

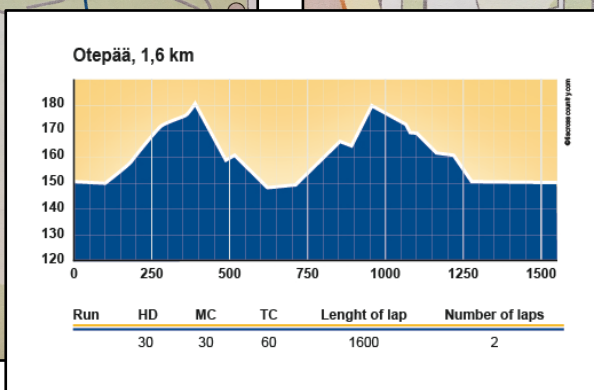
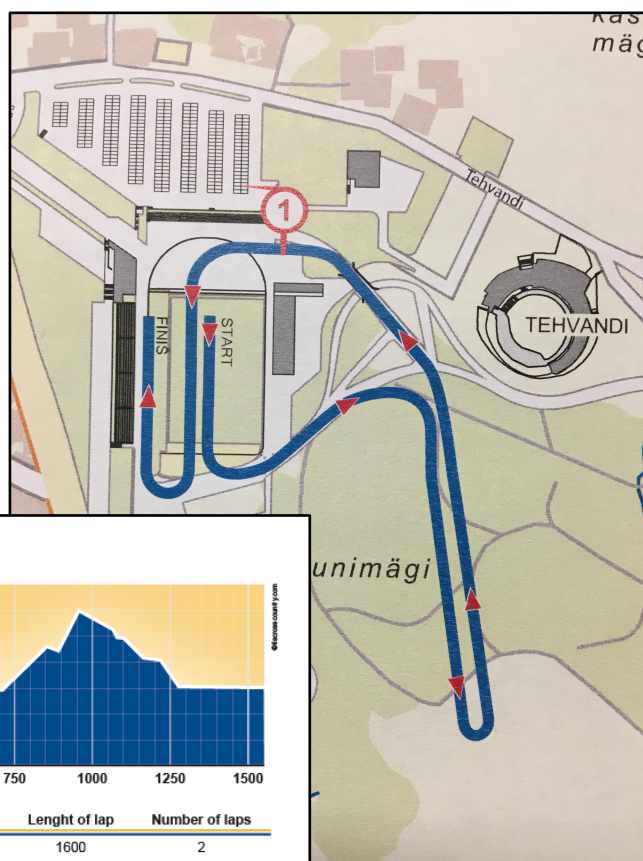
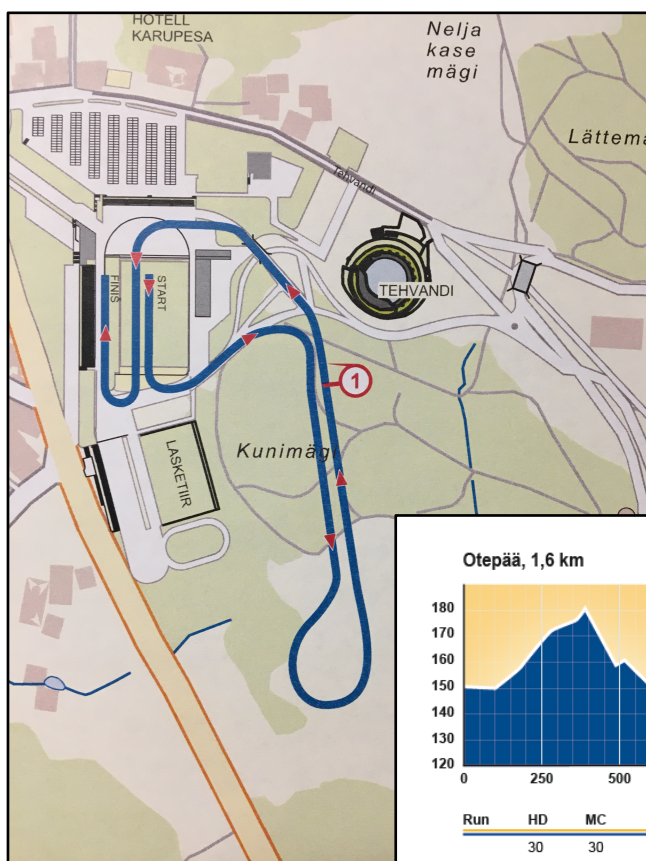
PRE-COMPETITION FACTS

OTEPÄÄ (EST)

Ladies'/ Men's Sprint Free

COMPETITION COURSE

Ladies: 1.3 km, **Men:** 1.6 km



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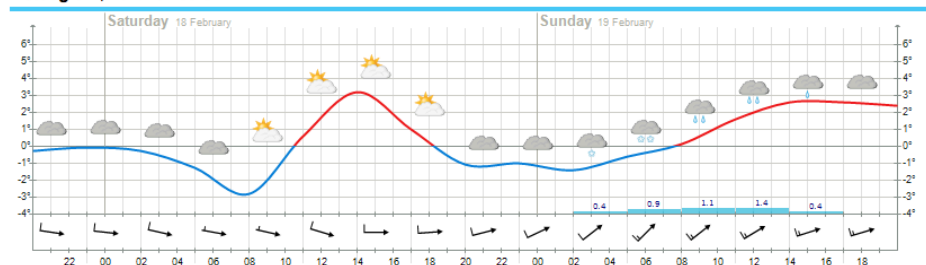
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WEATHER FORECAST

Meteogram, next 48 hours



The blue bars show max and min values for precipitation per hour.

PREVIEW LADIES SPRINT

Otepää will host a World Cup Sprint Freestyle for the first time. All previous 20 individual ladies' World Cup races here have been in classic style. In 2015, a team sprint in freestyle was held here.

Eight of the 20 previous races have been sprint races, all in classic style. Petra Majdic is the only athlete with multiple wins in sprint races in Otepää (3).

Three currently active skiers have previously won a sprint race in Otepää: Hanna Falk (2010), Justyna Kowalczyk (2012) and Ingvild Flugstad Østberg (2015)

Justyna Kowalczyk has won a record five individual World Cup races in Otepää. Bente Skari and Petra Majdic are on three wins, Marit Bjørgen and Virpi Kuitunen have won here twice.

Kowalczyk and Kuitunen have claimed a joint-record seven podiums in Otepää, two ahead of Marit Bjørgen and Aino-Kaisa Saarinen.

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Maiken Caspersen Falla (5) and Stina Nilsson (5) have combined for 10 wins in the last 11 World Cup races in sprint free. Natalia Matveeva is the only exception in this run as she won in Toblach last January.

Matveeva's victory is the only for an athlete outside Norway (10) and Sweden (6) in the last 17 World Cup races held in sprint free.

Nilsson has won a record nine World Cup races among Swedish women Charlotte Kalla follows with eight.

Five of her nine World Cup victories came in sprint freestyle. She is one win shy from equalling Petra Majdic and Arianna Follis (both 6) in joint-fifth place all-time.

Since the start of last season, Falla has finished in the top-2 in 10 of her last 11 starts in World Cup Sprint Freestyle races. She claimed five wins, five second places and a 45th place (Planica).

Matveeva is the first Russian woman with two World Cup sprint race wins. Six Russian women have one World Cup win each in sprint races.

Marit Bjørgen has won a record 24 World Cup Sprint Freestyle races. Kikkan Randall follows with 12 victories. Bente Skari and Maiken Caspersen Falla are in joint-third place with seven wins each.

Bjørgen has a total of 40 victories in individual World Cup sprint races (classic and free), at least double the amount of any other woman. Majdic (20), Skari (17) and Falla (13) make up the top-4.
Information provided by

Bjørgen can win a World Cup sprint even in the 26th different host city, as she has never won a sprint race in Otepää.

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Only Bjørgen (59) has claimed more World Cup podiums in sprint races than Falla (34).

PREVIEW MEN'S SPRINT

Federico Pellegrino could equal Hetland on top of all-time list

Otepää will host a World Cup Sprint Freestyle for the first time. All previous 20 individual men's World Cup races here have been in classic style. In 2015, a team sprint in freestyle was held here.

Eight of the 20 previous races have been sprint races, all in classic style. The eight sprint races held in Otepää have seen eight different winners.

Ola Vigen Hattestad has claimed a record six individual World Cup podium finishes in Otepää, all in sprint races.

No other athlete has more than two podiums in Otepää in sprint races - Eirik Brandsdal, Nikita Kriukov and Vassili Rotchev.

Lukáš Bauer has the most individual World Cup wins in Otepää with three. Dario Cologna and Eldar Rønning have two wins each while 13 athletes are on one victory.

Bauer has claimed five individual World Cup podiums in Otepää, only trailing Hattestad (6). All of the Czech's podiums came in 15km Classic Style.

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This will be the 104th World Cup Sprint Freestyle event. The first race was held in Reit im Winkl in February 1996, when Tor Arne Hetland won. In history of the sprint freestyle, Norwegian athletes have won 42 races. Swedish and Italian athletes follow with respectively 23 and 16 wins. Russia are in fourth place with 10 wins - no other country has managed more than three.

Norwegian athletes have won only three of the last 15 World Cup races in sprint free.

Sweden have gone 22 races without a win in sprint free, since Calle Halfvarsson won in the Tour de Ski on 29 December 2013. This is Sweden's longest streak without a victory in this event.

Tor Arne Hetland, winner of the first ever World Cup Sprint Freestyle, has claimed most victories in this event (9). Federico Pellegrino and Emil Jönsson are in joint-second place with eight wins.

Pellegrino won the last World Cup in this event, in Falun. Jönsson's last win in sprint free came in March 2013 in Lahti.

Pellegrino has claimed a record 13 World Cup podiums in this event among Italians. He is one podium finish shy from equalling Ola Vigen Hattestad (14) in fourth place all-time behind Hetland (20), Thobias Fredriksson (18), Alexey Petukhov (15).

Pellegrino has won nine World Cup races in all sprint events, joint-fifth on the all-time ranking alongside Petter Northug. Only Jönsson (16), Hattestad (13), Hetland and Jens Arne Svartedal (both 11) have won more.

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