

February 17, 2022

Beijing, China

Challengers hope to break Dutch 1000m dominance **Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games**

Four Dutch Men dominated the 1000m in the first four World Cups this season, but every nation has a maximum of three starting slots per distance at the Olympic Games. Reigning Olympic Champion [Kjeld Nuis](#) (NED) was the unlucky one out in the distance at the Dutch trials. [Thomas Krol](#) (NED), [Hein Otterspeer](#) (NED) and [Kai Verbij](#) (NED) all enter the competition in Beijing as title contenders. Based on the World Cup ranking, home favorite [Ning Zhongyan](#) (CHN), 2018 silver medalist [Håvard Lorentzen](#) (NOR) and Canada's [Laurent Dubreuil](#) are their main challengers.

Krol's confidence after 1500m

Having won two World Cup races this season and adding the European title last January, Krol is the main favorite for 1000m gold in Beijing. The 29-year-old Dutch Olympic debutant had to settle for silver after an impressive display in the 1500m. Only Nuis (NED) managed to beat his time of 1 minute 43.55s by 0.34s. Swallowing the disappointment, he already looked forward to the 1000m: "I can only say that I skated a fantastic race, and there was just one faster Skater today. But it's not over for me yet. I still have the 1000m to come and my chance is excellent. The one who won today (Nuis) won't be there, which is a pity for him of course. If I show my best self I will again be able to battle with the best."

Verbij and Otterspeer

Krol's teammate and long-time friend Verbij (NED) has stayed under the radar in Beijing pretty much. The 2019 World Champion in the 1000m made his Olympic debut four years ago, but due to injury troubles in the run-up he was not able to show his best self at the PyeongChang 2018 Games - finishing 9th in the 500m and 6th in the 1000m. In Beijing Verbij took 14th place in the 500m, but the 1000m suits him better.

Otterspeer (NED) only qualified for the Beijing 1000m, a boy's dream for an old man, he jokingly said after the Dutch trials. Leaving for Beijing he posted a photo on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CZepCOnq-lz/?hl=en>) with the accompanying text: "Exactly 20 years ago, this kid skated his first Dutch national Championships. Right there, the love for Speed Skating and the drive to go for the highest possible (goals) was ignited. Today I got to leave for the highest possible: The Olympic Games! On the way to Beijing!" Thriving on the success of teammates [Ireen Wüst](#) (NED) and Nuis, who both won 1500m gold in the first week, he'll definitely aim for the highest possible in Beijing's National Speed Skating Oval on Friday. To achieve that, he may well have to beat the twenty-year-old Olympic record of 1 minute and 7.18 seconds, set by his coach Gerard van Velde at the 2002 Salt Lake City (USA) Olympic Winter Games.

Team Inspiration for Lorentzen

Norway's Lorentzen got inspired by his teammates' success too, after he saw the Norwegian Men retaining their 2018 Olympic title in the Team Pursuit competition in Beijing 2022 on Tuesday. "I watched the Final from the stands, together with a lot of my teammates," he said. "Of course it gives us a boost. Now the team

has delivered two medals already (gold in the Team Pursuit and bronze for [Hallgeir Engebråten](#) in the 5000m), so hopefully we can lower our shoulders and deliver some good races on Friday." Four years ago Lorentzen was at his absolute peak, winning the 500m and taking silver in the 1000m. In the following years he had a lot of injury trouble, but this season he's shown consistency in the 1000m, being ranked third behind Krol and Nuis. "The main goal is to be up there, fighting for the medals. It's going to be a tough race, there's a lot of fast guys. We will see, it's going to be exciting."

Olympic pressure

Whereas Otterspeer and Lorentzen got Olympic inspiration in Beijing, Ning Zhongyan (CHN) was dealing with the pressure of being the home favorite, finishing in a disappointing seventh place in the 1500m. "I didn't skate at my normal level", he said. "I think the reason is that I failed to get my mentality right. Because this is my first time skating in an Olympic Games and on my home rink, I had a lot of pressure. I have to adjust my mentality for a better performance in the Men's 1000m and Men's Mass Start. I am not convinced by my result today."

Dubreuil hopes to make amends

Laurent Dubreuil (CAN) was also disappointed after his first race in Beijing. The World 500m Champion came in fourth in the shortest distance, and although the 1000m is not his favorite distance, he hopes to be able to make amends. "It's hard for me to think about 1000m right now. I'll give myself a day or two to shift my mindset and turn it around. I believe in my chances in the 1000m as well," he said.

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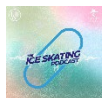
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Men's 1000m, 16:30 (local time)

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