

**February 9, 2022**

**Beijing, China**

## **Schouten is the one to beat in the Women's 5000m in Beijing** **Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games**

After a day's rest at Beijing's National Speed Skating Oval, Speed Skating competition resumes with the Women's 5000m. After having started the Olympic Games with 3000m gold, [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) is the one to beat again. The imperious Dutch Skater is the only one in the Women's field to skate a negative split in the longest distance, a feat that gives her just a little bit extra in the gruesome final laps. Long distance World Cup leader [Isabelle Weidemann](#) (CAN) will probably be Schouten's main rival.

### **Bringing it down**

In the only other Women's international 5000m race this season - at the second World Cup leg in Stavanger (NOR) on November 19, 2021 - Weidemann and Schouten raced in the same pair. Both the Canadian and the Dutchwoman skated at a very even pace. After 3000m into the race, Schouten had a lead of just over a second, but it was only in the final five laps that she really tightened the screws on her opponent. Schouten's lap times went from 32.8s, to 32.7s, twice 32.6s, 32.5s and her final lap even came in 31.9s. Weidemann was barely able to keep her lap times even, and lost 0.65s in the final lap.

"She (Schouten) likes to come down (in lap times)," Weidemann said. "I do a little bit better when I'm just really consistent (...). I'm still two seconds back from her and she's on a phenomenal trajectory right now but it's given me a lot of fire." Having pocketed a bronze medal in the 3000m gave her confidence heading into the 5000m. She said: "I'm excited to get the first one out of the way. I was quite nervous for today. We've been here for a while now. I've wanted to race for so long. I'm happy just to race bronze, so now I feel a little bit more at ease and I'm looking forward to the next few distances."

### **Unforgiving trials**

The Women's 5000m field features a combined five gold medals in the distance, but the reigning Olympic champion is absent. After her surprise win at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympics, [Esmee Visser](#) (NED) struggled to live up to the expectations of being an Olympic champion, and she failed to qualify at the unforgiving Dutch trials last December.

### **Veterans and milestones**

[Martina Sáblíková](#) (CZE) will take the ice for her fifth Olympic 5000m (2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018). She won the event in 2014 and 2010, and seized silver in PyeongChang 2018. In Beijing, the 34-year-old Czech long distance specialist came fourth in the 3000m, and she will aim at a medal in this fourth consecutive Olympic Games.

Long before Sáblíková begun her Olympic journey, [Claudia Pechstein](#) (GER) had already collected three 5000m titles (1994, 1998 and 2002). The German veteran, who will celebrate her fiftieth birthday two days after the 2022 Beijing flame is extinguished, won her last Olympic silverware at the 2006 Games in Torino

(ITA), but she's doesn't give in. Last Saturday, Pechstein finished 20th and last in the 3000m, but by doing so she became the oldest female to compete at the Olympic Winter Games at 49 years, 348 days, bettering the mark of Anne Abernathy - US Virgin Islands' luge slider - who was 48 years, 305 days at the Olympic Winter Games 2002.

### New kid on the block

Pechstein already collected most of her Olympic silverware before [Ragne Wiklund](#) (NOR) was even born. The 21-year-old Norwegian Olympic debutant came in fifth in the 3000m and 12<sup>th</sup> in the 1500m at the 2022 Beijing Olympics already. She could be in for a surprise in the longest distance this Thursday. "My main goal is to do (it) like the 3000m - to skate a good race that I can be proud of afterwards," the 2021 World 1500m Champion said.

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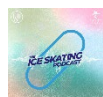
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What's coming ?

**Thursday, February 10, 2022**  
Women's 5000m, 20:00 (local time)

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