

Press release

14 February 2018

All eyes on Kodaira in Ladies' 1000m

Three wins in four World Cup races and a world record in Salt Lake City. Nao Kodaira (JPN) is the clear-cut favorite for the Ladies' 1000m at the Gangneung Oval on Wednesday. Competition will be tough, however and anything can happen. The only World Cup race Kodaira skated but did not win this season, in Calgary, she crashed.

One of the main challengers to Kodaira is her compatriot Miho Takagi. When Kodaira set her world record of 1:12.09 in Salt Lake City last December, Takagi came second in 1:12.63, which makes her the second fastest 1000m lady in this season. Takagi got silver in Monday's 1500m. She was encouraged for the 1000m: "Now I am motivated to go faster and better and that's a great reflection from today."

Bowe feels momentum

Last year's 1000m world champion Heather Bergsma and compatriot Brittany Bowe (USA) also aim at a spot on the podium on Wednesday. Bergsma hopes to brush off the disappointment of Monday's 8th place in the 1500m, while Bowe, in contrast, was encouraged by her 5th place in that event. Bowe missed last season due to a severe concussion and it took a lot of effort to get back to the top. She was happy after her PyeongChang 2018 1500m. "This was the best 1500m I've had in a couple of years. It gives me great momentum going into my favorite race, which is the 1000m."

Jorien ter Mors (NED) came third at last year's World Championships in Gangneung. The Olympic 1500m champion of 2014 in Sochi missed out on a ticket for the PyeongChang 1500m, but managed to qualify for the 1000m, despite an injury hampered season. She will also compete in the 500m, but the 1000m is her best shot at silverware. Compatriots Ireen Wüst, who took her fifth Olympic gold and her tenth medal in total in the ladies' 1500m, and Marrit Leenstra, who took 1500m bronze, should be considered outsiders for a gold medal.

Austrian Vanessa Herzog (AUT) could become the first Austrian lady winning and Olympic medal since Emese Hunyady in 1994. Herzog won the last international

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competition prior to Pyeongchang 2018, when she took gold at the Erfurt World Cup in January.