

December 15, 2021

Calgary, Canada

ISU Four Continents Speed Skating Championships ready for action

For some skaters it is a first shot at an international competition, a chance to prepare for their Olympic trials, and for others it is just a great opportunity to win an international prize. Whatever the reason all skaters enjoyed preparing for the races in a relaxed mode on Tuesday. Nine countries are entered to compete in the Championships.

Serious but relaxed

Team USA's [Austin Kleba](#), McKenzie Browne and Giorgia Birkeland enjoyed their first steps on the Calgary Olympic Oval on Tuesday after arriving on Monday.

Leaving the ice after a relaxed training session, they did some Michael Jackson dance moves together with fellow skaters from Chinese Taipei.

"We've gotta get groovy in here," Kleba joked .

The 22-year-old from Illinois is one of the more experienced skaters in the Team USA, with World Cup medalists [Brittany Bowe](#) and [Joey Mantia](#) back home in Salt Lake City.

Kleba already skated World Cup races at the World Cup events in Tomaszów Mazowiecki (Poland), Stavanger (Norway) and Salt Lake City (USA) earlier this year.

The Four Continents Championships are different. He says.

"I'm getting ready for our Olympic trials (January 5-9 2022 in Milwaukee), and also having a more fun and relaxed international competition.

"It's a lot less pressure in terms of getting a quota spot (for Team USA at the Olympic Games) and stuff like that.

"(Competition) is making it more seriously (than training), but not quite as seriously (as the World Cup)."

Kleba realizes that he's got a chance to win a career first international medal, but that does not distract him from his main target.

"I usually try to set time goals, and goals in what I'm trying to do on the ice in terms of skating technique. I've set some goals, just keeping my corners nice, keeping my exits good and skating fast."

First off for Browne

For McKenzie Browne the Four Continents Championships will be a first shot at an international competition on ice. The 26-year-old from Pennsylvania does have international experience in inline skating however.

"I crossed over about two years ago."

As an inline skater Browne, a 13-time national champion, competed at five world championships already. She's looking forward to international competition on ice.

"There's a few of us who have had the same journey and this is our first competition. So we're pretty excited.

"I know a lot of people from inline as well. I've been around that sport for so long. It kind of feels the same. It's doing something a little different, but the mindset is about the same, because I'm used to this level of competition."

Colombian Olympic Dream

Colombia's [Daniel Zapata](#) (COL) also comes from inline skating. He won a world title at the 69th edition of the Inline Speed Skating World Championships in his home country last November.

"After the World inline championships I came over to the ice to try to qualify for the Olympic Games in Beijing but it's very hard. There are many strong skaters and they train a lot more (on the ice), because they're focused on ice," Zapata said.

"I did not qualify for the Olympic Games, but (my compatriot) [Germán Tirado](#) (COL) is in a reserve spot."

"(The Olympics) are a dream. I'm a world champion inline, but it's different. I really dream to qualify for the Olympic Games."

Being present at the Four Continents Championships is a stepping stone, Zapata thinks.

"For Colombia, it's pretty good, to keep learning, because Colombia is a new country here (in ice skating). It's a good tournament to keep learning from the other countries."

Apart from Zapata and Tirado, [Laura Gómez](#) and Diego Ahuya will also represent Colombia at the Championships.

Powerhouse Korea

Korea has the biggest team in Calgary, containing some red-hot title favorites, such as defending Four Continents 1500m champion [Min-Seok Kim](#), bronze medalist in that distance at the PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter Games in his home country.

Olympic 500m silver medalist [Min Kyu Cha](#) will also be present. The sprinter won gold in the Team Sprint event at the previous Four Continents Championships and will compete in the 500m, the 1000m and the Team Sprint.

Schedule

Wednesday, December 15, 2021:	500m Women & Men, 3000m Women, 5000m Men, Team Sprint Women & Men
Thursday, December 16, 2021:	1500m Women & Men, Mass Start Women & Men
Friday, December 17, 2021:	1000m Women & Men, Team Pursuit Women & Men

Where to Watch

Viewers will be able to watch 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](#). You will find the full list in the [Where to Watch news here](#).

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and the “[Where to Watch](#)” news. You can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams start or new videos are published.

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About the ISU Four Continents Speed Skating Championships

As of season 2019/20 the Four Continents Championships are organized annually. The format for the Championships shall be decided by the ISU Council. The order of races and competitions for each day will be decided by the ISU in consultation with the organizer and the ISU Speed Skating Technical Committee. The format of the 2021/22 ISU World Four Continents Speed Skating Championships will have a Single Distance format.