



Olympic Winter Games Beijing 2022



PRESS RELEASE – Skeleton preview

7 February 2022

Women's skeleton celebrates its 20th year on the Olympic programme

Yanqing (RWH): The Winter Games in Beijing mark an Olympic milestone for female skeleton athletes. In Salt Lake City (USA) exactly 20 years ago, women's skeleton celebrated its debut appearance on the Olympic agenda, with the men's event having appeared at both the 1928 and 1948 Olympics. At the first ever women's event in 2002, gold and silver went to Tristan Gale and Lea Ann Parsely of the USA, giving them the chance to celebrate in front of a home crowd. Alex Coomber of Great Britain won Olympic bronze.

Britain's female athletes then went on to make their country the most successful nation in women's skeleton at the Olympics. Team GB have won medals in the women's skeleton at every Winter Games since then and no fewer than three golds, one for Amy Williams in Vancouver (CAN) in 2010 and gold for Lizzy Yarnold in both Sochi (RUS) in 2014 and PyeongChang (KOR) in 2018. Four years ago, Laura Deas won an Olympic bronze for the United Kingdom.

Following the results of the Olympic season, World Champion Tina Hermann (GER) and overall World Cup winner and European Champion Kimberley Bos of the Netherlands are definitely among the favourites for a medal in Beijing. After some problems with her back at the start of the season, the runner-up in the overall World Cup rankings Janine Flock (AUT) enjoyed increasingly impressive form, concluding the World Cup season with her tenth European Championship medal since 2013. The team from the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) also have their sights set on a medal: Elena Nikitina, Yulia Kanakina and Alina Tararychenkova are some of the fastest starters in the field and collected five-podium finishes between them during the Olympic season.

Winning their countries' first ever skeleton medals, Kim Meylemans of Belgium and Italy's Valentina Margaglio were surprise podium finishers during the Olympic season.

Viewers will have to wait for the races to see whether the hosts China – who will be represented by Li Yuxi and flag bearer from the opening ceremony Zhao Dan – will be able to convert their home advantage and incomparable level of experience on the track into medals.

Incidentally, this will be the first time that the team from hosts China will see how they measure up against international competitors on their home track: The tradition of holding a World Cup race on the new track in the pre-Olympic season had to be cancelled due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. No athletes from the host team took part in the Olympic trials during the international training weeks in October 2021. ©RWH2022

Video tour through the Yanqing Sliding Center of Beijing 2022

Yanqing (RWH) Sports fans can experience the Olympic Yanqing Sliding Center virtually with a camera tour through the 1615-meter competition track of the artificial ice rink. The video is available on the IBSF social media pages (@IBSFsliding) at [>>Facebook](#), [>>Twitter](#), [>>Instagram](#)



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Medallists from the Olympic trials in Yanqing

Yanqing (RWH): The medal winners from the Olympic trials in Yanqing Sliding Center in October 2021 will be back on the starting line when the battle for gold, silver and bronze commences at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. In the women's skeleton, the trial race during the international training weeks was won by World Champion Tina Hermann (GER), who finished just ahead of Junior World Champion Hannah Neise (GER). Elena Nikitina (ROC) finished third. In the men's event, the top spot in the skeleton went to Alexander Gassner (GER) ahead of Marcus Wyatt of Great Britain and Axel Jungk (GER). Chinese athletes did not take part in the international training sessions or Olympic trials. ©RWH2022

Martins Dukurs is chief favourite for the men's skeleton at his fifth Winter Games

Yanqing (RWH): With six World Championship titles, twelve European Championship wins, eleven overall victories in the World Cup and 61 World Cup race wins, Martins Dukurs of Latvia is by far the most successful skeleton athlete in the sport's history. The 37-year-old needs just one more title to complete his set: Olympic gold. Martins Dukurs will be making his fifth attempt at gold in Beijing. He won the silver medal in Vancouver (CAN) in 2010 and Sochi (RUS) in 2014, having been beaten by local heroes on both occasions: Jon Montgomery in Vancouver and Alexander Tretiakov in Sochi. At the Olympic trials at Yanqing Sliding Center, the Latvian finished in 18th.

Other names at the top of the list of favourites are the members of the German team: Christopher Grotheer has won the pinnacle event of the past two seasons, taking the World Championship title in 2020 and 2021. Here, the 29-year-old showcased his nerves of steel over the two-day competitions: Grotheer did not secure the 2020 World Championship title until the last few metres of the final run and only recorded the top time in one of the four runs – he was, however, the most consistent athlete. In 2021, he began the second day of World Championship action as the mid-point leader and ultimately rode to World Championship gold by recording the fastest times in heat three and four. In October, his team-mate Alexander Gassner won the Olympic trial, while Axel Jungk finished third. And when it comes to the question of favourites, Team GB cannot be forgotten with World Cup race winner Matt Weston and Marcus Wyatt, who finished second in the Olympic trials. The team representing the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) are entering two athletes in the form of 2014 Olympic Champion Alexander Tretiakov and 2016 Youth Olympic Champion Evgeniy Rukosuev, both of whom could finish on the podium in Beijing.

Yan Wengang and Yin Zhen will be representing the Olympic hosts China at the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing. However, China's first athlete to win a World Cup race will not be on the team: When the BMW IBSF World Cup was held in Innsbruck (AUT) in November 2021, Geng Wenqiang became his country's first skeleton athlete to win a World Cup race – in a historic three-way victory after tying with World Champion Christopher Grotheer (GER) and the UK's Matt Weston. ©RWH2022



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Katie Uhlaender and the Dukurs brothers most experienced skeleton Olympians

Yanqing (RWH): Katie Uhlaender of the USA and the two brothers Tomass and Martins Dukurs of Latvia are the most experienced Olympic athletes scheduled to appear in the skeleton at the Winter Games in Beijing. With five appearances apiece – 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018 and now 2022 – the 2012 World Champion Katie Uhlaender and six-time World Champion Martins Dukurs will both be competing in the Winter Olympics. The elder of the two Dukurs brothers, Tomass Dukurs' (LAT) experience in the Olympics stretches even further back. As well as competing in 2010, 2014 and 2018, he first raced in Salt Lake City (USA) in 2002, when he was just 21. As such, Tomass Dukurs is the only skeleton athlete to have been active throughout men's skeleton entire modern Olympic history: After two appearances at the 1928 and 1948 Olympics, skeleton has been a mainstay on the Winter Olympic agenda since 2002. ©RWH2022

Youth Winter Olympic Games has been a hotbed of skeleton talent for the past 10 years

Yanqing (RWH): Ten years after the premiere of the Youth Olympic Winter Games (YOG) in 2012 in Innsbruck (AUT), a few former YOG athletes will be competing in the skeleton events at the 2022 Beijing Winter Games – and are also favourites for a medal. In the women's skeleton, both Jacqueline Lölling (GER) and Kim Meylemans (BEL) were on the starting line at the YOG's inaugural event. Kim Meylemans finished fifth, while Lölling made sporting history to become the first Youth Olympic Champion in her discipline before winning Olympic silver in PyeongChang in 2018. The overall World Cup winner Kimberley Bos also competed in Innsbruck in 2012, albeit in a different discipline: As a pilot in the 2-woman bobsleigh, the Dutch athlete won the bronze medal. Valentina Margaglio (ITA) also appeared in the same race, finishing fifth as the brakewoman for bobsleigh pilot Mathilde Parodi.

As many as six skeleton athletes will be graduating from the 2016 YOG in Lillehammer (NOR) to the Beijing Games, led by Youth Olympic Champions Evgeniy Rukosuev (ROC) and silver medallist Hannah Neise (GER). The list of starters at the Yanqing Olympic Sliding Center will also include Alina Tararychenkova (ROC, eighth place at 2016 YOG) in the women's skeleton, and Samuel Maier (AUT, sixth place) plus Vladyslav Heraskevych (UKR) and Seunggi Jung (KOR), who tied in eighth place in 2016.

The Beijing Winter Games will even feature one female skeleton athlete from the most recent Youth Games in Lausanne in 2020: 19-year-old Zhao Dan (CHN) finished seventh in the YOG race in St. Moritz. And just two years later, she was the flag bearer who led the host team of China into the Olympic stadium during the opening ceremony. ©RWH2022



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Starting order for the Olympic skeleton events

	Starting Order Men's Skeleton and Women's Skeleton
Run 1	10 best athletes in IBSF ranking - chose starting numbers 4-13
	10 last athletes in IBSF-Ranking – draw for starting numbers 1-3
	All other athletes - starting numbers 14-25 following IBSF Ranking
Run 2	Rank 20 to 1, followed by 21 to 25 (according result after heat 1)
Run 3	Rank 1 – Rank 25 (according result after heat 2)
Run 4	Rank 20 – Rank 1 (according result after heat 3)

On the sidelines

The male and female skeleton athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing **range between the ages of 19 and 40**. So, there is a whole generation's gap between the youngest Olympic competitor and the oldest athlete competing in the skeleton races at Beijing 2022: When Tomass Dukurs (40) first stood on the starting line at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver (CAN) in 2002, Zhao Dan (19) had not even been born yet: The Chinese athlete celebrated her 19th birthday in December 2021. ©RWH2022

Jaclyn Narracott (AUS) made the history books at the last rehearsals prior the Olympics, the 2021-2022 World Cup finals in St Moritz (SUI). There she became Australia's first female skeleton athlete to top the podium at a World Cup event. The 31-year-old's coach just so happens to be her husband Dom Parsons. In his career as an athlete, the Brit won Olympic bronze at PyeongChang 2018. The other member of Australia's skeleton team is **Nick Timmings**. The overall winner of the 2021/2022 IBSF North American Cup will be making his Olympic debut in Beijing. ©RWH2022

Nicole Silveira (BRA) will arrive at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing as Brazil's first ever female skeleton athlete. The 28-year-old has been enjoying the best season of her career to date: She won the overall IBSF North American Cup – with five wins out of eight races – secured two wins in the IBSF Intercontinental Cup and got her first World Cup top-ten finish in Altenberg (GER) in December 2021. At the Olympic trials in Yanqing Sliding Center, the Brazilian finished eighth out of 24 competitors. ©RWH2022



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The Olympic schedule for skeleton

Date/Time Beijing/Yanqing CET: -7 hrs, UTC: -8 hrs, EST: -13 hrs		Race
Thursday, 10 February 2022	9.30 a.m.	Men's Skeleton, run 1
	11:00 a.m.	Men's Skeleton, run 2
Friday, 11 February 2022	9.30 a.m.	Women's Skeleton, run 1
	11:00 a.m.	Women's Skeleton, run 2
	8.20 p.m.	Men's Skeleton, run 3
	9.55 p.m.	Men's Skeleton, run 4
Saturday 12 February 2022	8.20 p.m.	Women's Skeleton, run 3
	9.55 p.m.	Women's Skeleton, run 4

Subject to changes – Up-to-date times (local time at the track and the user's local time) are listed on the [IBSF website](https://www.ibsf.org). ©RWH2022

This season's winners in the 2021/2022 BMW IBSF World Cup – Skeleton

Winners / Saisonsieger BMW IBSF World Cup 21/22	Women's Skeleton Frauen-Skeleton	Men's Skeleton Männer-Skeleton
Innsbruck 1	Elena Nikitina (RUS)	Alexander Tretiakov (RUS)
Innsbruck 2	Elena Nikitina (RUS)	Wenqiang Geng (CHN) Christopher Grotheer (GER) Matt Weston (GBR)
Altenberg 1	Tina Hermann (GER)	Axel Jungk (GER)
Winterberg 1	Kimberley Bos (NED)	Alexander Tretiakov (RUS)
Altenberg 2	Tina Hermann (GER)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)
Sigulda	Janine Flock (AUT)	Tomass Dukurs (LAT)
Winterberg 2	Kimberley Bos (NED)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)
St. Moritz + ECh/EM	Jaclyn Narracott (AUS)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)
Overall winner / Gesamtsieger	Kimberley Bos (NED)	Martins Dukurs (LAT)

>> [Athlete profiles on ibsf.org](https://www.ibsf.org) with an overview of medals, all results, news and photos

>> All [results](#) from races and training sessions

>> Photos: [IBSF Flickr account](#) (for editorial purposes only and with photo credits!)

