

March 5, 2022

Hamar, Norway

Takagi and Roest out in front as Allround battles heat up while Norwegian men and Dutch women celebrate World Team Sprint victories

In a classic fight between speed and stamina, [Miho Takagi](#) (JPN) struck hard in the 500m before [Irene Schouten](#) (NED) hit back with a track record in the 3000m. The pair set up an epic fight for the title and heading into the second day of the women's Allround World Championships in Hamar, Takagi holds a 0.43-second advantage over her Dutch rival in Sunday's 1500m. In the men's tournament, [Patrick Roest](#) (NED), who is chasing a fourth consecutive crown, has a fight on his hands with Beijing nemesis [Nils van der Poel](#) (SWE). The Dutchman heads into the second day on top but Van der Poel is chasing in second place.

To conclude Saturday's action, the Dutch women finished ahead of Poland and Norway in the World Team Sprint, while [Bjørn Magnussen](#), [Henrik Fagerli Rukke](#) and [Håvard Lorentzen](#) delighted the home crowd by winning the men's Team Sprint ahead of Poland and the Netherlands.

First strike

Takagi started the tournament by clocking 38.31 seconds in the shortest distance. The Olympic 500m silver medalist opened up a big gap over Dutch rivals [Antoinette de Jong](#) and Schouten, who had to make up 3.00s and 5.58s in the 3000m respectively. Yet Takagi, the 2018 World Allround Champion, was not satisfied with her sprint result and said: "I don't know what happened with 500m. I wanted to gain a much bigger lead."

Schouten finished the 500m in 39.24s for seventh place. Before the race she had feared a bigger gap, saying: "I thought (beforehand) 'if only that gap is not going to be more than two seconds' but it wasn't too bad, even less than a second."

Takagi's compatriot [Ayano Sato](#) (second in 38.49s) and her sister [Nana](#) (fourth in 38.71s) kept Miho in sight in the 500m. [Nadezhda Morozova](#) (KAZ) clocked 38.59s to take third place in the distance. Sato and Morozova were not able to maintain their ranking in the 3000m, dropping to sixth and ninth place respectively.

Schouten counters

Schouten and Takagi faced each other in the sixth pair of the 3000m. The Japanese speedster was faster in the opener and the first full lap but Schouten caught up at the 1000m split and slowly but steadily extended her lead. With a time of three minutes, 58.00 seconds, she beat the track record of 4:00.26 set by [Gunda Niemann-Stirnemann](#) (GER) in 2001.

"I've been very consistent throughout the season," the three-time Beijing Olympic champion said about maintaining her form after her successful campaign in China. "Except for Salt Lake City, I skated track records at every track this year."

Tight fight

Takagi dug in and eventually finished in 4:02.73 for fifth place in the distance, hanging on to the lead in the overall ranking by the skin of her teeth. Going into Sunday's 1500m, the difference between Takagi and Schouten is 0.43 seconds. Contrary to her 500m performance, Takagi was content with her display in the longer distance, saying: "My 3000m was reasonable. It's going to be tough but I will fight until the end."

Schouten also vowed to battle. She said: "(After the 3000m) I thought this may become very tight. I really have work to do. Takagi and De Jong are close and therefore the 1500m is crucial, there's a lot of pressure. I just hope I don't lose too much and then we'll see in the 5000m."

Allrounder De Jong

De Jong kept the two speed and endurance specialists in sight in both distances and she'll start the second day in third position, at 0.59s from Takagi in the 1500m. She was happy to perform well after a disappointing Olympic campaign, which resulted in 1500m and Team Pursuit bronze.

"I was able to fight again," De Jong said. "That's something I haven't felt for a long time. I was able to sit deep and push sideways and that makes me go so much faster. I'd rather have skated a bit faster in the 500m but usually I always mess up my first day in Allround Championships so I'm happy I could keep my composure this time. I was glad that Takagi did not skate a (500m in) 37s. The gap is not too big and Schouten obviously skates a superb 5000m, so we'll see where I stand tomorrow."

"I still believe in my chances (for the title). I hope for a good 1500m. I was able to fight in the 3000m today so I'll be able to fight for five more laps in the 5000m too."

Kok and Leerdam add Team Sprint title to individual silverware

After the Allround program, the Dutch women took the Team Sprint World Title. "We're very happy to win this," said [Femke Kok](#) (NED), who took individual Sprint silver on Friday. After [Dione Voskamp](#) and [Jutta Leerdam](#) skated, Kok stopped the clock on a new track record of one minute, 27.42 seconds. Poland's [Andzelika Wójcik](#), [Kaja Ziomek](#) and [Karolina Bosiek](#), who won the European title in this event, came second with 1:29.09. Norway's [Julie Nilstad Samsonsen](#), [Martine Ripsrud](#) and [Marte Bjerkreim Furnee](#) (NOR) seized bronze in 1:34.92.

"We had a good fight on our hands," new individual World Sprint Champion Leerdam said: "Poland are a good rival. They have two top sprinters (Wójcik and Ziomek) and a girl who can also skate a good 1500m (Bosiek) so we knew it wouldn't be an easy win. We were sharp and performed well as a team."

Van der Poel has Roest in sight after personal best in 500m

Roest knew he had to win as much as he could in the opening 500m and he set a time of 36.44 seconds for fourth in the distance. [Dmitry Morozov](#) (KAZ) won in a personal best of 36.12s with [Riku Tsuchiya](#) (JPN) and [Peder Kongshaug](#) (NOR) joint second in 36.40s. Morozov dropped to 19th place in the ranking after finishing 20th in the 5000m but Tsuchiya and Kongshaug set up their own battle for the third podium spot.

Roest has earlier predicted that Van der Poel would be his main rival in Hamar after home favorite [Hallgeir Engebråten](#) (NOR) had to withdraw following a positive Covid-19 test. Long-distance specialist Van der Poel skated a personal best of 37.33s in the 500m and kept Roest in sight despite only coming 14th in the distance.

"It's difficult to beat him because he's really on another level this season and also because he skated two world records this year," Roest said. "If there's a moment to beat him, it's definitely in the Allround (Championships) but it's going to be very difficult because he showed today he can also sprint a little."

Roest keeps Van der Poel at bay

Roest had to set the bar in the 5000m, skating in the seventh pair against teammate [Marcel Bosker](#) (NED). He managed to keep his lap times under 30s until the final 1200m to finish in six minutes, 15.99 seconds. Van der Poel had to make up 8.90 seconds to surge past Roest in the ranking, coming on straight after in the eighth pair against [Davide Ghiotto](#) (ITA). He was not able to bridge the whole gap but with a time of 6:12.45 he won back a lot, leaving 1.61 in Sunday's 1500m.

After their races, the two title contenders conducted a joint interview and speculated on their title chances together. What gap did Roest think he needed heading into the final 10.000m?

"When you look at the Olympics, when I had a gap of 12 seconds... something like that would be pretty nice. But you don't know, it's a different track, so we'll see tomorrow," the Dutchman said.

Van der Poel thought that 12 seconds would be feasible for him to overcome, saying: "If he (Roest) has 20 seconds, it's going to be really hard for me. If it's 20 seconds then I feel like I'm chasing."

Turning to Roest he said: "So if you win (the 1500m) by 1.5 seconds tomorrow, that's 20 seconds (in the 10,000m), and you normally win (the 1500m) by 2.5 or 3 seconds."

Roest wasn't so sure, however, and answered: "Yes, but you normally do a 38s (instead of his 37.33)"

After party

Whatever happens, Van der Poel enjoys racing in Hamar. He said he did not have much difficulty rediscovering his drive after the successful Olympic campaign: "It's a lot of fun being here. It's a different kind of goal. This weekend is about the after party. So everything you want is to have the best after party. And the better the races are, the better the after party is going to be. The Olympics was more about the races but now the goal is Sunday night."

National anthem in Vikingskipet

Before Van der Poel's after party on Sunday night, Norway's men gave the home crowd something to celebrate. Magnussen, Rukke and Lorentzen won the team sprint event in one minute, 20.01 seconds. Poland's [Marek Kania](#), [Damian Zurek](#) and [Piotr Michalski](#) came second in 1:20.80, edging out the Netherlands ([Merijn Scheperskamp](#), [Kai Verbij](#) and [Thomas Krol](#)) by 0.01s.

Lorentzen, who already won individual Sprint bronze on Friday, was delighted: "We faced a tough opposition from the Polish and Dutch team so this means a lot. It's also fun to hear the national anthem in the Vikingskipet."

With the Norwegian endurance men having won their second consecutive Olympic Team Pursuit title in Beijing, Norway dominates the team events in men's international skating. "We have a really good group and we train together every day," Lorentzen said.

He explained their tactics, adding: "It's important to have a fast start but not use too much energy in the first 800m. And it's also important that the second guy doesn't drop too much speed because if you start the last lap with a little bit too less speed, it's impossible to gain it. You can try to keep it quite flat but it's almost impossible to go down on the last lap, so it's a difficult event."

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