

February 16, 2022

Beijing, China

Takagi hopes for golden lining to three silvers

Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

After having won silver in the 1500m, the 500m as well as in the Team Pursuit Final, [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) seems to be the most obvious favorite for the 1000m distance that's right in between. Yet, competition will be tough in the Women's 1000m on Thursday. Having seen her teammate and friend [Erin Jackson](#)'s fairy tale 500m win, World Cup leader [Brittany Bowe](#) (USA) hopes to complete her long Olympic journey at Beijing's National Speed Skating Oval with a medal herself, while 2020 World Champion [Jutta Leerdam](#) (NED) has also set her eyes on 1000m gold.

Takagi's roller coaster

Miho Takagi (JPN) had a roller coaster Games so far in Beijing. Her coach Johan de Wit (NED) was absent due to a positive Covid-test, when she skated the 3000m and the 1500m. Heading into the 1500m as the big favorite, she was severely disappointed to come away with silver. Her 500m silver on the other hand, came as a surprise. With De Wit back on the ice, Takagi set a personal best of 37.12s. "He just told me I was tensing up, to relax. That's all he said," Takagi explained. "Those words have a big meaning. I listened to his words and thought about how that's affecting my skating and how it's changed my skating. Those words were very important to me."

Takagi discussed her busy schedule after the 500m: "Taking the 500m race wasn't an easy decision. But whether this silver medal is truly special, depends on my performance in the remaining two events (Women's 1000m and Women's Team Pursuit). I'll show people what I've got." Unfortunately, Takagi was disappointed again after the Team Pursuit Final. Japan failed to retain their title after Miho's teammate and sister [Nana Takagi](#) crashed in the last corner of the final race. Miho had to settle for silver again. The 1000m provides her with a final chance to add gold to her threefold Beijing silverware.

Bowe's jewel in the crown

Brittany Bowe's (USA) Olympic Games were an emotional roller coaster too. Having sacrificed her own 500m ticket to [Erin Jackson](#) (USA), she was delighted to see her teammate and long-time friend winning the shortest distance. Her own Olympic campaign hasn't been very prolific just yet, finishing tenth in the 1500m and 16th in the 500m, which she eventually was allowed to skate thanks to being high up on the reserve list. After her 1500m race, she was already looking ahead at the 1000m, in which she holds the world record with 1 minute and 11,61s. "I'm excited for the 1000m. It's really nice to get that tough race (Women's 1500m) out of the way, (and) get intention in the legs. I'll be racing the 500m in a week, so that will be nice to work on the speed, and the focus is definitely on that 1000m, going for gold there at the end of the competition."

Winning Olympic gold would be the jewel in the crown of Bowe's impressive list of Speed Skating honors. The 33-year-old athlete from Ocala, Florida, used to be an inline Skater. Having won 32 medals between 2002-2008, including eight World Championship titles, she chose to pursue a career in Speed Skating in 2010, because she was inspired by friends from her inline skating team dominating the ice scene at the Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Her first Olympics in Sochi 2014, ended in disappointment. Having entered as one of the favorites in the middle distances, she went home with a 6th place in the Team Pursuit as her best result. Four years later in PyeongChang 2018, Bowe had just come back from a severe concussion. She won bronze in the Team Pursuit, but was left empty-handed in the individual events again. Coming into Beijing 2022, Bowe had the honor of being the American flag bearer at the opening ceremony, but in the 1000m, she's looking for the one honor she really came for: "Stand on top of that Olympic podium, watch the American flag raised, and sing my national anthem."

Easygoing Leerdam

Compared to Takagi and Bowe, Jutta Leerdam's (NED) run-up to the Olympic 1000m has been somewhat more laid back. Easing into the tournament with a 500m, in which she did not really feel much pressure, she is gearing up for the 1000m: "I like to start with a 500m," she said before the start. "I want to skate a really fast full lap, but the 1000m is my favorite event." Leerdam finished fifth in the 500m and with 26.76s she skated the third fastest full lap of the field. Only Jackson and Takagi were faster. The American will not race in the 1000m, but Takagi definitely will.

Odd one out

The 1000m is the odd one out among the classic Speed Skating distances. This distance was not part of the Olympic program at the first seven Games, only to enter when Women were allowed in Speed Skating in 1960. The Men's 1000m was only introduced to the Olympic program in 1976. Apart from being a relatively young event, the 1000m also differs from the other classical distances on the track. Whereas all other events finish at the end of the finishing straight, the 1000m line is drawn halfway the finishing straight. Therefore the Skaters start halfway the opposite straight, which is a better place to make pace than having to enter a corner right after the start.

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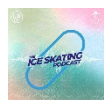
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Women's 1000m, 16:30 (local time)

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