

# coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE



Mikaela Shiffrin is among the athletes expected to compete in the 2022 Winter Olympics Monday on NBC and NBCUniversal networks.

## Shiffrin, Yuzuru, Kim favorites for gold at 2022 Winter Olympics

The 2022 Winter Olympics moves into its first full week of competition in Beijing and with it comes a number of high-profile sports and athletes. All events air on NBC, Peacock, USA Network, CNBC, NBCOlympics.com and NBC Sports app.

Probably the biggest gets underway early Monday, Feb. 7, when Mikaela Shiffrin begins a slate of potentially five events when she takes to the slopes of the National Alpine Ski Center in Yanqing to compete in the final of the women's giant slalom, the event she won gold in at PyeongChang in 2018.

The 26-year-old native of Vail, Colo., comes in looking to add to her three career Olympic medals, two of which are gold. She's considered the favorite in the GS but she'll face stiff competition from Tessa Worley of France, Petra Vlhova of Slovakia and Italian skiers Federica Brignone and Marta Bassino. Shiffrin will also face off with Vlhova in the slalom on Wednesday, Feb. 9, and with Ester Ledecka of the Czech Republic in the super-G on Thursday, Feb. 10.

Also on Monday, men's figure skating kicks into gear at Capital Indoor Stadium with the short program. Hanyu Yuzuru, the 27-year-old Japanese skater, comes in as the two-time defending Olympic gold medalist and has to be considered the favorite here. His chief competition will likely come from 22-year-old American Nathan Chen, the three-time World Champion who has yet to top a podium in Olympic competition but could break through here.

Wednesday, Feb. 9, women's snowboarding takes flight at Genting Snow Park with the final in the

halfpipe, in which Chloe Kim of the United States is the heavy favorite to win a second straight gold medal. In 2018 at PyeongChang, Kim scored a near-perfect 98.25 out of 100 and at 17 became the youngest snowboarder to win a gold medal at the Olympics. She's also the reigning World, Olympic and X Games champion in the halfpipe. One who could challenge her is 17-year-old prodigy ONO Mitsuki of Japan.

The final in the men's halfpipe on Thursday features a loaded field including Australia's Scotty James and the Japan contingent of Yuto Totsuka, Ayumu Hirano and Ruka Hirano vying for gold in an event that historically has been dominated by American Shaun White, who at the advanced snowboarding age of 35 will be vying to become the first snowboarder to win four Olympic gold medals.

Sunday, Feb. 6, is the men's slopestyle final, where Red Gerard and Dusty Henricksen will look to keep the United States' winning streak alive. The Americans took gold in the two previous Games (including Gerard's in 2018) but that won't stop a field that includes Canada's Mark McMorris and Norway's Marcus Kleveland from challenging them for the top spot on the podium.

Other finals to watch for this week include the women's slopestyle and men's singles luge (Sunday), the women's freeski big air (Monday), mixed doubles curling (Tuesday) and the 10km event in women's cross-country skiing (Thursday).

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