

Press release

16 March 2018

Lorentzen and Takagi aim to conclude season on top

Heading into the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final in Minsk (BLR), Grand World Cup leaders Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR) and Miho Takagi (JPN) hope to cash in on a prolific season. The ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Champion and the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Champion spearheaded Norway and Japan, who definitely joined the Netherlands as major power houses in Speed Skating this year.

Lorentzen leads the men's Grand World Cup standings with 640 points, ahead of Russian Denis Yuskov (595) and compatriot Sverre Lunde Pedersen (500).

Takagi collected 800 points to go to the top, with compatriot Nao Kodaira (700) in second and Dutch Marrit Leenstra (550) in third.

Lorentzen dominates men's Sprint

Lorentzen will skate the first 500m and the 1000m on Saturday and conclude with the second 500m on Sunday. In the 500m the Olympic champion leads the standings with 536 points. Canada's Alex Boisvert-Lacroix is second with 428 and Mulder is third with 416 points.

In the 1000m Lorentzen faces tough competition from Olympic champion Kjeld Nuis (NED). Lorentzen has 412 points and defends a 32 point lead over the Dutchman. Kai Verbij (NED), who hopes to make up for a disappointing Olympic campaign after a mid-season injury, is third with 320 points.

Will Kodaira's lead be sufficient?

In the ladies' Sprint events Nao Kodaira (JPN) has been unbeatable this season, but after withdrawing from the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships in Changchun (CHN) due to illness, she decided to finish her season last week.

Kodaira won all seven 500m World Cup races she entered. Despite having collected 700 points, she may still miss out on the World Cup, with Vanessa Herzog (AUT) in second place with 555 points and two races yet to come. In the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final a win is worth 150 points, which gives Czech Karolina Erbanova (546), Korean Sang-Hwa Lee (510) and even Russian Angelina Golikova (455) a chance to win the World Cup.

In the 1000m Kodaira only lost one World Cup race when she crashed in Calgary. Although she won the other three she skated, being absent in Erfurt (GER) handed Yekaterina Shikhova (RUS) the chance to take first place in the ranking, with 340 point after five World Cup events. Kodaira is second with 305 points and Vanessa Herzog third with 296 points.

Canadian leaders in long distances

In the ladies' 3000m on Saturday Canadian Ivanie Blondin (335 points) has a fifteen-point lead over Martina Sáblíková (CZE). Russian Natalia Voronina (315), Dutch Antoinette de Jong (295) and German Claudia Pechstein (266) are also still in contention.

The men's 5000m will be a battle between Ted-Jan Bloemen (CAN) and Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR). The Canadian leads the standings with 410 points, while the Norwegian is third with 295 points. Pedersen showed great form at the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Amsterdam last weekend, only to miss out on the title due to a fall in the final 10000m. Sven Kramer (NED), who is second in the ranking with 300 points, will be absent in Minsk.

Takagi time in 1500m

In Sunday's 1500m Takagi will get her moment to shine again. She has won all four World Cup 1500m races she skated this season, only to come second in PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games. Olympic Champion Ireen Wüst (NED), who is fourth in the 1500m ranking, will not skate in Minsk, however her compatriot Marrit Leenstra is second with 270 points and Yekaterina Shikhova (RUS) third with 236 points.

Denis Yuskov (RUS) is the big favorite in the men's 1500m, having won all four World Cup races he skated this season to collect 400 points. Koen Verweij (NED) is second with 312 points and Joey Mantia (USA) third with 250 points.

Mass Start and Team events

In the men's Mass Start, Olympic Champion Seung-Hoon Lee (KOR) is leading with 218 points. Livio Wenger (SUI) is second with 175 and Andrea Giovannini (ITA) third with 150.

Francesca Lollobrigida (ITA) is at the top of the ladies' classification with 220 points, ahead of Pechstein (152) and China's Dan Guo (146).

The Japanese ladies are ready to collect a third consecutive World Cup title in the Team Pursuit after having won all three races so far this season to collect 300 points. Germany is second with 195 points and Canada third with 190.

In the Men's Team Pursuit anything can happen. Olympic Champion Norway is on top with 195 points, but the first eight nations are all within 100 points from first place.

In the Men's Team Sprint Canada is in pole position having won all three previous races, with Norway in second and Russian in third.

Norwegian ladies are first in the ladies' ranking having come second in all three races so far. Russia is second having won two races and South Korea third with one win to their name.

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The schedule of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final 2018 is as follows:

Saturday, 17 March: Ladies and Men 500m (1st)

Ladies and Men Team Pursuit
Ladies and Men 1000m
Men 3000m and Ladies 5000m Men

Sunday, 18 March: Ladies and Men 500m (2nd)

Ladies and Men 1500m
Ladies and Men Team Sprint
Ladies and Men Mass Start

Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#WCSpeedSkating** and **#SpeedSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

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About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2017/18 Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating is a series of international Speed Skating competitions which takes place annually. The Series started in 1984 and usually consists of six or seven events including the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final. Skaters can earn points at each competition, and the skater who has the most points on a given distance at the end of the series is the World Cup winner of that distance. Skaters also cumulate Grand World Cup points each time they compete in a distance. During the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final, the Lady and the Man with the most Grand World Cup points is crowned the Grand World Cup winner.

The results on the individual distances in the World Cup ranking are the main qualifying method for the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships.

A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season;

For Men: 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, combined 5000 m / 10000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint.

For Ladies 500 m, 1000 m, 1500 m, the combined 3000 m / 5000 m, Team Pursuit, Mass Start and Team Sprint.