

January 14, 2021

Heerenveen, the Netherlands

Full-fledged season in Heerenveen Hub

Four events in five weeks. The pre-Olympic Speed Skating season has been cut short, but the hub-concept in Heerenveen will provide the Skaters as well as fans with spectacular action. The ISU has been, and still is very cautious regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the hub in the Netherlands, a competition Bubble with different levels are set up to guarantee the safety of everyone involved. Fans are not allowed in the stadium, but the spectacle on the ice will be widely available on television and live streams.

Full-fledged program

The 202/21 season will be condensed, but it offers a full-fledged program to the participants, beginning with the biennial ISU European Allround and Sprint Speed Skating Championships on January 16-17, 2021. The ISU World Cup Speed Skating series, which in a normal season consists of six events, will be contested over two events on January 22-24 and January 29-31. After the ISU World Cup Speed Skating events, the Skaters have one weekend off and the season comes to a climax with the ISU World Single Distances Speed Skating Championships on February 11-14.

Competition bubble

To guarantee the safest conditions possible, all participants are quarantined in one specific Competition Bubble during and in between the events. Although Skaters who travelled to the Netherlands have already had an obligatory PCR-test, everyone will be tested again at their hotel when entering the bubble. There are three specific entry moments: ahead of the ISU European Speed Skating Championships, ahead of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating events and ahead of the ISU World Speed Skating Championships. Skaters who have left the bubble are not allowed back in.

From the moment of entering until leaving, Skaters have to follow strict rules. They have to stay at their hotel or at the restricted bubble area in Thialf stadium. Skaters are allowed to go out for a bike ride, but they have to ask for permission and they're not allowed to meet anyone outside the bubble.

A separate second bubble is set up for Officials and facilitators. Within Thialf Stadium these two bubbles are kept apart in restricted zones. Media will not be able to directly access the Competition Bubble and will be in level 3, which is confined to the media area and the mixed-zone. In this specially set up mixed-zone media and Skaters are separated by plexiglass fencing to avoid any direct contact with the Skaters and Official who are in the Competition Bubble.

Excellent conditions

The strict rules make sure that the actual competition can go ahead as usual. For the first time this season, Speed Skaters will be able to race each other internationally and the conditions are excellent at the sea level track in Heerenveen. At the Dutch trials for the international races last December, [Patrick Roest](#) (NED) skated a national record in the 10,000m, coming just a little under two seconds short of the world record [Graeme Fish](#) (CAN) set at high altitude in Salt Lake City last year. In total seven season's bests were set at Thialf in December.

Where to Watch

Viewers will be able to watch the ISU Speed Skating competitions that will take place within the hub 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](#).

All the information is available in the [Where to Watch](#) which will be updated after each competition.

The individual announcements and entry lists will be published under the respective events as soon as they are available. For further information regarding the ISU Speed Skating Hub please visit: <https://www.isu.org/heerenveen2021>.

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information from the ISU and you can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams or new videos are published.

Highlights, clips, interviews, behind the scenes:

YouTube: [ISU Skating](#)

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About the International Skating Union

The International Skating Union (ISU), founded in 1892, is the oldest governing international winter sport federation and the exclusive international sport federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) administering the sports of Figure Skating (Single & Pair Skating and Ice Dance), Synchronized Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating worldwide. The objectives of the ISU are to regulate, govern, promote and develop its sports on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding between athletes. Currently three ISU disciplines are included in the Olympic Winter Games program (Figure Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating). For further information please visit isu.org.