been really good. (There’s) a lot of things to learn from this and then (I’m) ready to take a little break, regroup and come back strong.”

Jackson is not nervous about her new status going into the Olympics as World Cup leader.

“Pressure? I hope there is. I like it.”

#### **Hoolwerf thrives under pressure**

After missing out on the final at the first two World Cup Mass Start competitions this season, Hoolwerf was 24<sup>th</sup> on the World Cup ranking, just inside the criteria for a slot at the 2022 Olympic Games in Beijing.

With the World Cup event in Calgary a final Olympic qualification event, Hoolwerf knew what he had to do.

“If you don’t make it to the final, you’ll lose the Olympic slot, so the pressure was on,” he said.

Hoolwerf managed to get into the final with a strong semi performance, coming in fifth.

“The semi-final was super fast, maybe the fastest Mass Start race I’ve ever done. That cost a lot of energy but I felt good heading into the final,” he said.

In the final he followed [Felix Rijhnen](#) (GER) in an escape straight from the start.

“The plan actually was to hold back in the beginning but a Mass Start is unpredictable.

“I was behind Rijhnen and saw that he accelerated. I could decide to sit back or follow suit straightaway. I did the latter.

"I did not intend to escape the pack but when we got a gap I tried to keep the pace steady and cooperate."

### **Teamwork**

Hoolwerf was happy to have teammate [Kars Jansman](#) (NED) with him in the final.

"Every time anyone in the pack tried to make pace, Kars was getting to the front to hold it off. That was superb.

"With five or six laps to go I noticed that Rijnhnen's tank was emptied and I decided to go on my own.

"It's difficult because you have to stay calm and keep the pace up as long as you can, without emptying the tank too soon. If the pack makes pace and starts skating 23-second laps, it's over in no time."

The pack did not make pace, however, explained Bart Swings, who eventually took silver, reeling in Rijnhnen.

"There are teams with two skaters and I haven't (a teammate in the final). So it's not up to me to chase the escape. I won last week and felt ok, so I was going to sit it out for a final sprint. It's a pity that none of the others take the initiative for a chase."

### **Defying the critics**

Hoolwerf finished way ahead of the pack, which sped up only in the final lap. He crossed the line with a finger on his lips, silencing his critics, among them [Jorrit Bergsma](#) (NED), who had doubted whether his young compatriot was able to keep up with the international pace after missing out on the final twice.

Bergsma himself was absent in Calgary, already having secured the first Dutch Mass Start slot in Tomaszów Mazowiecki (POL) and Salt Lake City (USA).

"It was a big relief," Hoolwerf said, explaining his gesture at the finish line.

"Of course I understand Jorrit's criticism. He saw a teammate missing out on the final twice. The only thing I could do was speak with my legs. I knew I could do better. I've shown good things and I'm convinced there's still a lot more in store."

Pipping Rijnhnen to the line, Swings held on to the lead in the Mass Start World Cup ranking but the 21-year-old German managed to hang on to third place for his career first World Cup medal.

### **Mantia takes World Cup lead in 1500m**

[Joey Mantia](#) (USA) grabbed the lead in the 1500m World Cup over [Ning Zhongyan](#) (CHN), who decided to skip the 1500m in order to secure an Olympic ticket for China in the Mass Start, which he managed to do by the skin of his teeth.

Mantia's back-to-back gold after last week's victory in Salt Lake City did not come easy. The 35-year-old American finished in one minute and 41.86 seconds, half a second off the track record and more than a second-and-a-half behind the world record.

"I was just tired. I had a big weekend last weekend and I thought I would be ready again this week, but I'm not.

"I flew in Wednesday, had a hard workout Thursday and I was pretty tired after that workout. I was questioning whether or not I'd be able to do anything this weekend. So it's nice to know that even not prepared, or not what I think I should be to win, I'm able to hit the podium at least.

"The only thing I care about this year at all is winning a gold medal at the Olympics - multiple hopefully. So anything before that, the world record would have been icing on the cake.

"Maybe I could try again after the season or something, I don't know. It's always gonna be something that I want. I don't think I'm not capable of it still."

Behind veteran Mantia [Connor Howe](#) (CAN) took his career first World Cup podium, coming in second in 1:42.42.

Asked whether his good performance put more pressure on his future races, the Canadian youngster said: "A little pressure but confidence too because I've seen that I'm getting closer. Obviously a few guys are missing this weekend (apart from Ning, Dutchmen [Thomas Krol](#) and [Kjeld Nuis](#) were absent too), but it's a good time."

Norway's [Allan Dahl Johansson](#) (NOR) took bronze and his first individual World Cup medal since a 1500m bronze in Minsk four years ago.

"It wasn't that good of a race actually," Johansson said. "I'm starting to train a little bit again. So we can be in good shape at the Olympics. I'm happy I can skate that well, even though I'm tired."

500m Women

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

1000m Women

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

1500m Women

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 1500m Women](#)

3000m Women

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 3000m Women](#)

Mass Start Women

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings Mass Start Women](#)

Team Pursuit Women

ISU World Cup Team Pursuit Women [Standings Team Pursuit Women](#)

Team Sprint Women

ISU World Cup Team Sprint Women [Standings Team Sprint Women](#)

500m Men

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

1000m Men

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

1500m Men

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 1500m Men](#)

5000m Men

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings 5000m Men](#)

Mass Start Men

ISU World Cup Speed Skating [Standings Mass Start Men](#)

Team Pursuit Men

ISU World Cup Team Pursuit Women [Standings Team Pursuit Men](#)

Team Sprint Men

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

The event entry quotas for the individual distances will be determined by the [Special Olympic Qualification Classification \(SOQC\)](#) based on results from the different ISU World Cup Speed Skating Competitions and the full details are available in [ISU Communication 2405](#).

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit: [isu.org/speed-skating](https://isu.org/speed-skating). Results are [here](#) and you can follow the discussion on social media by using #SpeedSkating.

### 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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**ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2021/22:**

[Tomaszów Mazowiecki \(POL\) – Nov 12 – 14, 2021](#)

[Stavanger \(NOR\) - Nov 19 - Nov 21, 2021](#)

[Salt Lake City \(USA\) - Dec 03 - Dec 05, 2021](#)

[Calgary \(CAN\) – Dec 10 - Dec 12, 2021](#)

[Final – Heerenveen \(NED\) – Mar 12 - Mar 13, 2022](#)

**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. However during the Olympic season the Series consists of five Events.

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 and during the Olympic season they are Olympic Qualifying Events. 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 Women 500m, 1000m, 1500m, the combined 3000m / 5000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For further information please visit [isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating](https://isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating).