

February 12, 2020

Minsk, Belarus

Minsk ready to host future of International Speed Skating at Junior World Cup Final

After having hosted the first leg of the Senior ISU World Cup Speed Skating last November, Minsk will be home to the ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Final this weekend. Gabriel Odor (AUT) and Robin Groot (NED) represent the future of international Speed Skating, defending their leads in multiple events in the Belarussian capital. Dutch prodigy Femke Kok will not be present, because she'll compete at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Salt Lake City this week. Kok will be present at the ISU World Junior Speed Skating Championships in Tomaszów Mazowiecki next week.

Kok leaves it to compatriots

Competition kicks off with the Ladies' and Men's 1000m on Saturday. Kok led both the Ladies' 500m and the 1000m ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating rankings after having won all races in the previous two events in Bjugn (NOR) and Enschede (NED).

Kok propelled to the top like lightening when she qualified for the Senior ISU European Speed Skating Championships and ISU World Speed Skating Championships at the Dutch trials in December. At the ISU European Speed Skating Championships in Heerenveen, the 19-year-old came fourth in the 500m in a personal best and a junior world record of 37,66.

In absence of Kok, her compatriots Maud Lugters, Marrit Fledderus and Myrthe de Boer, who are ranked second, third and fourth in the 1000m ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating, will defend the Dutch honor.

In the men's 1000m, Taiyo Nonomura (JPN), Sang Hyeok Cho (KOR) and Wataru Morishige (JPN) made up for the same podium in the two previous ISU Junior World Cups. Nonomura will not be in Minsk to defend his lead, leaving the field open for Cho and Morishige to compete for the title.

Action will continue with both the Ladies' and Men's 3000m and Team Pursuit events on Saturday. These are the signature events of endurance specialists Groot and Odor. The Dutch lady leads the 3000m ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking, having won the two previous races, but Austrian Odor is only sixth in the ranking. He missed the first ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating in Bjugn but won in Enschede (NED).

The Team Pursuit has not been on the program at the first two legs of the ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating, so there's a wide-open field of surprises to come.

Japanese and Korean sprinters on Sunday

The second and final day of the ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Final comprises of the Ladies' and Men's 500m, 1500m and Mass Start events.

In the ladies 500m Moe Kumagai is favorite to win. The 19-year-old Japanese is ranked second behind absent Kok in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking and she'll have to deal with Maud Lugters, Marrit Fledderus, who are a close third and fourth.

The Men's 500m will feature another battle between ISU World Cup Speed Skating leader Sang Hyeok Cho (KOR) and his Japanese rivals Katsuhiko Kuratsubo and Wataru Morishige (JPN).

Kuratsubo is ranked second and fifth ranked Morishige won the 500m at the second ISU World Cup Speed Skating event in Enschede.

Groot will again be favorite in the Ladies' 1500m and the Mass Start events. The Dutch prodigy won the two previous 1500m races and will face a challenge in the Mass Start versus Laura Peveri (ITA). Both Groot and the Italian won one race, with Peveri on top of the ranking because she took silver, whereas Groot took bronze in the race she did not win.

The Men's 1500m will be a tight battle between ISU World Cup Speed Skating leader Peder Kongshaug (NOR) and third-ranked Motonaga Arito (JPN), with second ranked Jur Veenje (NED) absent in Minsk.

In the concluding Men's Mass Start, Tsubasa Hoikawa (JPN) defends a big lead in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking, but Gabriel Odor (AUT), who was absent at the first leg, won the second race.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit the [Series Page](#) on ISU.org. Click [here for results](#).

For further information on ISU Speed Skating visit <https://www.isu.org/speed-skating>. Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and follow the conversation with [#SpeedSkating](#).

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ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Series 2019/20:

[ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating - Qualifying YOG 2020 - Bjungn \(NOR\) Nov 16 – 17](#)

[ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating - Qualifying YOG 2020 - Enschede \(NED\) Nov 23 - 24](#)

[ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Final - Minsk \(BLR\) Feb 15 - 16](#)

About ISU Junior World Cup Speed Skating Series

Since the inaugural Junior World Cup in 2008/09 many youngsters have had their first taste of international competition in Junior World Cup events. The format is comparable to the Senior World Cup Speed Skating Series, but the juniors only have three events in the whole season. After Tomaszów Mazowiecki the competition will resume in Helsinki on January 26-27, and the final will be held at Baseldga di Piné on February 9-10. In 2016 a neo-senior World Cup was added to the Junior World Cup Series.

Participation in the Junior World Cup is open to Junior A and Junior B Skaters, born between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2003, and to Junior C Skaters born between July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004. Participation in the Neo-seniors division is open to Skaters born between July 1, 1995 and June 30, 1999.