

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships – Berlin (GER) Preview

Berlin will host the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships for the third time in history. Sven Kramer leads the Dutch quest to equal Norway's record total of 36 World Allround titles in the Men's tournament at Sportforum Hohenschönhausen. Martina Sáblíková (CZE) and Ireen Wüst (NED) will probably reignite their battle for the ladies' crown after Wüst's absence on the international stage in the first half of the World Cup season. Kramer and Sáblíková are the defending Champions.

Competition format

A total of 24 ladies and 24 men from 18 different countries will compete in the big combination. For the Ladies the big combination consists of 500m, 3000m, 1500m, and 5000m and the men have to skate 500m, 5000m, 1500m and 10,000m. Points will be calculated on the basis of the 500m (eg time from the 1500m and 5000m will be divided by 3 and 10 respectively).

Reignited old rivalry in Ladies' competition

Last season Sáblíková defeated Wüst in the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Calgary, with Norway's Ida Njåtun taking the bronze. Sáblíková could win her fourth World Allround title. German Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann still holds the record with eight titles and Wüst already won five World Allround gold medals in her career. The Dutchwoman won a total of nine medals at World Allround Championships (5 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze).

At the 2016 ISU European Speed Skating Championships in Minsk (BLR) in January Sáblíková defeated Wüst, who had missed the first four World Cup legs, because she had failed to qualify after suffering a concussion in a pre-season accident. At the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships Wüst showed growing form when she took a silver medal in the 3000m and fourth place in the 1500m. Sáblíková was glad her rival was back. "I've been on the top for ten years now and Ireen was always there as my main rival. I miss the fights," said the Czech lady at the Heerenveen World Cup in December.

Antoinette de Jong (NED) finished third in the overall classification at this year's European Championship. She could become the third youngest Dutch female speed skater to win a medal at ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships. Other contenders for bronze could be Ida Njåtun (NOR), Natalja Voronina (RUS) or perhaps Heather Richardson-Bergsma (USA). The American lady came second in last week's ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships and she finished fourth in last year's ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships.

Kramer chases eighth title

Sven Kramer is the outright favorite to win the men's tournament. He could grab a record extending eighth World Allround title. His seven so far are two more than the next most prolific participants in the history of the competition, Oscar Mathisen (NOR) and Clas Thunberg (FIN). One of Kramer's rivals for the title is compatriot Jan Blokhuijsen, who came third in the ISU European Speed

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Skating Championships in January. Blokhuijsen was the runner-up in 2012 and 2014, finished third in 2011 and is also a former European Champion.

For the first time since 1999, Netherlands will be represented by only two skaters at these Championships, because the Dutch men failed to secure their third slot at the World Cup in Stavanger in January, when Arjan Stroetinga crashed in the 5000m.

Bart Swings (BEL) will also aim for at least a medal after he won silver at the European Championships in Minsk. In 2013 he already won a bronze medal at the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships.

Denis Yuskov (RUS) came second last year, after having won the bronze in 2014. Two skaters have recorded 3-2-1 finishes in three successive years: Ivar Ballangrud (NOR, 1934-1936) and Johann Olav Koss (NOR, 1992-1994). Yuskov's coach Kosta Poltavets announced that the Russian skater suffers from a slight groin injury and will not participate in the final 10,000m.

Sverre Lunde Pedersen took the bronze medal last year. The Norwegian withdrew due to illness at the European Championships in Minsk, but he showed good form when he grabbed the bronze in the 5000m at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships.

Since the reunification in 1990, only one German man ever managed to finish in the top three of the standings. In 1997, Frank Dittrich (GER) won a bronze medal. In Berlin Patrick Beckert and Moritz Geisreiter will defend the German honor on home ice. The two long distance specialists hope to qualify for the final 10,000m with a strong performance in the 5000m on Saturday.

Records

Track records Men: 34.69, 1:44.47, 6:09.76, 12:50.40

Track records Women: 37.36, 1:54.88, 4:00.75, 6:59.26

Championships records Men: 34.98, 1:42.68, 6:07.49, 12:49.88. Points: 145.742

Championships records Women: 37.11, 1:51.85, 3:53.34, 6:48.97. Points: 154,580

Additional information

[ISU Speed Skating Media Guide](#)

Results: <http://www.isureults.eu/>

Live Stream on [ISU Skating Channel](#) NB: geoblocking may be required in certain territories

Twitter: [@ISU_Speed](#)

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