

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships 2014 Preview Dresden, GER

The ISU Short Track Speed Skating Championships season starts on Friday January 17, 2014 with the ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships where the allround winners will be crowned on Sunday January 19. Unlike the World Cup where skaters race one or two distances and win distance titles, during the European Championships the skaters have to compete over four distances. The allround classification is based on the results of each skater in the three individual distances 500m, 1000m and 1500m. After the completion of the three distances only the top eight point scorers and ties on the eighth position will skate the 3000m Super Final. For the individual distances the final points 34, 21, 13, 8, 5, 3, 2 and 1 are awarded in descending order commencing with the first place. Final points are only awarded to skaters who participate in the Super Final. No points are awarded to skaters who receive a yellow or red card or failed to finish the race.

The competition starts on Friday with the Ladies and Men 1500m and with the Heats Relay. On Saturday the Ladies and Men 500m and Relay Semi Finals will take place and finally on Sunday the Ladies and Men 1000m, the Ladies and Men 3000m Super Final and Relay Finals will be skated. This competition will provide a last chance for European skaters to compete before the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

In the Ladies' field, five time and reigning European Champion Arianna Fontana (ITA) will defend the title, which she won in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. Fontana was also third in both 500m and 1000m in the last edition of the Samsung ISU World Cup Short Track. Last year's runner up and 2010 bronze medalist Elise Christie (GBR) is a strong contender for the top of the podium after two very successful seasons. The Dutch hopeful is Jorien ter Mors (NED) with two podium finishes in the last two Europeans. Other skaters to look out for are 2011 silver medalist Bernadett Heidum (HUN), 2010 winner and 2009 silver medalist Katerina Novotná (CZE), 2011 and 2012 bronze medalist Martina Valcepina (ITA), Yara van Kerkhof (NED) and Tatiana Borodulina (RUS) who both had a good season so far.

Reigning European Champion Freek van der Wart (NED) is back on the European stage. He will try to retain his title but his biggest rival is not only his compatriot Sjinkie Knegt, who won the event in 2012 and came second in 2011 but also a strong Russian team that will aim to get the countries' first Men's gold medal. Leading the Russians is Victor An (RUS) who is showing great form in all distances but specially in the 500m which he won the Overall title in this season's World Cup. Previous bronze medalists: Vladimir Grigorev (2013), Semen Elistratov (2012) and Ruslan Zacharov (2011) will also be pushing the Russian squad. Frenchmen Maxime Chataignier (2010 bronze medalist) and Thibaut Fauconnet (2010 silver medalist) will also be aiming to get a medal. Other skaters to look out for are Robert Seifert (GER), Yuri Confortola (ITA) and Viktor Knoch (HUN).

Full results are available at www.isu.org

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