

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Press release

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ISU Speed Skating World Cup Final Stavanger Preview #WCSpeed

The ISU Speed Skating World Cup visited Stavanger for the first time in 2016, and this weekend the Sørmarka Arena will host the World Cup Final for the first time. Kjeld Nuis (NED) and Heather Bergsma (USA) will defend their leading positions in the Grand World Cup standings.

The Dutchman could win his second consecutive Grand World Cup victory and Bergsma could win her third Grand World Cup after 2014 and 2015. Last year's winner Brittany Bowe has quit the season in January to fully recover from a concussion. Sven Kramer and Ireen Wüst will also be absent. They decided to call it a season after winning last week's World Allround titles.

Nuis man to beat in middle distances

Nuis has dominated this season's 1000m and 1500m winning three out of four 1000m races and two out of three 1500m races in the World Cup. The Dutchman also won this year's World titles in the two distances and he'll seek to put a crown on his best career season so far.

Nuis' compatriot Kai Verbij, who won this season's European and World Sprint Titles, is second in the Grand World Cup ranking. He'll try to beat Nuis in his favorite 1000m and 1500m in a final chance to take the Grand World Cup himself.

Peter Michael is also in contention for the Grand World Cup. With Kramer absent in the 5000m the New Zealander will be one of the favorites to win the long distance and he could also collect points in the 1500m. Jorrit Bergsma (NED) tops the 5000m/10,000m World Cup ranking and aims to win the final classification in the long distances.

In absence of Pavel Kulizhnikov his countryman Ruslan Murashov is in the driver's seat for the 500m World Cup.

Sáblíková aims at 11th long distance crown

Martina Sáblíková is heading for her 11th consecutive long distance World Cup. After having won the 3000m/5000m World Cup in the ten previous seasons, the Czech skater took five gold medals and one silver this season. She was beaten by Ireen Wust on the 3000m in Berlin in January, but Wüst will be absent in Stavanger.

Heather Bergsma has a strong lead over Marrit Leenstra (NED) in the Grand World Cup standings, after a total of five race wins over the past season. Second ranked Leenstra did not win a single race, but she has consistently collected silver and bronze medals throughout the season, to stay in contention for the Grand World Cup.

Nao Kodaira looks set to win her second 500m overall World Cup, after a previous victory in 2015. The 31-year-old Japanese skater had a career best season winning the 500m World Title and the World Sprint title this year.

Official Series Hashtag: #WCSpeed

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For full results of the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isureports.eu/> and <http://www.isu.org/en/speed-skating/series/isu-world-cup-speed-skating>

About ISU World Cup Speed Skating 2016/17 Series

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating circuit consists of six events across Asia and Europe. The series starts in Harbin (CHN) on November 11-13 and moves to Nagano (JPN) on November 18-20. In December the Series goes to Europe stopping in Astana (KAZ) on December 2-4 and to Heerenveen (NED) on December 9-11. On January 27-19 2017 the fifth leg of the event will be in Berlin (GER) and the ISU World Cup Speed Skating Final will take place in Chelyabinsk (RUS) on March 10-12. The full ISU Calendar of Events is available here:

<http://www.isu.org/en/news-and-events/calendar-of-events>

The ISU World Cup Speed Skating Series is available as a live stream on the ISU Skating Channel. Please note that geoblocking may be required in certain territories

<http://livemanager.eurovision.edgesuite.net/isu/index.html>

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