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Lausanne, Switzerland

## **This season combines the new and the old**

**After the exciting PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games last February, a new generation of long track Speed Skaters is gearing up to challenge the reigning champions in the next Olympiad.**

The 2018/19 season has a lot of variety to offer: outdoor ISU European Speed Skating Championships in Collalbo, ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships at the Max Aicher Arena in German Inzell, ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships in Dutch Speed Skating Mekka Heerenveen, and a North American season climax with ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Calgary and ISU World Cup Speed Skating final in Salt Lake City.

### **Kramer chases 10th European and World Allround titles**

Since 2017 the format of the ISU European Speed Skating Championships alternates and last year saw the inaugural European Championships with a single distances format. This season the Championships will be Allround and will be held in Collalbo. The Italian town has hosted the European Allround Championships twice in the past, first in 2007, when 21-year-old Dutchman [Sven Kramer](#) won his first European title. In 2019 he will be aiming at his tenth European Allround title.

The World Single Distances Championships will visit Inzell for the second time in history. The first time, in 2005, the Championships were held at the outdoor Ludwig Schwabl Stadion, which was roofed in to become the Max Aicher Arena in 2011.

Olympic 500-meter champion [Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen \(NOR\)](#) and Olympic 1000-meter champion [Jorien ter Mors \(NED\)](#) will defend their 2018 World Sprint titles in Heerenveen, which hosts the World Sprint Championships for the sixth time.

Calgary will host the World Allround Championships for the fifth time on March 2-3, 2019. Last time out, in 2015, Sven Kramer won his seventh World Allround title and this season he wants to add a tenth World Allround title to his tally.

### **Lorentzen and Takagi defend World Cup titles**

The 2018/19 season kicks off with the first of six legs in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series on November 16. Håvard Holmefjord Lorentzen (NOR) and [Miho Takagi \(JPN\)](#) became the first Norwegian and Japanese Skaters to win the Grand World Cup trophy since its inauguration in the 2011/12 season which was also their last chance to grab the title as Grand World Cup points will no longer be given from this season. Instead Skaters who finish on a podium in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will obtain prize money of 5,000 USD for first place, 3,000 USD for second and 1,800 USD for a third place finish in any distance (half amounts will be awarded for each 500m race where the distance is skated twice).

## Six legs

This season's ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series will see two new host cities, the first outdoor World Cup in ten years, and will stop in the best-known Speed Skating rinks in the world. After two events in Japan, Obihiro (November 16-18) and Tomakomai (November 23-25), the Series travel to Europe for the third leg in Polish Tomaszów Mazowiecki (December 7-9) and the fourth leg in Heerenveen (December 14-16). In 2019 the World Cup will resume with the fifth leg in Norway's legendary Vikingskipet on February 1-3, and the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will mark the end of the season in Salt Lake City on March 9-10.

The first four legs of the ISU World Cup series are qualifying events for the European Championships, the World Single Distances Championships, the World Sprint Championships and the World Allround Championships.

## First outdoor World Cup in ten years

Obihiro hosted an ISU World Cup event on four previous occasions, twice on the old track at the No Mori Skating Centre and twice at the new Meiji Hokkaido-Tokachi Oval. Six of the track records at the sea level oval in Obihiro date from the last World Cup event in 2014.

In Tomakomai the World Cup will be held on the outdoor track of the Tomakomai Highland Sports Center. The last time a World Cup event was held on an outdoor track, was in 2008 in Italian Baselga di Pinè. Tomakomai is a newcomer to the World Cup Series, hosting its first event.

## Back in Poland

On December 7-9 the World Cup will return to Poland for the first time since the 1999 event at the outdoor Tor Stegny track in Warschau. Host city will be Tomaszów Mazowiecki, where the indoor Arena Lodowa replaced the old outdoor Tor Pilica. The stadium was first used in 2017 and it's the first indoor 400-meter track in Poland. The ISU World Cup will be the first international competition to take place in Tomaszów Mazowiecki.

## Familiar ice in Heerenveen

In Heerenveen the ISU World Cup series returns to familiar ice at Thialf Stadium, the second oldest indoor track in the world. With 48 previous events between 1986 and 2017 Heerenveen is the World Cup's most visited venue. At the Dutch World Cup trials in Heerenveen in November, youngster [Patrick Roest \(NED\)](#) defeated Olympic Champion Sven Kramer (NED) in a new track record time of 6:08.98 in the 5000m.

The 1994 Olympia Hall in Hamar, Norway, hosted fourteen World Cup events in the past, the last time in 2015. [Sverre Lunde Pedersen \(NOR\)](#) set a track record in the Men's 3000m (3.42,27) last October, but all the other track records date back to 2010 and before.

## Fastest track in the world

Salt Lake City (USA) will host this season's World Cup Final. The high altitude 2002 Olympic Oval in Utah is considered to be the fastest track in the World. At last season's World Cup event in December 2017, four world records were broken: [Nao Kodaira \(JPN\)](#) in the ladies' 1000m (1:12.09),

the Japanese ladies (Miho Takagi, [Ayano Sato](#), [Nana Takagi](#)) in the Team Pursuit (2.50,87), [Denis Yuskov \(RUS\)](#) in the men's 1500m 1.41,02 and [Ted-Jan Bloemen \(CAN\)](#) in the men's 5000m (6.01,86).

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### **About Speed Skating**

In Speed Skating, Skaters race in pairs, counter-clockwise, a draw determines the competition lane, and lane changes take place during each lap. The Skater who skates on the inner lane shall change to the outer lane in the crossing straight, defined as the straight between the end of the curve (as marked with moveable blocks) and the beginning of the next curve (as marked with a cone), and vice versa for the Skater who skates in the outer lane. Exception for the 1000 and the 1500 meters: when racing on a 400 meters standard track, there is no change of lanes in the first straight.