

February 4, 2022

Beijing, China

Speed Skating competition skates off with Women's 3000m race Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

The Olympic Speed Skating competition kicks off with the Women's 3000m on Saturday. For [Irene Schouten](#) (NED), it is the start of a campaign in which she strives to equal legendary Soviet Skater [Lidia Skoblikova](#), who won a record of four medals at a single Winter Olympics event in 1960. Apart from the 3000m, Schouten is a favorite to win the 5000m, Mass Start and Team Pursuit events.

Schouten's Achilles' heel

Schouten won all 3000m and 5000m races she competed in this season, but she's always critical of her own performances. In the 3000m, her Achilles' heel is the second lap into the race, but even if she falls behind, she doesn't panic: "I've skated so many races with other girls taking a lead and I always catch up," she said after winning the European 3000m title on January 7 in a dress rehearsal for Beijing 2022. "I just feel a bit bad about my second lap, that was not good. I want to skate the perfect race of course. Let's hope to get it at the (Olympic) Games."

Achtereekte's Olympic pressure

Four years ago the Netherlands swept the Women's 3000m podium, with [Carlijn Achtereekte](#), [Ireen Wüst](#) and [Antoinette de Jong](#). Although Achtereekte was an established name in Speed Skating by then, her Olympic 3000m title in 2018 came as a surprise. She had won a 5000m silver at the ISU World Speed Skating Championships in 2015 already, but had never topped the podium in an ISU World Cup race yet. Yet, being an Olympic champion did not make life on the ice easier: "All of a sudden I had a new status and I'm not the person to step up into the spotlights. "After the Olympics, I wanted to show that I was more than a one-hit-wonder. I really felt that pressure. Often I felt that I couldn't perform up to my possibilities. It was as if I froze during the races."

Partly due to injury Achtereekte did not manage to win an international race since 2018, but she did qualify for Beijing 2022 and any Skater who manages to make it through the extremely competitive Dutch trials, is able to win an Olympic medal.

Other contenders

Antoinette de Jong is the reigning World Champion in the distance and a strong contender for the title. [Francesca Lollobrigida](#) (ITA) set this season's second best time in the 3000m, when won the distance in 3:54.43s in the absence of Schouten at the ISU World Cup in Calgary (CAN) on December 10, 2022. Schouten and De Jong set the first and third best times this season, with [Isabelle Weidemann](#) (CAN) and [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) fourth and fifth on the list. The 2010 Olympic 3000m Champion and 2014 silver medalist [Martina Sáblíková](#) (CZE) is ranked sixth on the season's list. Record Olympian Wüst did not qualify for the 3000m.

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What's next ?

Saturday, February 5, 2022

Women's 3000m, 16:30 (local time), National Speed Skating Oval

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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](#).