

December 18, 2021

Calgary, Canada

Huang claims Chinese Taipei's first-ever speed skating title as Kuzin (KAZ) wins long-awaited gold

Having won the first international speed skating medal for Chinese Taipei with silver in the 500m on Wednesday, [Huang Yu-Ting](#) seized the first title for her country in the 1000m at the Four Continents Championships. In the men's events, [Denis Kuzin](#) (KAZ) ended another long wait, winning his first major title since 2013 in the 1000m

Survival of the fittest

With the personal bests only two hundredths of a second apart and much faster than those of the other women, the winner of the fourth pair between Huang and [Yekaterina Aidova](#) (KAZ) was likely to take gold.

Both women were tired after a long World Cup campaign, but the last race before a break inspired them to give it their all once more.

Aidova had the fastest opener, but Huang used the draft on the first back straight to get ahead at the second split, and finished her race with the fastest final lap of the field in 29.29s.

Huang clocked 1 minute and 14.45 seconds, and Aidova finished 1.03 seconds adrift.

"I'm happy to be alive," Aidova said. "It was such a hard race today. When got off the start I felt like all the power went away.

"I was tired after the big competition (in the World Cup). The body is tired and the mind still wants to fight for a medal. I started to feel it after the 500m.

"It's really nice to be on the podium. The girl from Chinese Taipei, she had a really good race, especially because she said that she was very tired too. She said she needs a rest, and I felt the same."

Aidova will travel to Spain for a training camp after the Four Continents Championships.

"I feel like I need one week to eat, one week to sleep and one week in bed," she laughed.

Inspiration for a new generation

Huang couldn't be happier to have won a historic first international speed skating title for her country. Having switched from inline skating to ice skating, the 33-year-old trains with coach Mitch Whitmore (USA) in Salt Lake City as a member of the ISU Development Transition Program.

"If I can show people that I can win a medal, a lot of (inline) skaters (from Chinese Taipei) will be really interested to switch to ice," she said.

"If they want to switch to ice, I really want to help them. I have that experience. So I can guide them.

“The program helped the weakest part of me. We do a lot of hard training to make me stronger.”

Canada’s [Kali Christ](#) (CAN) came in third in 1:16.50. Having won Thursday’s 1500m, she was happy to collect another medal.

“(It was the) fastest opener I’ve done this year, that felt really good. (I’ve been) doing a lot of work on that. So to feel it starting to come together is really nice,” she said. Christ went on to win a silver medal with the Canadian women in the Team Pursuit.

Jurak queen of the Four Continents

Canada came close to winning the Team Pursuit, but Team USA nailed it in the second half of the race against their neighbors.

Trailing by a margin of three tenths, [Giorgia Birkeland](#), [Dessie Weigel](#) and [Jamie Jurak](#) managed to keep their lap times flat towards the end, whereas [Kali Christ](#), Lindsey Kent and [Laura Hall](#) slowed a little.

Finishing in 3 minutes and 8.18 seconds, USA was 0.50 faster than Canada.

Jurak, who had anchored the US women throughout the race, crowned herself queen of the Four Continents Championships with two gold medals, a silver and a bronze.

“That’s really cool, and I never would have expected that at all,” she said.

“I really didn’t have too high of expectations. I just wanted to try to get some personal bests, and do the best that I can. And I guess that was really good.”

Canada left their regular team of [Ivanie Blondin](#), [Valérie Maltais](#) and [Isabelle Weidemann](#) home for the Four Continent Championships.

“This shows that we’ve got a giant pool of girls to choose from, so even when anybody retires or anything, Canada will still be able to put up a good team,” Christ commented.

South Korea ([Park Ji Woo](#), [Park Chaewon](#) and [Kim Minseo](#)) took bronze in 3:30.61.

Kuzin edges out Kleba

When Kuzin entered the rink versus compatriot [Alexandr Klenko](#) (KAZ), Kleba and [Tai Wei-Lin](#) (TPE) had set the first and second time of the day in the penultimate pairing.

The 2013 World Champion started a little slower than Kleba, but made up for that in the second lap. With a 0.10-second advantage at the 600m split, the 33-year-old Kazak had to fight to the line to keep Kleba behind and he managed it in 1 minute and 8.63, just 0.12s ahead of the 22-year-old.

“I did not think about the time or the pace,” Kuzin said. “I was actually battling the pain to a minor a groin injury.”

Kuzin found it hard to compare the world title to the Four Continents gold.

“It’s such a long time ago. I’ve not been on the podium or not won for eight years, so I’m really happy to be on top again.”

Kleba touches the sky

Kleba had no regrets coming second: “There's always stuff that you can do more in the race, and in the technique and stuff like that, but for how it was today, how it's feeling, that was good. It was well executed. My competitors are strong, so congrats to them as well for how they did.”

Reflecting on his medal haul at the three-day tournament, music lover Kleba named Kayne West's ‘Touch the Sky’ as the soundtrack to his tournament.

“It's been almost surreal. during the competition, you still got to keep that focus. I've got to race, so not celebrate too soon, but now that it's all over, I can kind of sit back, reevaluate my weekend and enjoy the fruits of my labor.”

Tai makes it a Chinese Taipei double

[Tai Wei-Lin](#)'s time of 1:09.19 was good enough for bronze, meaning he became the first male international speed skating medalist, after [Huang Yu-Ting](#) (TPE) had already won the first title for Chinese Taipei in the women's 1000m.

“I just tried not to think too much about getting a medal, focus on good technique, look straight, don't look down, and get it,” he said. Like Huang, Tai hopes to inspire other inline skaters from his country to turn their attention to the ice.

Canadian climax in Team Pursuit

[Ted-Jan Bloemen](#), [Hayden Mayeur](#) and [Kaleb Muller](#) (CAN) concluded the Four Continents Championships with a staggering time of 3 minutes and 37.21 seconds in the Team Pursuit, more than half a second faster than Bloemen had skated together with regular team mates [Jordan Belchos](#) and [Connor Howe](#) at the World Cup last weekend.

Canada left second-placed Kazakhstan 14.37 seconds behind while South Korea took bronze in 3:54.37.

Canada's fast time came as a surprise to Bloemen and his team-mates.

“We didn't have a time set in mind,” Mayeur said. “The first time the three of us have actually skated together was about two and a half hours ago.”

“A total of six laps together,” Bloemen said about their preparation. “So I thought that was pretty good, quite a bit quicker than last weekend. It shows the depth of the Canadian team.”

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.