

# The Salt Lake Tribune

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## Speedskating: Another record day at Utah Olympic Oval

Italian, Finn increase number of world marks at Utah Oval to nine

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The Salt Lake Tribune  
Salt Lake Tribune

Article Last Updated: 11/11/2007 04:48:45 AM MST

KEARNS - Speedskater Sven Kramer of the Netherlands thought he was going to improve on his own world record in the men's 5,000 meters at a World Cup event at the Utah Olympic Oval on Saturday.

Instead, Italy's Enrico Fabris went home with it.

Moments after Kramer slowed ever so slightly on his final lap and missed his record by 0.04 seconds, Fabris blazed through his final lap to steal the mark by 0.08 seconds. His final time was 6 minutes, 7.40 seconds, and the homeland hero of the 2006 Turin Olympics in Italy said he was shooting for the record all the way, leaving Kramer in second place at 6:07.52.

"I wanted to do it since this morning," Fabris said. "I knew the ice was fast."

Four records have been tied or broken in the first two days of the event this weekend, giving the Utah Olympic Oval nine of the 11 individual speedskating world records. None of them is more than 2 years old.

One of the new records was set earlier Saturday, when Finland's Pekka Koskela skated 1:07.00 in the 1,000 despite clipping skate blades with Canada's Denny Morrison midway through the race. The collision sent Morrison falling to the ice and led to his disqualification, and almost inspired Koskela to abandon the race.

"There was a moment out there when I thought, on the back straightaway, 'Should I stop, or not?' " Koskela said, knowing he could have enjoyed a re-skate because of Morrison's interference. "But I figured out, I said, 'maybe I'll go ahead.' "

Good decision.

A natural sprinter, Koskela already had blazed to a better start than when Shani Davis of the United States set the previous record of 1:07.03 nearly two years ago at the Utah oval, and he was able to keep up his pace even though Davis has the reputation as the stronger finisher. In fact, Davis nearly reclaimed his record in the final pairing, but couldn't quite make up for a start that had him in 21st place after the first 200 meters.

Davis skated 1:07.18 to finish second, the day after watching the Netherlands' Erben Wennemars tie his record in the 1,500 on Friday.

"It's back to the drawing board," Davis said. "I have to figure something out if I want to be a champion. I need to figure some things out."

While Davis said he's hopeful that he can improve as the long season progresses and re-establish his dominance in the middle distances - he said it's good for the sport that there are now five or six men capable of breaking the world record at any given time - Koskela was thrilled with his accomplishment.

Whenever he arrives to skate at the Utah Olympic Oval, he glances at the giant board in the lobby that lists all of the world records and their owners. Every time, he said, he fantasizes that "maybe I'm up there someday.

"But today," he said, "I didn't think that I would be up there."

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### Men

\* 1,000 - 1, Pekka Koskela, Finland, 1:07.00; 2, Shani Davis, United States, 1:07.18; 3, Jeremy Wotherspoon, Canada, 1:07.34.

\* 5,000 - 1, Enrico Fabris, Italy, 6:07.40; 2, Sven Kramer, Netherlands, 6:07.52; 3, Havard Bokko, Norway, 6:14.14.

### Women

\* 500 - 1, Jenny Wolf, Germany, 37.22; 2, Wang Beixing, China, 37.45; 3, Sayuri Yoshii, Japan, 37.90.

\* 1,500 - 1, Christine Nesbitt, Canada, 1:52.75. 2, Kristina Groves, Canada, 1:54.25; 3, Chiara Simionato, Italy, 1:54.65.

Steve Holcomb of Park City and Shauna Rohbock of Orem are among the Utahns named Saturday to the U.S. Bobsled and Skeleton team for the upcoming World Cup season.

Holcomb will defend his World Cup title in the men's four-man bobsled in the USA-1 sled, while Pleasant Grove's Stephan Bosch will drive the USA-3 sled with a crew that includes Orem's Chris Fogt and Salt Lake City's Tim O'Mara. Rohbock again will team with Valerie Fleming in the women's bobsled.

Salt Lake City's Zach Lund will defend his World Cup championship in men's skeleton, though Orem's Noelle Pikus-Pace is taking the season off to have a baby. The World Cup season begins Nov. 26 in Calgary, and continues in Park City on

Dec. 3-8.

*-Michael C. Lewis*

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