

REVIEW DAY 3 - Yoo and Kim crowned National Champions

Melbourne, October 8 - In the end it all came down to one race.

With Lucas Wareham winning the 1500m on Day One and Ihan Yoo taking out the 1000m and 500m on Day Two the overall senior men's champion at 2023 Australian Open Short Track Championship was settled in the 3000m Super Final.

And Wareham knew he had to win.

But in an intriguing tactical 27-lap race, the would-be champions - who are great mates off the ice - were lapped by Fangzhou Xing in the opening moments making Wareham's task even more challenging.

The Wings international skater made his move in the ninth lap, but it was ultimately not enough to shake Yoo or catch Xing.

Xing (5:11.915) going on to win, with Wareham (5:19.284) in second and Yoo (5:21.296) doing what he had to do to secure the overall title in third.

Although Yoo did admit to not nailing his race tactically.

"I missed counted the laps and I thought I'd finished," he said. "I was just too keen to win."

Yoo said Xing's early move to the front shifted the race in his favour.

"It did make things more comfortable for me," he said.

But the result completes a stellar three days for the Sydney Arrows skater and has confirmed his place as one of the rising stars of Aussie short track.

"As a junior, being the senior champion feels very nice," he said.

Yoo will compete next month in the Junior World Cups in The Netherlands.

In the Women Super Final, Australia's number one, Hyojin Kim, did what she has done the whole championships and blew the opposition away, winning a lap ahead of her nearest rival in 6:20.742 and taking the bonus laps with ease.

Kim has reigned supreme in the women's competition over the three days and went into the Super Final knowing no one could catch her in the race for the overall title courtesy of her wins in every other senior final.

Her nearest rival for over the championships, Jaewong Song, was disqualified after two false starts, leaving the door open for Saffron Canny-Smith (6:39.555) to take second, with Ashley Thorburn (6:51.911) in third.

"I love taking part in this competition," Kim said.

"I've been working a lot of my form and I will continue to work on my skating for better speed."

This will involve stepping up the cardio in the build up to the World Cup in Montreal, Canada, later this month.

As Olympian Brendan Corey goes from strength to strength training in Italy, back home the next generation of short track speed skaters are underlining their credentials.

Across the other age divisions the overall champions were:

Tianxiao Nolan Yu in the Junior F Men
Maya Elise in the Junior F Women
Yirun Wang in the Junior E Men
Rachel Li in the Junior E Women
Leo Tian Le Xu in the Junior D Men
Gloria Kang in the Junior D Women
Qiyue Lian in the Junior C Men
Sophie Jeon in the Junior C Women
Luke Street in the Junior B Men
Maya Smallbone in the Junior B Women
Edward Feryagin in the Junior A Men

Jinna Kim in the Junior A Women

In the Masters, Erika Fontaine, Sashen Chetty, Celeste Milner, Yin Zhang, Nicole Keeghan, Christopher Brookes, Lisa Shaw, Michael Attwood, Marianne Reece, Scott Kiel-Chisholm, Carolyn Phillips, Linda Brodersen and Anthony Richter won their age division.

The 2023 Australian Championships also saw the retirement of official Jim Hewish who has represented Australia at International Skating Union events - from World Cups to Olympics - for over 40 years and kept an eye on the local competition for 50.

It's only fitting the last word goes to the sport's oldest competitor; the gentleman of the ice, 80-year-old Anthony Richter.

"It's a great sport. It's almost an addiction for me. I started when I was 19 and I've only had about an eight year break since then," he said.

"The ice is so good at this rink (O'Brien Icehouse), you can get so much speed out of it. Obviously I'm a bit slower now!

"But look how promising it is for the sport with all the juniors we have here and they're only going to get bigger and bigger and faster and faster.

"Some of them will be champions; watching them skate, they're amazing."

In other results on the final day three:

Lucas Yang won the Junior F Men and Women 500m
Yirun Wang won the Junior E Men and Women 500m
Leo Tian Le Xu won the Junior D Men 777m
Gloria Kang won the Junior D Women 777m
Qiyue Lian won the Junior C Men and Women 1000m
Luke Street won the Junior B Men and Women 1500m
Michael Attwood won the Masters Men 1500m
Carolyn Phillips won the Masters Women 1500m