

February 21, 2019

Heerenveen, the Netherlands

50th ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships in Heerenveen

Heerenveen will host the 50th ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships on February 23-24.

Reigning World Sprint Champion [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR) hopes to keep his crown in Heerenveen while [Jorien ter Mors](#) (NED) had to skip the current season due to knee surgery leaving the title up for grabs.

Big scene for Lorentzen

Lorentzen won the first 500m World Cup race of this season, but hasn't been able to take another top spot on the podium since. The Olympic 500m Champion struggled with his motivation this season. "I need the big scene to get the adrenaline running," he said after grabbing silver at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Inzell. An adjustment to his equipment also helped Lorentzen to get back on track. He said: "Jeremy (Wotherspoon, coach) made some changes to the radius and the bend of the blade. Small changes can have a big impact."

After winning 500m silver in Inzell, Lorentzen ended up fourth in the 1000m, thus marking the best combined 500m and 1000m results. Although it's not worth anything at the Single Distances Championships, the combined result must have given Lorentzen confidence heading into the World Sprint Championships.

Netherlands versus Russia

[Kai Verbij](#) (NED) is another top contender for the title in Heerenveen. The 2017 World Sprint Champion won the European Sprint Championships in Collalbo in January and took the 1000m title at the World Single Distances Championships two weeks ago. Verbij will be accompanied by countrymen [Hein Otterspeer](#) and [Kjeld Nuis](#). Otterspeer already won bronze at the World Sprint Championships in 2013 and silver in 2015. Olympic 1000m and 1500m Champion Nuis won silver in 2016 and 2018.

The 2015 and 2016 Champion [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) (RUS) leads the 500m World Cup ranking and is second in the 1000m World Cup ranking, but the Russian had to settle for seventh and sixth place in those distances in Inzell. He'll be looking to find back his winning ways in Heerenveen, while his countryman [Ruslan Murashov](#) hopes to top his 500m World title with success in the sprint combination.

Japan's [Tatsuya Shinhama](#), who won two 500m World Cup races this season, although he is an outsider for the World Sprint title, the question is whether he'll have enough power to stay close in the 1000m races.

Three horse race in Ladies' competition

Without defending Champion Ter Mors, the Ladies' competition is likely to become a three horse race between 2017 Champion and Olympic 500m gold medalist [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN), European Sprint Champion and 500m World Champion [Vanesse Herzog](#) (AUT) and [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA),

who won the World Sprint crown in 2015 and 2016, and showed great form taking the 1000m World title in Inzell.

The Russian squad will also challenge for the podium with [Olga Fatkulina](#), [Angelina Golikova](#) and [Daria Kachanova](#) currently ranked second, third and fourth in the 500m World Cup rankings, but the 1000m might be a bottleneck.

All-time ranking

With two titles and a silver medal Bowe is the most decorated skater at the current World Sprint Championships. She could climb up to fourth place in the all-time ranking with another gold medal. Karin Kania-Enke (GDR) tops the list with six gold medals and two silvers.

Igor Zjelezovski (BLR) is the best male Sprinter with six gold medals and one bronze. Håvard Lorentzen's coach Jeremy Wotherspoon (CAN) comes second with four gold medals, four silvers and one bronze. With two gold medals Pavel Kulizhnikov is the highest ranked skater to compete in Heerenveen. A third title would lift him up to fifth place on the all-time list.

The ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships will be available as a live stream in some countries on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

About ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships

The ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships is a four-race tournament, in which Skaters compete in two 500m races and two 1000m races over two days, to decide the champion in an overall classification.

For further information please visit: <https://www.isu.org/speed-skating/events/speed-skating-calendar/eventdetail/11203/35/isu-world-sprint-speed-skating-championships?templateParam=11>