

January 20, 2021

Heerenveen, the Netherlands

Fresh faces in shortened ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series

The condensed International Speed Skating season in the Heerenveen Hub resumes with the first of two ISU World Cup Speed Skating events on Friday 22 January. After the ISU European Speed Skating Championships last weekend, this will be the first chance for Skaters from the other continents to see how they stand at an International level. The 2020/21 ISU World Cup Speed Skating series, which comprises of two events in Thialf in back-to-back weekends, will also serve as one of the qualifying events for quota places at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships 2021 in February.

Different mindset

Last weekend the best European Skaters battled for the Allround and Sprint crowns, which are overall titles adding up the results of four distances in a single weekend. At the ISU World Cup Speed Skating events, the Skaters race for Single Distances honors. That requires a completely different mindset.

Winning the Allround title, [Antoinette de Jong](#) (NED) proved to be the most complete Skater in the Ladies' field, but she really struggled in the 3000m. "The 3000m in an Allround tournament is always more difficult (than in Single Distances format), and I always have difficulties," she commented. "Maybe it's because I'm just too focused on the sprinting legs. Switching to the 3000m I just did not have the right feeling."

Fresh legs

When De Jong starts in Sunday's 3000m at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating, she'll have fresh legs and having skated the track record in this distance in December, she'll be one of the favorites but the Ladies' long distance field is very competitive. [Irene Schouten](#) won the 3000m at the ISU European Speed Skating Championships, just ahead of [Natalya Voronina](#) (RUS), who is always a contender in the long distances. And after the exclusive European party last weekend, Canadian endurance specialist [Isabelle Weidemann](#) will also be in the mix.

Single distance specialists

[Patrick Roest](#)'s career first ISU European Speed Skating title was based on a superb display in the 1500m and the 5000m, which he won both. At the ISU World Cup Speed Skating events, he'll have to deal with specialists in those events, however. In the 1500m those specialists are his compatriots [Kjeld Nuis](#) and [Thomas Krol](#), who won the European sprint title by surprise. Not being a natural born sprinter Krol admitted that the 500m is not 'his hobby', but he really excels in both the 1000m and the 1500m.

Endurance engine Van der Poel

In the 5000m Roest will face competition from countrymen [Jorrit Bergsma](#) and [Sven Kramer](#), but Sweden's [Niels van der Poel](#) also proved to be a strong contender in the Men's long distances, coming second in the 5000m and winning the 10.000m by a 18.27 second margin. After having been absent from International Speed Skating for two years, Van der Poel will start in the B Division, but he hopes to promote to the A Division. Because there will not be a 10,000m race in this season's ISU World

Cup Speed Skating series, he needs the 5000m races to qualify for the 10,000m at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in February.

Bloemen defends Canada's honors

From outside Europe the World 5000m champion [Ted-Jan Bloemen](#) (CAN) will probably be the strongest endurance specialist in the Men's field. His compatriot and world record holder in the 10,000m [Graeme Fish](#) was nominated for the Canadian team too, but decided against travelling to Heerenveen in January.

Golikova looking forward to favorite distance

"I was tired," [Angelina Golikova](#) (RUS) said. "It's not easy, four distances in one weekend." The Russian Sprinter was on top of the rankings after three distances into the European Sprint Championships, but eventually lost the title to world 1000m champion [Jutta Leerdam](#) (NED). Being more of a 500m specialist, Golikova can eat her heart out at the World Cups, with a 500m on both Saturday and Sunday, and only one 1000m on Sunday.

Tough competition for Kulizhnikov

The Men's 500m traditionally is one of the most competitive distances in Speed Skating. Russian world record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) was absent at the ISU European Sprint Speed Skating Championships after having contracted a COVID-19 infection in December, but he is on the entry list for the ISU World Cup Speed Skating events. If he starts, he'll face tough competition from Canada. The Men's sprinting powerhouse will field [Alex Boisvert-Lacroix](#), [Laurent Dubreuil](#) and [Gilmore Junio](#) in the shortest distance. Dutch [Kai Verbij](#) will seek redemption after crashing out of the first 500m, while defending his ISU European Speed Skating title and his compatriots [Dai Dai Ntab](#), [Ronald Mulder](#), [Hein Otterspeer](#) all know what it is to win a 500m race at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating too.

ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking and program

Despite the shortened season, there will be an ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking for each competition category. Both 2020/21 ISU World Cup Speed Skating events will have the same program. The weekend starts with the Men's and Ladies' Team Pursuit events and the semi-finals of the Mass Start competition. On Saturday both the Men and the Ladies will skate the first of two 500m races, the 1500m and the Mass Start finals, and the weekend concludes with the second 500m for both genders, the 3000m for the Ladies, the 5000m for the Men and the 1000m for both genders.

Where to Watch

Viewers will be able to watch the ISU Speed Skating competitions that will take place within the hub either 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](#).

All the information is available in the [Where to Watch](#) which will be updated after each competition. The individual announcements and entry lists will be published under the respective events as soon as they are available. For further information regarding the ISU Speed Skating Hub please visit: <https://www.isu.org/heerenveen2021>.

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information from the ISU and you can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams or new videos are published.

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