

March 8, 2019

Salt Lake City, USA

Chasing records in ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final

The 2018/2019 season finale will be held on the fastest ice of the world at the Utah Olympic Oval in Salt Lake City. All five men's single distance speed skating world records and three of the five ladies' single distance world records are skated at the 2002 Olympic rink. In the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final, the twelve best skaters per distance will compete for double points to decide who takes home the World Cup in each distance.

Close battle in men's long distance

Sverre Lunde Pedersen (NOR) leads the 5000m ISU World Cup Speed Skating, only one point ahead of Aleksandr Rumyantsev (RUS). The Norwegian 5000m World Champion finished second behind Patrick Roest (NED) at the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Calgary last week.

The Dutch youngster skipped two ISU World Cup Speed Skating events this season and is only ninth in the 5000m World Cup ranking. For Roest Salt Lake City is a new experience.

"I never skated here before," he said after training. "I can feel that the ice is really fast. When I skate at extensive endurance pace, I easily clock 31.0 laps, which wouldn't happen in the Netherlands.

"I hope to skate personal bests here. A world record or even a national record is too far-fetched because I would have to shave at least five seconds off my own personal best, so my goal is to set personal records in both the 1500m and the 5000m."

Sáblíková better than ever

Martina Sáblíková (CZE) leads the ladies' long distance ISU World Cup Speed Skating and the Czech veteran seems to be better than ever. Last week Sáblíková grabbed her career fifth ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships title, skating a 3000m and a 5000m world record at the Calgary Olympic Oval. "I don't know whether I'll be able to skate even faster in Salt Lake City," she said. "Somehow I always feel very much at ease in Calgary."

Sáblíková leads the ISU World Cup Speed Skating rankings with an eleven point advantage over Natalya Voronina (RUS). Isabelle Weidemann (CAN) and Olympic 5000m Champion Esmee Visser (NED) are third and fourth.

Kulizhnikov and Kodaira

In the sprint distances all eyes will be on Pavel Kulizhnikov (RUS) in the men's competition and Nao Kodaira (JPN). The Russian rocket, who won the ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Championships title two weeks ago in Heerenveen, is the only man who ever managed to skate the 500m under 34 seconds, bringing the world record down to 33.98 in Salt Lake City in 2015. He leads this year's World Cup, with Tatsuya Shinhama (JPN) and Håvard Lorentzen (NOR) sitting second and third.

Ladies' ISU World Sprint Speed Skating Champion Kodaira already skated the 1000m world record at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2017 in Salt Lake City. This time around she will be aiming at [Sang-Hwa Lee's](#) (KOR) world record time of 36.36 in the 500m. Having felt the ice in the run-up to the World Cup final, Kodaira looked relaxed. "Yes, I want to finally break that 500m world record", she said.

[Vanesse Herzog](#) (AUT) leads the 500m ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking, because Kodaira skipped three World Cup races. Herzog was the only one who beat Kodaira in the 500m this season, taking the title in the shortest distance at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Inzell in February.

Stamina or raw speed

Kulizhnikov and Kodaira are also in contention for the 1000m ISU World Cup, but they face fierce competition from skaters who rely more on stamina than on raw speed. Heading into the final weekend Olympic champion [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) leads the men's classification, five points ahead of Kulizhnikov.

In the ladies' 1000m [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) climbed to the top of the rankings with an immaculate performance at the fifth ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Hamar, which she followed up with an exhilarating 1000m win at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Inzell. Herzog is 60 points behind in second, while Kodaira and compatriot [Miho Takagi](#) are joint third at 75 points from the leader.

The 1500m is the ultimate battle between endurance specialists and sprinters. World record holder Denis Yuskov combines the two better than anyone else. The Russian is in pole position to win the World Cup with a 20-point lead over Japan's [Seitaro Ichinohe](#) and a 24-point lead over third ranked [Min-Seok Kim](#) (KOR).

In the ladies' 1500m it's again Brittany Bowe in top position. Skating on her home rink the American thus has a chance to secure two overall ISU World Cup Speed Skating wins. [Ireen Wüst](#) (NED) lies second at 53 points and Miho Takagi third at 59 points.

Mass Start

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final concludes with the Mass Start events on Sunday afternoon. In the Men's race [Cheonho Um](#) (KOR) defends a 45-point lead over [Bart Swings](#) (BEL). [Ruslan Zakharov](#) (RUS) is third at 109 points.

[Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) hopes to take home the ladies Mass Start World Cup. She is 12 points ahead of [Bo-Reum Kim](#) (KOR) and 34 ahead of Olympic Champion [Nana Takagi](#) (JPN).

Program

The [ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final](#) features the long distances, 3000m for ladies and 5000m for men, and for both genders the first 500m race and the 1000m on Saturday. The Sunday schedule consists of the 1500m, the second 500m and the Mass Start for both genders.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series please visit: isu.org/speed-skating. Results are [here](#) and you can follow the discussion on social media by using #WCspeedSkating and #SpeedSkating.

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series will be available in some countries on the [ISU Skating Channel](#).

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating is a Series of international Speed Skating competitions which takes place annually. The Series started in 1984 and usually consists of six or seven Events including the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final. Skaters can earn points at each competition, and the Skater who has the most points on a given distance at the end of the Series is the World Cup winner of that distance. The World Cup Competitions held from November to December serve as qualifying events for entry quotas at the ISU European, World Single Distances, World Sprint and World Allround Speed Skating Championships. A number of World Cup titles are awarded every season; For Men: 500m, 1000m, 1500m, combined 5000m / 10,000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For Ladies 500m, 1000m, 1500m, the combined 3000m / 5000m, Mass Start, Team Pursuit and Team Sprint. For further information please visit isu.org/WorldCupSpeedSkating.