

January 22, 2020

Debrecen, Hungary

## Hungary's Liu brothers leading the charge for honors at ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships

The 24th ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships take place from January 24-26 in Debrecen, Hungary – and the host nation will have high hopes of winning a clutch of gold medals.

Budapest-born brothers [Shaolin Sandor](#) and [Shaoang Liu](#) have been among Europe's elite racers for several years and became national heroes two seasons ago when they formed half of the 5000m Men's Relay team – along with [Viktor Knoch](#) and [Csaba Burjan](#) – who won gold at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

Hungary is a proud Olympic nation, with 178 gold medals in the summer Games – placing it ninth on the overall table – but the team's heroics in the Republic of Korea led to the nation's first winter gold.

Since then, the siblings have made serious progress individually too: they've regularly made podiums on the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating circuit, and Shaolin Sandor was crowned overall ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Champion last season, with Shaoang winning the silver.

The duo have already expressed excitement about this competition coming to their homeland and identified Debrecen as the focal point of their season.

They're certainly in suitable form to enter the tournament with real optimism. Shaolin Sandor, 24, won the ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating 500m in Montreal earlier this season; Shaoang, 21, took the win in the same distance in Nagoya. In Shanghai, meanwhile, Shaolin Sandor won both 500m gold medals.

Alongside individual honors, they'll also be targeting victory in the 5000m Relay – in which they are world record holders as well as Olympic champions.

Their female teammates might also have a shot at individual medals – particularly Jaszapati, who has improved greatly over recent seasons.

Who will rival the homeland heroes? With Netherlands' [Sjinkie Knegt](#) – a three-time overall ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Champion – still not in the field after being plagued by injury and misfortune, it is perhaps Russia that offers the biggest threat in the Men's field.

[Semen Elistratov](#), overall ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Champion in 2016 and 2017, has had an excellent term. He won gold in the 1500m at Salt Lake City earlier this season before adding the 1000m title in Montreal.

Elistratov's teammates [Pavel Sitnikov](#) and [Alexander Shulginov](#) have also been steady, while Netherlands' [Itzhak de Laat](#) has been making finals too. But all signs point to a bumper weekend for the Lius.

The Ladies' field looks like it will be a straight shootout between the Netherlands and Italy.

[Suzanne Schulting](#) is the ISU European and ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Champion and will be keen to maintain an iron grip on her title. While not quite in the indestructible form of 2018/19, Schulting has been steadily winning races throughout the season, and the world No.1 will be the racer to beat.

Her biggest rivals will be an Italian duo: [Martina Valcepina](#), who has been strong in the 500m this season and looks in the form of her life, and [Arianna Fontana](#).

Fontana has won seven of the past 12 ISU European Short Track Speed Skating overall titles and was victorious in 2018 before taking a season off. The 29-year-old has returned in fine form and is a danger over all three individual distances.

Elsewhere, the Netherlands' [Lara van Ruijven](#) and [Yara van Kerkhof](#) are always contenders, while Russia's [Sofia Prosvirnova](#), who won silver in 2019, and [Ekaterina Konstantinova](#) can also threaten.

An X factor for the weekend? The return of Great Britain's [Elise Christie](#). The 29-year-old Scot, who was overall ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Champion in 2017 and ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Champion in 2015 and 2016, took bronze in this event last season.

She's since been hit with some injury woes and may lack the race fitness to make an impression here. But Christie remains one of the sport's most powerful athletes so don't be surprised to see her return in style.

The ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships are being held in Hungary for only the second time; the second edition of the competition was held in Budapest in 1998.

### **Where to watch and follow the ISU European Short Track Speed Skating Championships?**

Viewers will be able to watch via their national broadcaster/channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#). You will find the full list in the "[Where to Watch](#)" news [here](#).

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and the "[Where to Watch](#)" news. You can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams start or new videos are published.

Highlights, clips, interviews, behind the scenes:

YouTube: [ISU Skating](#)

IG: [@isuspeedskating](#)

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Follow the conversation with #ShortTrackSkating.

For further information on ISU Short Track Speed Skating visit: [isu.org/short-track](http://isu.org/short-track).

### **About the International Skating Union**

The International Skating Union (ISU), founded in 1892, is the oldest governing international winter sport federation and the exclusive international sport federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) administering the sports of Figure Skating (Single & Pair Skating and Ice Dance), Synchronized Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating worldwide. The objectives of the ISU are to regulate, govern, promote and develop its sports on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding between athletes. Currently three ISU disciplines are included in the Olympic Winter Games program (Figure Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating). For further information please visit [isu.org](http://isu.org).