

February 7, 2022

Beijing, China

## **Winning the 1500m King's race comes with hardship and pain** **Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games**

It's the King's Race and every Speed Skater dreams of bringing home the Olympic 1500m medal, but it's one of the most excruciating events in sports all across the board. Defending champion [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) looks forward to the Men's 1500m race in a combination of excitement and anxiety: "Tomorrow, when I put that armband on and glide to the start, I think to myself: why do I do this?"

### **Bad dress rehearsal**

When Nuis got off the ice after his final training on Monday, he was not too happy. "That was a bad dress rehearsal," he said. "Today sucked, totally, I don't know why. I couldn't hang into the corners, my skates broke off the ice, there were other Skaters in my way, I just quit halfway the training." Nuis explained how the public could see if he was good or not. "Ok, here's a little Speed Skating for dummies: When I'm not doing well, it looks wild. When you look at me and think that I'm too relaxed, then I'm good."

### **Coughing up blood**

Nuis' Dutch rival [Thomas Krol](#) (NED) did not want to pay much attention to the defending champion's bad dress rehearsal: "Bad training or not, I'm sure that he'll be up for it tomorrow. He's a great Skater, and what he says, I don't take it too seriously."

Olympic debutant Krol is the reigning World Champion in the 1500m. His description of the hardship that the 1500m athletes have to endure, makes you think why anyone would want to skate this distance: "The legs hurt, the lactic acid comes out of your ears, the last 100m it's all black in front of your eyes, you don't know how to get to the line anymore. Then, you've got about two minutes to get off the ice because that's when it really kicks in. You can't stand on your feet anymore, you cough up blood, you become nauseous, you get a headache. Usually it takes about fifteen minutes before you can sort of function again."

Still Krol, who's the World Cup leader in the 1000m, which he also strives to win at the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, loves the 1500m just a little bit more than any other distance. "I would like to win any title, but the 1500m still is the most beautiful one. It's the King's race after all."

### **Not for Allrounders anymore**

Nuis and Krol dominated the 1000m and 1500m over the past few years, but in the 1500m they seemed to have lost their edge this season. The Korean 2018 bronze medalist [Kim Min-Seok](#) (KOR) as well as Beijing's home favorite [Ning Zhongyan](#) (CHN), both won a World Cup race this season and [Joey Mantia](#) (USA) leads the ranking having won two of four races.

Both Krol and Nuis think the 2022 Olympic 1500m is anyone's game, although the event has evolved from a middle distance to a sprint over the past years. Krol explains: "The way we – and I also mean Ning and Mantia – skate the 1500m nowadays, it's not for Allrounders anymore. We skate it like it's a 1000m, start at 98 percent and then see where it gets you in the end. You cannot hold back in the beginning, because you just lose too much ground and you'll not be able to make up for it anymore."

Some Skaters said the ice at the National Speed Skating Oval in Beijing does not have much glide, which might favor Skaters who come from the Allround side instead of the Sprint side in the 1500m. Yet, Nuis doesn't believe that: "All this fuss about the ice, it's all bullsh\*t. The times are great, and I've been skating very well here, today was an exception. There's nothing wrong with the ice and it's the same for everyone."

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**Tuesday, February 8, 2022**  
Men's 1500m, 18:30 (local time)

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