

January 27, 2021

Heerenveen, the Netherlands

Heerenveen Hub continues with decisive ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2

How are things going to turn out in the second and final leg of this year's ISU World Cup Speed Skating series in the Heerenveen Hub? The program is a carbon-copy of last week's. Will home-skaters [Patrick Roest](#) and [Irene Schouten](#) again be able to skate a track record? Will [Thomas Krol](#) and [Brittany Bowe](#) continue to dominate the middle distances? And will [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) and [Kai Verbij](#) be able to bounce back from their 500m crashes last week?

Because the first and second leg in the Heerenveen Hub are the only ISU World Cup Speed Skating events in the shortened season, the ranking after the finish of each distance will also be the overall classification, except for the 500m. The shortest distance will be skated twice over the weekend, so the final ranking will only be made-up after the second race on Sunday. The second ISU World Cup Speed Skating event does not count as the regular season's ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final, so there are no double points to be earned.

Fresh faces in Team Pursuit line-ups

The last ISU World Cup Speed Skating event kicks off with an exciting battle in the Men's and Ladies' Mass Start events on Friday night. Last week veteran captain [Sven Kramer](#) led Dutch youngsters [Chris Huizinga](#) and Beau Snellink to victory, but national coach Jan Coopmans will field another line-up this week. [Marcel Bosker](#) will probably replace Snellink. "The more depth we've got the higher we can peak", Kramer said about the different Dutch options.

Norway coach Bjarne Rykkje also has the luxury of choice. After [Sverre Lunde Pedersen](#), anchored [Peder Kongshaug](#) and [Allan Dahl Johansson](#) to silver last week, he'll probably be accompanied by Johansson and [Hallgeir Engebråten](#) this Friday.

In the ladies Team Pursuit competition Canada leads the ISU World Cup Speed Skating standings after [Ivanie Blondin](#), [Valérie Maltais](#) and [Isabelle Weidemann](#) surprisingly beat the Netherlands last week. The Dutch ladies will try their luck in a different line-up this week too. In the first race [Ireen Wüst](#) was joined by [Carlijn Achtereekte](#) and [Melissa Wijfje](#). "Next week I'll skate with Antoinette [[de Jong](#)] and [Irene Schouten](#) (...) she said."

Indomitable Krol not satisfied yet

Competition resumes on Saturday with the 1500m, the 500m and the Mass Start finals for both Men and Ladies. Last week [Thomas Krol](#) beat [Patrick Roest](#) in a fascinating battle between speed and stamina in the king's race. After already having won the ISU European Sprint Speed Skating Championships at the opening event of the Heerenveen Hub two weeks ago, everything that Krol touches this season seems to turn into gold. He still wasn't completely satisfied, however. "If I had done everything right, a track record might have been possible today," he said.

In the Ladies' 1500m, [Brittany Bowe](#) skated faster than she had ever done in Thialf to take gold in 1:53.88, but she also came short of the track record, which remained in the hands of [Ireen Wüst](#). The reigning European and Olympic champion [Ireen Wüst](#) (NED) needed 0.69 seconds more to finish second.

Both Krol and Bowe also won last week's 1000m, which puts them in the driver's seat to take the double and win both the 1000m and 1500m overall classifications this Sunday.

Ntab defends 500m lead

Last week [Artem Arefyev](#) won his career first individual ISU World Cup Speed Skating gold in the 500m on Sunday. World record holder [Pavel Kulizhnikov](#) and Dutch ace [Kai Verbij](#) had crashed in Saturday's race and were relegated to the B Division on Sunday. The two will again have to make an effort to get back into the A Division on Saturday morning. In the afternoon [Dai Dai Ntab](#) (NED) will defend his lead in the ISU World Cup Speed Skating rankings after last week's gold and silver. Arefyev is second in the ranking and on track to follow-up his first individual ISU World Cup Speed Skating gold medal with a first podium place in the overall 500m ranking.

Golikova challenges Kok

In the Ladies 500m [Angelina Golikova](#) will again take up the challenge of beating Dutch youngster Femke Kok (NED), who took her career first two individual ISU World Cup Speed Skating gold medals winning the 500m back-to-back last weekend. Golikova came second twice, but wasn't too worried about it. "This is not the most important race of the season, that's in a few weeks from now [the ISU World Speed Skating Championships in Heerenveen in February]. Femke Kok is very good, but I focus on myself. I feel I can be faster."

Dutch replacements in Mass Start

Saturday's packed program concludes with the Mass Start finals in which [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) will defend her ISU World Cup Speed Skating lead after winning last week's race with the help of teammate [Marijke Groenewoud](#), who came third herself after leading-out Schouten's final sprint. Groenewoud will probably not start in this week's Mass Start, because she's listed as a substitute behind Schouten and [Melissa Wijffe](#).

Last week's winner of the Men's Mass Start, [Arjan Stroetinga](#), is also listed as a substitute. Victor Ramler and [Jorrit Bergsma](#) will defend the Dutch colors. The Dutch thus open up the field for last week's silver and bronze medalists [Livio Wenger](#) (SUI) and [Bart Swings](#) (BEL) to take a shot at the overall classification.

Endurance events main dish on Sunday

Sunday's program features the second 500m for both Men and Ladies' as the hors d'oeuvre before the endurance events (3000m ladies and 5000m men) are served as a main dish and the 1000m for both genders as the dessert.

Irene Schouten was proud to put her name on the track record board of Thialf last Sunday, but winning for the second time in a row will not be easy. Compatriot and previous record holder [Antoinette de Jong](#) came 1.36 second short to beat Schouten and will be eager to take her track record back.

In the Men's 5000m, no one was able to match Patrick Roest's 6 minutes and 5.14 seconds, with which the fresh ISU European Allround Speed Skating Champion took 3.07 seconds off his previous best at the Thialf rink and he left his closest [Sven Kramer](#) (NED) and [Sergey Trofimov](#) (RUS) rivals more than six seconds behind. "Superfast," Kramer commented on Roest's performance. Yet the reigning Olympic champion will never settle for second place and he saw room for improvement in his own race: "I must keep my upper body a little more flat. If I do that, I don't even have to skate much faster because the aerodynamics would give me a 0.2 to 0.3 second advantage per lap. But it's not easy of course, it's not as if I do it the wrong way on purpose."

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.

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