

REVIEW DAY 1 - Wings soar as Wareham and Kim take 1500m honours on Day 1

Melbourne, October 6 - Lucas Wareham took opening day honours at the O'Brien Icehouse and in doing so underlined his credentials as the athlete to beat for the overall title at the 2023 Australian Open Short Track Speed Skating Championships.

The Sydney Wings skater won the 1500m (2:31.980) in what was a much anticipated showdown with fellow Australian representative Ihan Yoo (2:32.191).

"I felt really good but still felt like I could do a lot better. It's a great way to start," Wareham said.

"Ihan and I are pretty good friends and it feels really good to race someone at my skill level around the same age.

"Racing Ihan brings out the best in me because as soon as the comp finishes, you want to go back and train harder and work even harder to make sure you beat him next time."

Chinese skater Fangzhou Xing (2:36.913) finished the 1500m in third and is now expected to feature in a stellar three-way battle to decide the 500m and 1000m with Wareham and Yoo.

Hyojin Kim (2:50.017) stamped her class on the Women's 1500m producing a faultless performance in the final to make it a Sydney Wings' 1500m double.

The major challenge for the Australian international was negotiating the traffic as she began lapping the eight-person field. Korean skater Jaewon Song (2:50.431) stuck with her most of the way to finish second, while the Dockland Demon's Saffron Canny-Smith (2:55.710) came in third.

Australian Olympic President Ian Chesterman, who officially opened the championships with Australian Ice Racing President Alison Throssell, said Australian Short Track Speed Skating was a sport with "a great Olympic history".

"I'm delighted that there's been so much representation from this sport at the Olympics across the years and I'm really hoping the young kids here today are inspired to keep that representation going at Milano Cortina 2026 and beyond," he said.

"We really need the diversity that this sport brings to our Olympic program."

In other finals today:

Leo Tian Le Xu won the Junior D Men 500m.
Gloria Kang won the Junior D Women 500m
Michael Attwood won the Masters Men 1000m.
Nicole Keeghan won the Masters Women 1000m
Tianxiao Nolan Yu won the Junior F Men and Women 333m.
Aaron Dong won the Junior E Men and Women 333m.
Qiyue Lian won the Junior C Men and Women 777m
Luke Street won the Junior B Men and Women 1000m

While in the inaugural 2000m Mixed Relay the Dockland Demons were too strong for Sydney Speed Skating comfortably knocking off their northern neighbour.