



US SPEEDSKATING PRESS RELEASE

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US Speedskating Announces 2016-17 World Junior Short Track Championships Team

KEARNS, Utah – US Speedskating announced the 2016-17 World Junior Short Track Championships Team that will compete in Innsbruck, Austria from January 27-29, 2017. Team USA will send eight skaters – four men and four women – to compete in the three-day competition.

The same four skaters that were sent to the 2015-16 World Junior Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria will represent the women. Leading them will be U.S. Short Track Junior Champion **Gabriella Hachem** (North Potomac, Md.). Joining her is 2015-16 U.S. Short Track Junior Champion **Maame Biney** (Reston, Va.), Inline Junior World Champion **Francesca Bell** (Orlando, Fla.) and three-time World Junior Championships team member **April Shin** (Rockville, Md.).

“I love the group of girls that I get to go to World Junior Championships with,” said Hachem. “This is the same group that we had last year and we are all even stronger than we were in 2015-16.”

Brandon Kim (Fairfax, Va.), the winner of the men’s overall title at the U.S. Short Track Junior Championships, will be making his first appearance on the World Junior Championships Team. Kim will be joined by newcomer **Aaron Heo** (Warrington, Pa.), 2015-16 World Junior Championships team member **Benjamin Thornock** (Salt Lake City, Utah) and current 2016-17 ISU World Cup Fall team member **Thomas Hong** (Laurel, Md.).

Utah Olympic Oval FAST team short track coach, **Lin Lin Sun**, leads the team and will be assisted by Academy of Skating Excellence (ASE) short track coach **Hongyang Wang**.

Women

Francesca Bell (Orlando, Fla.) – Sunshine State Speedskating Club

- Two-time World Junior Championships team member (also 2015-16).
- Current one-lap Inline World Junior Champion...also won bronze in the inline track 500m at World Junior Championships.

Maame Biney (Reston, Va.) – Dominion Speedskating

- Two-time World Junior Championships team member and 2015-16 U.S. Women’s overall Junior Champion.
- Returned from three ankle injuries this year – two broken left ankles and one sprained right ankle – to place second at the 2016-17 Short Track Junior Championships.

Gabriella Hachem (North Potomac, Md.) – United Capital Blades Short Track Speed Skating Club

- 2016-17 Women’s U.S. Junior Champion.
- Two-time World Junior Championships team member (also 2015-16).

April Shin (Rockville, Md.) – National Training Program

- Made her first ISU World Cup roster this year, skating at World Cup Calgary and Salt Lake City for Team USA
- Three-time World Junior Championships team member (also 2014-15 & 2015-16).

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Men

Aaron Heo (Warrington, Pa.) – Potomac Speedskating Club

- Was one of two skaters to represent the United States in the 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.
- First time making the Junior World Championships Team.

Thomas Hong (Laurel, Md.) – National Team

- A member of the 2016-17 Short Track World Cup Fall Team...won bronze in the 5000m relay at World Cup Gangneung.
- Four-time World Junior Championships team member (also, 2013-2015).

Brandon Kim (Fairfax, Va.) – Potomac Speedskating Club

- 2015-16 Age Groups National Champion.
- 2016-17 U.S. Short Track Junior Champion.

Benjamin Thornock (Salt Lake City, Utah) – FAST Team

- Two-time World Junior Championships team member (also 2015-16).
- Two-time silver medalist at Age Group Nationals.

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About US Speedskating

From Pond to Podium, we are US Speedskating. We grow and nurture a sport where all ages can experience the thrill of speed and the camaraderie of the skating community. US Speedskating is responsible for the development of speed skating from grassroots to the highest elite racing programs. US Speedskating is recognized by the United States Olympic Committee and the International Skating Union as the governing body for the sport of speed skating in the United States. The Organization has won 86 Olympic medals to-date, making it one of the most successful sports in U.S. Olympic history. US Speedskating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), on [Facebook](#) and at www.usspeedskating.org.