

Press release

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Olympic and World champions go ahead to ahead in the Short Track Men's 1500m

Coveted as Korea's favorite winter sport, the Short Track Speed Skating competition will "go to the start" today. The action-packed day includes the Ladies' 500m qualifying heats (final on February 13) and the Ladies' 3000m Relay qualifying heats (final on February 20) but the highlight of the day will be the Men's 1500m final.

World Record holder Knekt will battle it out with home favorites

In order to reach the final, skaters have to go through the qualifying heats of the 1500m. 1500m World Record holder Sjinkie Knekt (NED) will attempt to become the first Dutch Short Track Speed Skater to win an Olympic gold medal in this sport. When asked about his goals in PyeongChang 2018 Knekt commented: "Four gold medals is maybe a little bit too high, but I know the competitions are is hard. If I'm four times on the podium I should be OK with it. But of course, I'm hoping and I'm going for (at least) one gold medal."

Knekt will face tough competition from a strong Korean squad, who will be competing on home ice. Hwang Dae Heon (KOR) is in top form this season, having won most 1500m races he competed in, putting him first in the World Cup ranking in this distance. Team mate Lim Hyo Jun (KOR) lists fourth in the ranking, while Seo Yi Ra is 2017 1500m world bronze medalist.

Headlining team Canada: Veteran Hamelin and youngster Girard

Charles Hamelin (CAN) has had a solid season standing third in the World Cup rankings. As the 2014 1500m Olympic and World Champion and 2010 500m Olympic Champion, Hamelin is a very experienced skater and he will attempt to become the first Short Track Speed Skater to win a gold medal at three different Olympic Winter Games. Back in November 2017, Hamelin beat Hwang in a photo finish at the Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating event in Seoul (KOR). Back then, he stressed the importance of the win: "It's really good to have such results in Korea because we'll be back in two months for the Olympics, so just to have some good vibes here is really good for me." 2017 silver medalist in the 1500m and team mate Samuel Girard (CAN) is a strong contender to make it to the final and finish on the podium. Considered as the rising star in the Canadian Short Track team he will be looking to confirm his status on Saturday.

Olympic Silver medalist Han goes ahead to ahead with World Champion Elistratov

2014 Olympic silver medalist and 2016 World Champion in the 1500m, Tianyu Han (CHN) will also be eyeing the podium. Semion Elistratov (OAR), who won the World title back in 2015, will be eager to show that he can also be a force to be reckoned with.

For more information, schedules, full entries and results please refer to the [ISU website](#) and the [official website](#) of the Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang.