

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games **Speed Skating Team Pursuit Preview**

The Speed Skating competition will conclude with the Ladies' and Men Team Pursuit which will take place on Friday and Saturday.

The Ladies' and Men's quarterfinals will take place on Friday where the winning team of each heat qualifies for the semifinals. The two losing teams with the best times qualify for the Final C and the remaining two teams qualify for Final D. The Men's semifinals will be skated after the heats. The ladies will continue their competition on Saturday.

In the Men's field, the reigning Olympic Champions team Canada will compete against reigning silver medallist team USA in the first heat. Korea and Russia will contest the second heat. Korea is higher ranked than Russia this season so they will have their work cut out. Then Norway will meet Poland, a hard competition where both teams are determined to win a medal. In the final pair the favourite Netherlands will face France, whose strongest skater has not competed due to a virus. The Netherlands will aim for its first Team Pursuit gold in history.

The ladies' competition has to do without the reigning Olympic champion Team Germany and starts with Canada (2006 Olympic Champions) meeting Russia, then, just like in the men's field, Poland (bronze in Vancouver) meets Norway. 2010 silver medallist Japan meets Korea and the Netherlands will give the USA a hard time. However having the fastest skaters is not always the key to success. A team that can work together and skate close as a unit and in the same rhythm is necessary.

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.sochi2014.com and www.isu.org

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