

February 13, 2020

Salt Lake City, USA

## **Salt Lake City: maiden titles and records at stake in Ladies' Speed Skating tournament**

The eyes of the Salt Lake City home crowd will be on world record holder [Brittany Bowe \(USA\)](#) defending her title in the 1000m at the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships on Saturday, but there's a lot more exciting racing to enjoy. Will [Martina Sáblíková \(CZE\)](#) be able to bring the last standing Calgary world record to Salt Lake City, will [Miho Takagi \(JPN\)](#) win her first individual ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating title in the 1500m or will [Ireen Wüst \(NED\)](#) be able to skate a world record in that event for the first time in her career?

### **3000m: Dutch and Canadian challenges for Sáblíková**

The Ladies kick-off the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships with the 3000m. [Martina Sáblíková \(CZE\)](#) already won the title in this event five times before. Last season she grabbed the 3000m world record at the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Calgary, only to shave off another second a week later in Salt Lake City.

At last year's ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships in Inzell, [Antoinette de Jong \(NED\)](#) took silver behind Sáblíková, but the Dutchwoman did not manage to qualify for this year's 3000m. She has to leave the Dutch honor to no less than Olympic 3000m Champion [Carlijn Achtereekte](#), Olympic 5000m Champion [Esmee Visser](#) and ISU World Speed Skating Mass Start Champion [Irene Schouten](#).

Apart from the Dutch there's a Canadian challenge for Sáblíková too. [Ivanie Blondin](#) won an ISU World Cup Speed Skating 3000m and 5000m race this season and [Isabelle Weidemann](#) also took an ISU World Cup Speed Skating gold in the 3000m.

### **Team Sprint: Netherlands versus Russia**

In the second Ladies' event on Thursday, the Netherlands will defend their Team Sprint title. Russia is the most important rival. With [Angelina Golikova](#), [Olga Fatkulina](#) and [Daria Kachanova](#) the fast Russian Ladies managed to beat the Dutch at the second ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Poland.

Canada, who came fifth at last year's ISU World Speed Skating Championships, might be up for a surprise after having finished third behind the Netherlands and Russia in this season's ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking.

The Ladies' Team Sprint world record is 1:24.84, set by Russia at the Calgary Olympic Oval in 2017.

### **Team Pursuit: Japan back in strongest line-up**

Thursday's Team Sprint will be followed by the Ladies' Team Pursuit event on Friday afternoon. Japan's [Miho](#) and [Nana Takagi](#) have dominated this event together with [Ayano Sato](#) over the past three years.

This season, Japan have shown to be vulnerable if the line-up changes. With [Nene Sakai](#) as a substitute for Sato, the Takagi sisters only finished eighth at the first ISU World Cup Speed Skating race this season. Russia took advantage and won the race in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, and Canada took gold in the second ISU World Cup Speed Skating race in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan in December.

At the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Nagano, Japan, the Takagi sisters were reunited with Sato and the Olympic champions outclassed the rest of the field again. In Salt Lake City, Japan is set to skate in their strongest line-up and it's hard to imagine anyone else being able to beat the world record holders. Japan clocked 2:50.87 in Salt Lake City in 2017.

#### **500m: Kodaira, the Russians and Herzog**

In the Ladies' 500m [Nao Kodaira](#) (JPN) is eager to take back the title she lost to [Vanesse Herzog](#) last year in Inzell. The Olympic champion from Japan has faced fierce competition from Russia's [Angelina Golikova](#) and [Olga Fatkulina](#) this season.

At the ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Calgary last week, Kodaira beat pair mate by only a 0.13 second margin. Golikova skated a Russian national record, but she did not want to celebrate too soon, expecting that the ice in Salt Lake City would be a little faster than Calgary.

"Last year I also broke the national record but the next day my friend Olga Fatkulina broke it again," Golikova said. "If I'm still the fastest after Salt Lake City it will really be a national record."

Herzog, who has had a rough first half of the season after being disqualified for two false starts at the first ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Minsk in November, only dared dreaming of retaining the world title.

"The [season] start was terrible of course, but I tried to fight my way back and from Japan [fourth ISU World Cup Speed Skating in Nagano in December] until now, I was on the podium in every 500m. "My goal is to be on the podium next week. [Defending my title] would be a dream, but the other girls are very strong."

The 500m world record is still held by retired Sang-Hwa Lee (KOR), who skated 36.36 in Salt Lake City in 2013.

#### **5000m: Sáblíková's home territory**

Saturday's program starts with the longest distance for the Ladies, which is [Martina Sáblíková](#)'s home territory. The 32-year-old Czech has won the ISU World Speed Skating 5000m title ten consecutive times already.

The Salt Lake City Championships race will be exciting nonetheless, because [Esmee Visser](#) showed that Sáblíková is beatable, winning the Olympic 5000m title in PyeongChang in 2018.

The Ladies' 5000m world record is the only world record in a classic distance, which is not skated at the Utah Olympic Oval. [Martina Sáblíková](#) set her mark of 6:42.01 at the ISU World Allround Speed Skating Championships in Calgary last year.

#### **1000m: Rebound for home favorite Bowe**

All eyes in the Ladies' 1000m will be on reigning champion [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA). The home favorite won the first three ISU World Cup Speed Skating races in the double sprint distance this season, but last week's race in Calgary must have worried her a bit.

Even though she skated faster than her own season's best time, Bowe ended up in a disappointing sixth place.

[Nao Kodaira](#) won the 1000m in Calgary, ahead of [Olga Fatkulina](#), [Yekaterina Shikhova](#) (RUS) and [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN).

Bowe still holds the 1000m world record with 1:11.61, which she skated at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final in Salt Lake City last year.

### **1500m: Takagi is lady to beat**

[Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) is the outright favorite to win the Ladies 1500m on Sunday. The Japanese ace underlined her candidacy for the title with a superior gold medal at the Calgary ISU World Cup Speed Skating last week, beating [Ivanie Blondin](#) by a 1.43 second margin.

[Ireen Wüst](#) (NED) came third in Calgary, 1.65 seconds behind Takagi. The Dutch title defender still believes that she can beat her Japanese rival though.

"I rely on my experience," Wüst said. "I rely on my race instinct, which always gives me that little bit extra on big occasions." "She [Takagi] is the lady to beat and I'm really curious to see how she handles that pressure."

Takagi, who was the first lady to skate the 1500m under 1:50, when she set the world record to 1.49,83 at the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final in Salt Lake City last year, has never won an individual ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating title yet.

### **Mass Start: Schouten, Blondin or...?**

The Ladies' Mass Start has been a battle between [Ivanie Blondin](#) (CAN), [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) and [Bo-Reum Kim](#) (KOR) over the past four years, with the Dutch lady winning two world titles and the other two both taking one gold.

Blondin may feel her legs after already having skated the 1500m previously on Sunday, which might give defending champion Schouten and Kim the upper hand. They all have to look at [Nana Takagi](#) too. The Japanese lady surprised the rest of the field winning the Olympic title in 2018 already.

The numbers three and four in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating ranking, [Elizaveta Kazelina](#) (RUS) and [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) are also in the mix.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships please visit the [Championships Page](#) on ISU.org. Click [here for results](#).

### **Where to Watch**

Viewers will be able to watch either via their national broadcaster / channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#). You will find the full list in the [Where to Watch news here](#).

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**About ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships 2020**

The ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships consists of single distance races. The 2020 Championships take place in Salt Lake City (USA). The Ladies will compete in the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 3000m and 5000m, Team Sprint, Team Pursuit and Mass Start race over 16 laps. The Men's competitions are the 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 5000m, 10000m, Team Sprint, Team Pursuit and Mass start race over 16 laps.