

REVIEW DAY 2 - Yoo skates into box seat as Kim extends her lead

Melbourne, October 7 - Ihan Yoo has raced into the box seat for overall championship honours after winning two thrillers in the 500m and 1000m over close friend and fierce rival Lucas Wareham on Day Two of the 2023 Australian Open Short Track Speed Skating Championships.

Yoo ensured that contest went down to the wire by winning the first final of the day between the two - the 500m - in 43.747.

Yoo took the lead from the all-important start and didn't relinquish that advantage, despite a last-gasp, nail-biting effort by Wareham (43.824) in the final lap. Fangzhou Xing (45.072) finished in third.

"I had a bad day yesterday (Day One) losing to Lucas," Yoo said. "If I had come second in the 500m I would have lost everything but I got there man, and that was good.

"We're like brothers outside the rink as we spend so much time together. But this is just sport. It's about winning on the ice. It's what we train for."

The two backed up to go head-to-head in a thrilling 1000m Final showdown. Yoo (1:38.400) timing his charge from the back perfectly to overtake Wareham (1:38.458) and Xing (1:43.474) to take out the Day Two double.

Today's results put Yoo in pole position to win the overall championship going into tomorrow's 3000m decider.

"I'm confident over short distances and I'm confident over long distances," he said.

Australia's No1 female skater Hyojin Kim (47.859) was in a class of her own in the 500m. In what was a repeat of the result in the Women's 1500m, the Wings superstar finished ahead of Jaewon Song (50.211) and Saffron Canny-Smith (54.328).

The three also fought out the 1000m final and again Kim (1:38.877) was too good, leading from start to the finish to beat Song (1:46.204) and Canny-Smith (1:53.612).

In the Junior B Relay 3000m showdown between the Sydney Arrows and the Canterbury Alpine Ice Speed Skating Club, the Kiwis were the victor.

The result was the icing on the cake for Christchurch-based Luke Street, who also won the Junior B Men's and Women's 500m and 777m.

"It's good to be here at the Australian Champs, it's much different to competition in New Zealand, more people and better racing," he said,

"I'm happy with the way I've skated."

He puts the success of the Kiwi juniors down to "just working hard, we're hard workers."

Street is growing his hair for charity.

"I've been growing it for three to four years and I'm planning on cutting it in the next couple of weeks to raise money for cancer."

In the Masters Relay 3000m, the Olympic Southern Fliers beat the Dockland Demons and two Sydney Speed Skating teams.

Winners of today's other finals were:

Sashen Chetty in the Masters Men 500m and 777m
Nicole Keeghan in the Masters Women 500m and 777m
Leo Tian Le Xu in the Junior D Men 222m and 333m
Alexandra Abrossimova in the Junior D Women 222m
Tianxiao Nolan Yu in the Junior F Men and Women 111m
Yirun Wang in the Junior E Men and Women 111m and 222m
Qiyue Lian in the Junior C Men and Women 333m and 500m
Gloria Kang in the Junior D Women 333m
Lucas Yang in the Junior F Men and Women 222m