



Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018

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IBSF PRESS RELEASE – Skeleton Preview

Women's skeleton makes fifth appearance in Olympic programme

PyeongChang (RWH): The Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang will mark the fifth time that women's skeleton has been included in the global event. Women's skeleton made its Olympic début in Salt Lake City (USA) in 2002. Back then, gold and silver went to Tristan Gale and Lea Ann Parsley 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 to date, most recently with a gold for Amy Williams in Vancouver (CAN) in 2010 and a gold for Lizzy Yarnold in Sochi (RUS) in 2014.

When it comes to the favourites for victory in PyeongChang, current Olympic Champion Lizzy Yarnold is joined by World Champion and overall World Cup winner Jacqueline Lölling (GER), who won the Olympic rehearsal at the World Cup race in PyeongChang in March 2017. Canada may also be in with a chance for a medal from Elisabeth Vathje, who finished third in the overall World Cup. One competitor who could shake things up in PyeongChang is Kimberley Bos (NED). She finished third at last year's Olympic test, giving the Netherlands their first World Cup podium finish in skeleton. ©RWH2018

Sungbin Yun and Martins Dukurs lead the favourites for the men's skeleton

PyeongChang (RWH): The 2018 Games in PyeongChang will mark the 90th anniversary of men's skeleton at the Olympics – albeit with a few interruptions along the way. Skeleton athletes raced in the Olympics all the way back in 1928 and 1948, both times in St Moritz. Jennison Heaton of the USA (1928) and Italy's Nino Bibbia (1948) went down in history as the sport's first ever Olympic champions.

After appearing at the two Olympic Games in St Moritz – whose traditional Cresta Run is regarded as the birthplace of skeleton – the sport officially returned to the programme for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City after a gap of over half a century. With two gold medals each, the USA (1928 and 2002) and Canada (2006 and 2010) are the two most successful nations in the men's skeleton.

Korean sports fans are particularly looking forward to seeing local hero Sungbin Yun, who is arriving at the Winter Games as the overall World Cup winner. The Korean athlete, who won five World Cup races this season and never finished below second, is certainly one of the favourites to win in PyeongChang. The same goes for Martins Dukurs of Latvia, who has been involved in a gripping duel with Sungbin Yun over the past few years. With five World Championship titles and eight overall World Cup wins, Martins Dukurs is also firmly at the top of the list of favourites for the 2018 Winter Games. The two favourites are also joined by World Championship runner-up Axel Jungk of Team Germany, who secured three podium finishes this season and also won his first ever World Cup race at the finale in Königssee. ©RWH2018



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Medallists from Olympic trials in PyeongChang lined up to compete

PyeongChang (RWH): Five out of the six medallists from the Olympic rehearsals in PyeongChang are signed up to compete in the Olympic skeleton events. At the World Cup finale at the Olympic Sliding Centre in March 2017, Jacqueline Lölling (GER) won the women's race, while Kimberley Bos surprised the field to secure the Netherlands' first ever podium finish in the women's skeleton. The top spot in the men's skeleton went to World Champion Martins Dukurs, who finished ahead of local hero Sungbin Yun (KOR) and Tomass Dukurs (LAT). ©RWH2018

Katie Uhlaender and the Dukurs brothers most experienced skeleton Olympians

PyeongChang (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 PyeongChang. With four appearances apiece – 2006, 2010, 2014 and now 2018 –the 2012 World Champion Katie Uhlaender and five-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. Tomass Dukurs is thus the only Olympic athlete to have raced in 2002 who is still actively competing in skeleton today. ©RWH2018

Skeleton athletes range from ages 19 to 38

PyeongChang (RWH): The ages of the athletes competing in the skeleton events at the Winter Olympic Games in PyeongChang span from 19 to 38.

While Dave Greszczyszyn (CAN), born in 1979 and now 38, is celebrating his Olympic début, his competitor Vladyslav Heraskevych already has Olympic experience under his belt at half the Canadian's age. The Ukrainian athlete, then just 17, finished in eighth at the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) in Lillehammer (NOR) in 2016. In PyeongChang, Vladyslav Heraskevych will be the first Olympic skeleton athlete of his nation.

The youngest female skeleton athlete due to appear at the Olympics is the Junior World Champion Anna Fernstädt of Germany at age 21. ©RWH2018

Four former YOG athletes on the starting line in PyeongChang

PyeongChang (RWH): Four of the athletes set to compete in PyeongChang began their skeleton careers at the Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG). In Innsbruck (AUT) in 2012, Jacqueline Lölling (GER) became the first ever Youth Olympic Champion in the women's skeleton, while Kim Meylemans of Belgium finished in fifth. Kimberley Bos (NED) has also won a YOG bronze, though as a pilot in the bobsleigh. Vladyslav Heraskevych of Ukraine finished eighth in the men's skeleton at the 2016 Youth Winter Games in Lillehammer (NOR). ©RWH2018



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Three-strong skeleton team for Team GB's Ambition Programme

PyeongChang (RWH): The skeleton athletes Madelaine Smith and Marcus Wyatt of Great Britain and coach Kenny Howard are heading to PyeongChang as part of the British Olympic Association's (BOA) Ambition Programme. Their attendance was announced in a press release by the British Bobsleigh & Skeleton Association. The programme is designed to motivate athletes with a view to their future participation in the Olympics, while also giving them the chance to gain experience.

Madelaine Smith and Marcus Wyatt made their débuts in the IBSF World Cup in the 2017/2018 Olympic season. Smith's best result in the women's skeleton was 13th, while Wyatt achieved a best of 10th place in the men's event. In PyeongChang, they will be backing athletes including the skeleton team made up of Lizzy Yarnold and Laura Deas, Dom Parsons and Jeremy Rice. Lizzy Yarnold, the 2014 Olympic Champion, is a former graduate of the Ambition Programme herself, having attended the London 2012 Games before her first Winter Olympic Games. ©RWH2018

On the sidelines

Anna Fernstädt (GER) was forced to take a detour on her journey to Olympic qualification. Prior to the start of the season, the 21-year-old failed to achieve the start time standard required for the German World Cup team. However, after winning three races in the Intercontinental Cup, she was allowed to switch to the World Cup in time for the third race after all. At the last qualification World Cup race in St Moritz, she then celebrated her third top-eight finish, which meant she also met Germany's Olympic criteria. Two weeks before the opening of the Winter Games in PyeongChang, Anna Fernstädt won her first Junior World Championship title. ©RWH2018

Simidele Adeagbo (NGR) and Akwasi Frimpong (GHA) will be representing Africa in the skeleton events at the PyeongChang Olympic Games. Simidele Adeagbo is thus the first ever female athlete from an African country to compete in one of the IBSF disciplines. The 36-year-old athlete finished third in the last two races of the IBSF North America Cup season in Lake Placid (USA), becoming the first ever female athlete from Africa to finish on the podium at an IBSF race. Simidele Adeagbo finished twelfth in the racing series' overall standings. Ghana's Akwasi Frimpong secured his spot in the Olympics after competing in the North America and Intercontinental Cup.

A male IBSF athlete from Africa has already competed in the Olympics before when South Africa's Tyler Botha raced in the 2006 Winter Games in Turin (ITA). The athlete, who is now 37 and was born in Cape Town, competed in skeleton between 2003 and 2006, making it onto the podium in the now defunct Challenge Cup and finishing 15th in the Winter Games in Turin. ©RWH2018



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Anthony Watson (JAM) is Jamaica's first ever skeleton athlete to compete in the Winter Olympic Games. Born in the USA to a Jamaican father, Watson met the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation's (IBSF) basic qualification standards by finishing 43rd in the rankings. Anthony Watson found out that he would be competing in the Olympics on 31 January after other countries had declined their allotted qualification spots.

"Wow!!!! What a day!!!" was his response to the news in a post on his Facebook page, in which he also thanked his fellow athletes from all over the world. "To my friends who have qualified, your hard work has inspired me to always push myself my hardest. To my friends who have given everything [and] just missed your mark, you inspire as well. And at [these] Games I represent you all!"

Before launching his career in skeleton, the former sprinter Anthony Watson had also tried his luck in the US bobsleigh team before finally switching to skeleton in 2016. In addition to his sporting ambitions, the 28-year-old is also a singer, songwriter, actor and model. ©RWH2018

Alex Hanssen (NOR) is following in the Olympic footsteps of his coach Snørre Pedersen. The Norwegian athlete, who will celebrate his 30th birthday three days after the skeleton final in PyeongChang, is only the second male skeleton athlete to represent the Scandinavian country at the Winter Olympics, with his coach being the first athlete to do so.

Snørre Pedersen competed for Norway in Salt Lake City in 2002, when skeleton made its comeback to the Olympics after a break of over 50 years. Now 45, Pedersen finished 14th in Salt Lake City (USA).

In the Olympic season, Alex Hanssen finished 13th in the World Cup race on the 2010 Olympic track in Whistler (CAN) and also secured 16th place in the European Championships. He is now set to make his Olympic début in PyeongChang.

The IBSF's live stream of the World Cup finale in Königssee (GER) may have contributed to his entry. Norway's national association Norges Ake, Bob-, og Skeletonforbund convinced the members of Norway's National Olympic Committee to watch his athlete's progress in the race live online. After the first heat in Königssee, Alex Hanssen surprised the field by being on course for a top-ten finish – supported by the customary enthusiastic commentary from Martin Haven and John Morgan on the live stream. "You can have tipped the scale in the right direction for us", wrote Snørre Pedersen later when thanking the IBSF commentary team. ©RWH2018



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Starting order for the Olympic skeleton events

	Starting order for the women's skeleton
Heat 1	Top ten athletes in the IBSF rankings – choice of starting places 4-13 Three lowest ranking athletes in IBSF rankings – draw for starting places 1-3 All other athletes – starting places 14-20 allocated according to position in IBSF rankings
Heat 2	20th place – 1st place (according to the results after the first heat)
Heat 3	1st place – 20th place (according to the results after the second heat)
Heat 4	20th place – 1st place (according to the results after the third heat)

	Starting order for the men's skeleton
Heat 1	Top ten athletes in the IBSF rankings – choice of starting places 6-15 Five lowest ranking athletes in IBSF rankings – draw for starting places 1-5 All other athletes – starting places 16-30 allocated according to position in IBSF rankings
Heat 2	20th place – 1st place, then 21st to 30th place (according to the results after the first heat)
Heat 3	1st place – 30th place (according to the results after the second heat)
Heat 4	20th place – 1st place (according to the results after the third heat)

The Olympic skeleton races in PyeongChang

Race	Date/Time PyeongChang (KST)		Date/Time CET	
Men's Skeleton, run 1 Men's Skeleton, run 2	Thursday, 15 Feb.	10 am - 12.25 pm	Thursday, 15 Feb.	2 am - 4.25 am
Men's Skeleton, run 3 Men's Skeleton, run 4	Friday, 16 Feb.	9.30 am - 12.10 pm	Friday, 16 Feb.	1.30 am - 4.10 am
Women's Skeleton, run 1 Women's Skeleton, run 2	Friday, 16 Feb.	8.20 pm - 10.10 pm	Friday, 16 Feb.	12.20 pm - 2.10 pm
Women's Skeleton, run 3 Women's Skeleton, run 4	Saturday, 17 Feb.	8.20 pm - 10.40 pm	Saturday, 17 Feb.	12.20 pm - 2.40 pm

Info to all Skeleton athletes in PyeongChang: [IBSF Athletes Guide Skeleton](#)

World Cup 2017/2018 Men's Skeleton / Männer-Skeleton							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TRETIKOV, Alexander	RUS
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	JUNGK, Axel	GER
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TREGUBOV, Nikita	RUS	DUKURS, Tomass	LAT
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	GRESZCZYSZYN, Dave	CAN
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TREGUBOV, Nikita	RUS
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	TRETIKOV, Alexander	RUS	GROTHEER, Christopher	GER
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018	YUN, Sungbin	KOR	JUNGK, Axel	GER	GASSNER, Alexander	GER
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018	JUNGK, Axel	GER	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	DUKURS, Tomass	LAT
Overall Winners World Cup/ Weltcup-Gesamtsieger	2017/2018	YUN, Sungbin (KOR)	1545	JUNGK, Axel (GER)	1507	DUKURS, Tomass (LAT)	1464
World Champions 2017 Weltmeister 2017 Feb 2017, Königssee, GER		DUKURS, Martins	LAT	JUNGK, Axel	GER	TREGUBOV, Nikita	RUS
European Champions 2018 Europameister 2018	Dec 15-17, 2017 Innsbruck, AUT	DUKURS, Martins	LAT	TREGUBOV, Nikita	RUS	JUNGK, Axel	GER

World Cup 2017/2018 Women's Skeleton / Frauen-Skeleton							
Track / Bahn	Date / Datum	1.		2.		3.	
1. Lake Placid (USA)	Nov 9-10, 2017	FLOCK, Janine	AUT	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN	YARNOLD, Lizzy	GBR
2. Park City (USA)	Nov 17-18, 2017	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS	HERMANN, Tina	GER	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER
3. Whistler (CAN)	Nov 24-25, 2017	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	CHANNELL, Jane	CAN	HERMANN, Tina	GER
4. Winterberg (GER)	Dec 8-10, 2017	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS
5. Innsbruck (AUT) + Ech/EM	Dec 15-17, 2017	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN	RAHNEVA, Mirela	CAN
6. Altenberg (GER)	Jan 5-7, 2018	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	HERMANN, Tina	GER	FERNSTAEDT, Anna	GER
7. St. Moritz (SUI)	Jan 12-14, 2018	FLOCK, Janine	AUT	HERMANN, Tina	GER	VATHJE, Elisabeth	CAN
8. Königssee (GER)	Jan 19-21, 2018	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	HERMANN, Tina	GER	FLOCK, Janine	AUT
Overall Winners World Cup/ Weltcup-Gesamtsieger	2017/2018	LÖLLING, Jacqueline (GER)	1628	HERMANN, Tina (GER)	1504	VATHJE, Elisabeth (CAN)	1470
World Champions 2017 Weltmeister 2017 Feb 2017, Königssee, GER		LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	HERMANN, Tina	GER	YARNOLD, Lizzy	GBR
European Champions 2018 Europameister 2018	Dec 15-17, 2017 Innsbruck, AUT	NIKITINA, Elena	RUS	LÖLLING, Jacqueline	GER	FLOCK, Janine	AUT