

Makowsky qualifies for second event

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Lucas Makowsky keeps adding to his Olympic itinerary.

The Regina-born speed skater qualified for the men's 1,500 metres on Friday during the Canadian long track team selections in Calgary. He posted a winning time of one minute 44.47 seconds.

Makowsky was already guaranteed an Olympic berth after winning the 5,000m on Monday. His success at 1,500m and 5,000m has also earned him a spot in the team pursuit event.

"It's what I set out to do before these trials," Makowsky said Friday from the Calgary Olympic Oval. "There's for sure the 1,500, the 5K and the team pursuit, so winning this one definitely solidifies my position on the team. To come out with the three distances like I wanted to is definitely a good feeling."

Makowsky was happier with his performance in the 1,500m when compared to the earlier 5,000m skate.

"It was definitely a little better than how the 5K felt," he said. "I was very relaxed going into this one -- maybe a little more relaxed than I was going into the 5K. I didn't quite have that full-out aggression that I normally have in a 1,500, but I think that relaxation helped when it came to the second and third laps. I know I skated it well technically and tactically, so I was very happy with it. I paid off with a good time and a good finish, a good result."

Makowsky was followed by Mathieu Giroux of Pointe-aux-Trembles, Que. (1:45.34) and Kyle Parrott of Minnedosa, Man. (1:45.69). All three skaters are a good bet to compete at 1,500m in the Olympics, along with compatriot Denny Morrison of Fort St. John, B.C. Morrison had pre-qualified for the 1,500m.

Also on Friday, Kristina Groves of Ottawa won the women's 1,500m qualifier in 1:53.53. Next in line were Winnipeg skaters Cindy Klassen (1:55.65) and Brittany Schussler (1:56.10). All three are expected to compete at the 2010 Olympics. Christine Nesbitt of London, Ont., had pre-qualified at 1,500m.

The national team selections are to conclude today with the women's 5,000m and men's 10,000m. Makowsky may compete in the latter event.

The Vancouver Olympics are set for Feb. 12-28. The speed skating venue is in Richmond, B.C., where Makowsky expects to be well-supported by family members and friends.

"There's definitely a lot more people who want to be booking their tickets to Vancouver now," Makowsky said. "I know the support will be there and I'm pretty excited for it."

