

Press release

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Norway challenges Dutch again in men's 1000m

Kjeld Nuis (NED) won the men's 1500m and Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR) took gold in the 500m, which makes them both favorites for the 1000m at the Gangneung Olympic Oval on Friday. But there are more men aiming at the top spot, such as Nuis' countrymen Kai Verbij and Koen Verweij, Finland's Mika Poutala, and German Nico Ihle.

Impressed

Nuis was impressed by Lorentzen in the 500m. "Yes, he scared me, that full lap. The guy just has a fantastic technique. On the other hand, I think that his 24.6 full lap in the 500m is impressive, but he'll probably think the same about my 25.0 lap in the 1500m. I hope that comes together in the 1000m and then we'll see who wins."

The Dutchman won the 1000m world title at last year's ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Gangneung and he could become the first reigning world champion in the men's 1000m to win the Olympic gold medal in the same event. He could also become the third man to win the 1000m and 1500m at a single Olympic Winter Games, after Eric Heiden (USA, 1980) and Gaetan Boucher (CAN, 1984).

Nuis will start in the final pair versus Poutala. "That's tough," he said. "To look at all the other skaters before you. I just have to do my own thing and keep focused on my own race. Lorentzen already skated 1:08 in a training race here. I think the winning time will be 1:07 something."

Never a bad thing to skate fast

Lorentzen on the other hand could become the second man to win the 500m and 1000m at the same Olympic Winter Games, after Heiden in 1980. Together with Sverre Lunde Pedersen, who anchored Norway's Team Pursuit men to gold, the sprinter represents a new generation in Norwegian Speed Skating. Lorentzen's 500m gold was Norway's first Olympic Speed Skating title in any event since 1998, when Adne Soendral won the men's 1500m. Coach Sondre Skarli thinks the Heerenveen World Cup in November 2017 was the turning point. "We had five or six wins there and a week later came Stavanger where we also won a lot. Then we knew we had something big going on. A lot of people asked whether our form came too early, but it's never a bad thing to skate fast. It's good to come to the Olympics knowing that normal is good enough and that you don't have to do better than you've done before."

The 1000m is the only men's Speed Skating event in which Norway does not have an Olympic gold medal. Only the Netherlands has already completed the gold medal set in individual men's events, excluding the Mass Start, which will have its inaugural appearance at the Olympic Games on Saturday. Skarli looks forward to another confrontation between Norway and the Dutch: "Kjeld (Nuis) will skate



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extremely good. I think the 1000m gold will be a battle between them (Nuis and Lorentzen), and maybe Verbij if he's in good shape. It will be exciting to see."

While everyone is gearing up for the 1000m, Lorentzen himself might well be playing the guitar, like he did on the day he won the 500m. "I played probably two or three hours just to cool myself down before the race, Metallica and Guns 'n Roses songs", he said after having won the 500m.

'Doing a Lorre'

Mika Poutala (FIN) gave Lorentzen the nickname Lorre. 'Doing a Lorre' became a common expression in the Norwegian team. "It means keeping your calm," Lorentzen explained. "If you don't get a good result, or the seconds are not on our side, you'll have another chance next time." After the 500m Poutala had to do a Lorre himself. The 34-year-old veteran finished fourth in the 500m, just 0.27 seconds away from a medal. "Not a good result, but I'm happy with how I skated," he said. "It's a new day tomorrow, even though it's not my favorite discipline, I really think anything can happen. I'm in a really fast shape right now. I can skate pretty fast and save energy not going full out in the beginning, to save energy for the last lap."

Verbij targets podium

Kai Verbij was also disappointed after the 500m, in which he finished ninth. "I've got mixed feelings because it's my first race again after nine weeks. I was injured in December and I didn't know what my level was today. I knew in training I was skating pretty well but it's always different in competition. He was ready looking forward to the 1000m, which is his favorite discipline: "I hope to skate a really good race there and eventually end up on the podium." Verbij will face Canada's Vincent De Haitre in the 17th pairing.

Nico Ihle (GER) finished 8th in the 500m, and he has not been able to finish on the 1000m World Cup podium this season yet. The German came fourth in the Sochi 2014 Olympic 1000m, behind Stefan Groothuis (NED), Denny Morrison (CAN) and Michel Mulder (NED). For various reasons none of the 2014 medalists will skate the 1000m in PyeongChang.

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.