

Press release

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Korean fireworks expected at Gangneung Ice Arena

Saturday's Short Track Speed Skating program Gangneung Ice Arena makes up for more exciting competition in the ladies' 1500m and the men's 1000m. The Ladies will start with the heats and skate all the way to the final, while the men already finished their heats on Tuesday. They will skate the quarter, semi and finals on Saturday.

Following the Ladies 500m and Men 1500m races, the Men 1000m qualifying heats, Men 5000m Relay and Ladies 3000m Relay semi-finals a total of 20 penalties were given to 11 different countries. All penalties were for impeding.

Home crowd looks at Choi and Shim in ladies' 1500m

The Republic of Korea will be looking forward to the ladies' 1500m tonight. The home nation has won all World Cup races in this event this season. Minjeong Choi claimed three victories and Sukhee Shim pocketed one. Shim already won silver in this event in Sochi four years ago when she was just 17 years old. Choi got penalized in the 500m race for impeding another skater but is focused on what is to come: "I did my best for the final and I was so happy that I could be in the final. I still have other competitions left, so I will focus and concentrate on those."

Korea and China have divided all previous four Olympic gold medals in this event between them. Since Yang Zhou's Sochi Olympic gold, China has not won any silverware at the ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships in this event. However, with an eighth place, Yutong Han was the highest ranked Chinese in this season's 1500m World Cup.

Arianna Fontana (ITA) hopes to challenge Korean dominance in the 1500m. In last Tuesday's 500m, the 27-year-old Italian finally won her first gold medal in her fourth Olympics. She won 1500m gold in the 2015 ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships, but only finished tenth in this season's 1500m World Cup.

Elise Christie (GBR) is the reigning world champion. She is aiming to seize Great Britain's second Olympic Short Track medal after the bronze for Nicky Gooch in the men's 500m in 1994. Christie fell in the 500m but she is still aiming to reach the goal she set at the beginning of the Olympics: "The main goal is to get two medals, and definitely one gold. I'm happy with silver or bronze if it was everything I had that day, the race went that way and that was all I could do. But if I'm in silver medal position with two laps to go, and I attack and get a penalty, I'm happier with that, because I wouldn't have been happy sitting in second place. For me it's about winning gold, but at the same time I know it's short track and it's messy."



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The strong Canadian squad headlined by Marianne St-Gelais, who celebrates her 28th birthday today, and Kim Boutin who won the 500m bronze last Tuesday will aim to get to get through the qualifying rounds to get a step closer to a medal.

Others to look out for include Dutch women Suzanne Schulting and Jorien ter Mors (NED) who won the Speed Skating 1000m gold medal on February 14. Petra Jaszapati (Hun) and Sofia Prosvirnova (OAR) have also had a strong season.

Hamelin looks to complete golden set in the Men's 1000m

The men's 1000m is another event with a Korean colored history. Five of the seven previous gold medalists at the Olympic Winter Games were Korea. This year's Korean hope rests on the shoulders of Hyojun Lim, who already won gold in a new Olympic record in last Saturday's 1500m. Dae Heon Hwang (KOR), who finished second in the 1000m World Cup rankings this season, did not manage to finish the 1500m final, but he will get a new chance in the 1000m. World Champion Yira Seo is the third Korean competitor in the 1000m quarter finals. He'll have to defy the odds, because no reigning world champion in this event has ever won the Olympic title. All Koreans race in the first heat of the quarter finals, so only two will be able to make it into the semis.

Sjinkie Knegt (NED) and Semen Elistratov (RUS) will have another shot at gold in the 1000m, when they both start in the third hear of the quarter-finals, after grabbing silver and bronze respectively in the 1500m last Saturday. Knegt won the first Short Track medal for the Netherlands and knows he has a lot of pressure: "Four years ago it came as a surprise my bronze medal in the 1000m. Right now I'm one of the favorites on almost each distance, so that's of course a big difference. But I try to stay relaxed about it and then we will see how it goes in the competitions."

Charles Hamelin (CAN), who was penalized after the 1500m final, will start in the fourth quarter final heat. The Canadian set a new Olympic record clocking 1:23.407 in Tuesday's heats. "I'll put my focus on the next two races and make sure I'll get into the final again. Right now I'm just trying to get my head together and focus for the next day." Said Hamelin with only the 1000m gold missing from his impressive collection of Olympic medals. The 33-year-old Canadian, who announced his farewell from the sport at the end of the season. already won 500m and relay gold at Vancouver 2010 and 1500m gold at Sochi 2014.

Samuel Girard will have some big shoes to fill once his mentor Hamelin retires, but he told the press that he felt ready. He finished second at the 2016 ISU World Short Track Speed Skating Championships and is fifth in the World Cup ranking this season.

Although the 1000m is not Dajing Wu's specialty, he will feel the pressure as he is the only Chinese skater who managed to qualify for the quarterfinals.



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Shaoang LIU (HUN), who finished second at last year's world championships, could win Hungary's first Olympic medal in Short Track Speed Skating. He starts in the fourth quarter final together with Hamelin.

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.