

Well Organized Speed Skating Competition on Fast Ice

11th Masters' International Master Cup Berlin 2007

The 1st Masters International Speed Skating Master Cup in Berlin/GER was organized in November 1994 by Dominik Wehling, head of the speed skating section of the Berliner Schlittschuh-Club (BSC) at the open air speed skating track of Berlin-Wilmersdorf. In the same season the 1st Masters' International Speed Skating Sprint in Inzell/GER was held. And both competitions started 4 years later than the 1st Masters' International Speed Skating Games in Frankfurt am Main. The Master Cup was organized again and again every year in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, later in the icehall of the Sportforum in Berlin-Lichtenberg. Only in two seasons where the Masters' Games and German Masters' Championships were held in Berlin-Lichtenberg it could not take place because of the too large competition program in the icehall of the Sportforum. Very early the same 4 distance competitions could be skated at the Master Cup as at the Masters' Games (Ladies 500 m, 1500 m/1000 m, 3000 m; Men 500 m, 3000 m/1500 m, 5000 m). The competition should be an alternative to the Masters' Games, where not all interested Masters could start because of the limitation to about 150 – 200 competitors in three days.

The 11th Masters' Speed Skating Master Cup took place in Berlin-Lichtenberg at 17 – 18 Feb 2007. The date was only one week before the Masters' Games in Calgary/CAN and a lot of the Master skaters was already on the way to Calgary. But nevertheless 56 participants (8 Ladies and 48 Men) from 6 Nations were at the start (EST 1, GER 29, ITA 2, NED 7, NOR 10, RUS 7). Because there were no restrictions at the fourth distance, all skaters could skate the complete 4 distance race. The 10 Norwegian skaters made a round trip from Norway to Berlin, to Calgary and back to Norway. I met them again in the plane of Air Canada from Frankfurt to Calgary Monday afternoon.

Friday evening at Hotel Kolombus there was organized the drawing and afterwards we could enjoy a fine buffet. Unfortunately the eldest participant, Tauno Nurmi (M 80) hurted his leg during the buffet this evening and could not skate at the next day. The television from Berlin-Brandenburg which came next day to make a report about the Master Cup was very disappointed that he was not in the competition. The competition was again very well organized by a large jury team. Proof for the participation of top Master skaters and for the good ice were the IMSSC Records of Harry Schut/NED (M 40) 3000 m 7:17,87, Ragnvald Næss/NOR (M 50) 5000 m 7:28,85 and of Martin Fagna NOR (M 75) who lowered the IMSSC Records at all 4 distances and in the 4 distance race: 500 m 50,84, 1500 m 2:37,02, 1000 m 1:42,36, 3000 m 5:33,59 and 4 distance race 209,958 points. A nice victory ceremony was held after the competitions on Sunday afternoon. Many thanks to the Organization Committee with Karin Geike and Jörg Krakow and their team and to Kurt Ney and his jury members, who conducted the competition so well.

Unfortunately I could not take part in the event as competitor because of knee problems, but nevertheless I enjoyed the competition as spectator and could take some photos. And I could welcome the initiator of the Master Cup and the organizer of this event for many years, Dominik Wehling, with his family, who visited the competition also as spectator (see pictures). I think that in the next season there will be much more skaters at this competition, because it will be held already two weeks before the Masters' Games in Erfurt and because it is not possible that all interested skaters can skate at the Games because of quota limitations for the different countries. The Master Cup with the same distances as at the Games will be a good alternative.

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