

Press release

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'Every step for the Games' say top skaters as Audi ISU World Cup Short Track hits Shanghai

No one can get the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games out of their mind as the Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating series comes to Shanghai, China 9-12 November. Not only are priceless Olympic qualification quotas up for grabs, but it is also the penultimate opportunity for the world's very best Short Track skaters to put down a marker ahead of February's Korean showpiece.

The competition is coming to the boil at just the right time. The Canadian and, to a slightly lesser extent, Dutch and Chinese squads responded impressively to the Republic of Korea's domination of the season-opening event in Budapest, Hungary. Last time out, in Dordrecht, Netherlands, Canada's skaters claimed three of the eight gold medals on offer, matching the Republic of Korea, with the Dutch and Chinese taking one each.

In total, athletes representing five different nations have triumphed in the 2017 World Cup season so far, with a further five winning at least one medal. These are the kind of numbers which not only suggest a dynamic competition in Shanghai, but a hugely exciting two weeks in PyeongChang next year.

Current leader of the Ladies 500m World Cup Classification, [Marianne St-Gelais](#), neatly summed up the levels of commitment driving her and her peers after winning the 500m in Dordrecht.

"You have to think about PyeongChang 2018. Every move, every step is for the Games," she said. "We don't have many races left against our opponents, so when you have the shot, you have to take it."

The three-time Olympic silver medalist is part of an increasingly powerful-looking Canadian squad which will be looking to cement its position in Shanghai as the team to challenge the revered Republic of Korea skaters. Compatriot [Samuel Girard](#) illustrated the team's improvement from Budapest to Dordrecht, taking two golds and a silver in the Netherlands after picking up a solitary medal – albeit a gold, in the 5000m Relay – during the opening weekend.

"To stay in front – on the ice and mentally – is really important," Girard said. "It's pretty cool racing with these guys."

The men's 5000m relay is an area of particular strength for the Canadians, who will be looking for a third successive victory in Shanghai.

Elsewhere on the men's side, [Sjinkie Knegt](#) (NED) is worth watching. The 1500m world record holder won his first-ever World Cup 1000m title in Dordrecht before warning his rivals that he can “definitely do much more” once he is fully up to racing speed.

After a relatively quiet start to the season for the Republic of Korea's men's team, it would be no surprise to see 2017 Overall World Champion [Seo Yi Ra](#) (KOR) skate back to form in China. Teammate [Sin Da-woon](#), the two-time 1500m World Champion, is also yet to show his class. In contrast, Lim Hyo Jun will be aiming to return to the form that helped him claim the distance title in Budapest.

[Tianyu Han](#) (CHN) has been involved in all three of the medals won by Chinese men this season and, with the backing of a home crowd, he'll be aiming to top the podium after two bronze medals (1000m and Men's 5000m Relay) and one silver (Men's 5000m Relay).

In the women's draw you can almost feel the host of big names stretching eagerly on the sidelines, ready to prove a point. Having looked unbeatable in Budapest, [Choi Min Jeong](#) (KOR) climbed to the top of the podium just once in Dordrecht, in the 1500m, and admitted to feeling “frustrated” after she could help the Korean team finish only second in the 3000m Relay.

[Shim Suk Hee](#) is the only other Korean lady to claim individual gold so far this season. The 1000m world record holder took the title in her favored event last time out.

Great Britain's [Elise Christie](#) will be itching to get back on the ice in Shanghai after a cruel opening to such a momentous season. The 2017 1000m, 1500m and Overall World Champion injured her thigh in Budapest and, despite a valiant attempt, was effectively unable to compete in Dordrecht.

With skaters representing Russia, Italy, Australia and Japan all taking medals in the opening two events, the competition is wonderfully wide open in Shanghai. The Ladies 3000m Relay emphasizes the point perfectly. The Republic of Korea opened the season by finishing ahead of Canada and Russia, before China powered through to take gold in Dordrecht, with Korea second and Canada third. You would have to be brave to bet on the outcome in Shanghai.

Full [results and classifications](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#WCShortTrack** and **#ShortTrackSkating** and watch the live stream on the [ISU Skating Channel](#). Live results are available [here](#).

About Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating 2017/18 Series and qualification system for PyeongChang 2018

The **Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating** consists of four events during the Olympic season; [Budapest](#) (September 28-October 1), [Dordrecht](#) (October 5-8), [Shanghai](#) (November 9-12) and [Seoul](#) (November 16-19). The 2017/18 Series is also the Olympic Qualifying events for the 2018 PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games.

The competitions have a single distance character and are held in separate sessions. The first two days of the event are dedicated to all Qualifying Rounds. On the third and fourth days the last Qualifying Rounds take place before the World Cup session. A and B Finals are held for each distance 500m, 1000m and 1500m. Skaters qualify for A and B Finals only through the Semi-Finals. Men and Ladies also compete in the Team Relay races, 3000m for Ladies and 5000m for Men. Each team consists of four competing Skaters. Skaters gain World Cup points from each distance they compete in during the Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating series. The Skater with the most World Cup points at the end of the season wins the distance World Cup. A total of 110 Olympic spaces are up for grabs during the four Audi ISU World Cup Short Track Speed Skating events. As the host country, the Republic of Korea automatically qualifies five Ladies and five Men. However, all other ISU Members must compete in the Audi ISU World Cup series in order to qualify up to five Ladies and five Men (quota including a qualified Relay Team), or up to three Ladies and three Men (quota excluding a qualified Relay Team). Quota places per gender are earned based on the results achieved by the ISU Members competing at the four Audi ISU World Cup Events. Skaters ranked within the top 32 (top eight for the Team Relay) in the World Cup classification of the individual distances will qualify for PyeongChang 2018. If an ISU Member has more than 3 Skaters ranked in the top 32 or decides not to use a spot, skaters on the waiting list will qualify (e.g. athlete ranked 33 in a distance World Cup Classification will take the next available spot).