2026 WWK SCHWAIGER & PARTNER FIM SPEEDWAY WORLD CUP SEMI-FINAL 1 – LANDSHUT – BURB'S BRIEFING

Hello and welcome to Burb's Briefing! Here is some information and a few talking points which may assist your coverage of 2026 WWK Schwaiger & Partner FIM Speedway World Cup Semi-Final 1 – Landshut ...

SWC REVAMPED FOR 2026

- The FIM Speedway World Cup – the sport's original world team competition – returns to the calendar for the first time since it was staged in Wroclaw in 2023.
- Currently, the competition takes place every three years, with the FIM Speedway of Nations staged during the two seasons in between. The next SWC is therefore scheduled for 2029.
- The SON is a pairs format, featuring teams of two starters and one reserve rider. For the SWC, countries track four starters and one reserve – raising their teams from three riders for the SON to five for the SWC.
- A major change to the sport's world team championships for 2026, sees the SWC action take place across three different countries – Germany, Latvia and Poland.
- For the past four years, the SWC or SON was always staged across a single week at one venue, with Torun hosting both Semi-Finals, SON2 for the sport's under-21 teams and the SON Final.
- The new format ensures there will be a home team competing in every SWC event, with Germany riding in Landshut on Friday, Latvia racing in Riga at Semi-Final 2 on August 7 and Poland seeded through to the BOLL FIM Speedway World Cup Final – Warsaw as host nation on August 29.
- Joining the Poles in the Final is Australia, who qualified as winners of the 2025 FIM Speedway of Nations Final in Torun. They are seeking their first SWC gold medal since the 2002 competition.
- Meanwhile, reigning champions Poland go into a huge Final at Warsaw's PGE Narodowy, bidding to win a record-extending 10th world title in front of what could be a circa 50,000-strong crowd at the biggest world team final for generations.
- Semi-Final 1 sees Germany take on Great Britain, Czech Republic and tournament debutants Ukraine, with Semi-Final 2 featuring Latvia, Denmark, Sweden and SWC newcomers Norway. The winner of each Semi-Final joins the Final line-up.

WHERE?

- Landshut's OneSolar Arena made a popular return to the Speedway GP calendar in 2024 – the first time it had hosted a round since its only previous SGP event in 1997.
- The 1997 edition did not run too smoothly as it was postponed due to heavy rain on Saturday, July 5, before being staged on Sunday, July 6, with Danish legend Hans Nielsen topping the podium ahead of his fellow countryman Brian Andersen in second and third-placed American legend Greg Hancock, who went on to win the first of his four Speedway GP World Championships that year.
- Things went much more smoothly in 2024, with the OneSolar Arena packed for Germany's biggest speedway event. There was a Danish winner once again, with Mikkel Michelsen topping the podium for his first-ever Speedway GP win. Poland's Bartosz Zmarzlik was second and Australia's Jack Holder took third place.
- The 2025 Speedway GP in Landshut was won by Bartosz Zmarzlik, with Britain's Dan Bewley second and Latvia's Andzejs Lebedevs achieving his first-ever SGP podium in third.
- This year is the first time Landshut has staged two nights of back-to-back FIM Speedway action with SWC Semi-Final 1 on Friday and the WWK Schwaiger & Partner FIM Speedway GP of Germany – Landshut on Saturday.
- The OneSolar Arena was constructed in just 350 days between August 29, 1974 and August 17, 1975, with the first meeting taking place in September 1975.
- The Bavarian venue is located 10 kilometres from the centre of Landshut and around an hour's drive from Munich, with Munich Airport just half an hour away. Landshut also has an airfield, located next to the stadium.
- Landshut took over as FIM Speedway GP of Germany host from Teterow's Bergring Arena, which staged six Speedway GPs from 2016-2023 – missing the 2020 and 2021 series due to the pandemic.
- With the German speedway leagues struggling for clubs and badly hampered by the pandemic, the Landshut Devils took the brave step of entering the Polish Second Division in 2021, winning promotion to the First Division at the first attempt. The move was incredibly bold given that some of their early matches were raced under heavy Covid-19 crowd restrictions.
- Landshut was forced to drop down to Poland's National League – formerly known as the Second Division – for the 2024 season after the PGE Ekstraliga took over the First Division, rebranding it as Metalkas 2. Ekstraliga. The league is now closed to non-Polish clubs.

WHEN?

- Practice: Friday, May 1 - 12:00 CEST
- WWK Schwaiger & Partner FIM SWC Semi-Final 1 – Landshut: Friday, May 1 - 19:00 CEST

FIM JURY

REFEREE: Pawel Slupski (Poland)

JURY PRESIDENT: Armando Castagna (Italy)

FMNR REPRESENTATIVE: Christian Froschauer (Germany)

RACE DIRECTOR: Phil Morris (Great Britain)

PLENTY IN RESERVE

- Team managers have selected five riders for Friday's Semi-Final – four starters and one substitute at No.5.
- Teams can deploy their No.5 as a replacement at any time, handing them up to six rides – five regular races, plus one as a tactical substitute if the team falls six or more points behind the leading nation.
- While teams have the option to select their weakest rider at No.5, keeping them on hand to cover for injuries or riders struggling for form, some managers opt to track one of their strongest stars in this position.
- This gives them the option to track one of their big hitters when they feel it would be most advantageous – perhaps in a race they are likely to win or to replace a weaker teammate struggling for points.
- German captain Kai Huckenbeck, Czech skipper Jan Kvech and Ukrainian captain Marko Levishyn all take on this role and could pose a tactical headache for rival nations.
- Meanwhile, Great Britain manager Oliver Allen has opted to name 16-year-old Will Cairns in the No.5 role, handing his more experienced stars the guaranteed starts and a more consistent one ride apiece within every block of four heats.
- Which approach will pay off?

TEAM NOTES

GREAT BRITAIN

- Great Britain bids to lift the modern-day Ove Fundin Trophy for the first time this week as they seek their first world title over the four-team format since their FIM Speedway World Team Cup win at Bradford in 1989.
- Their silver-medal success at the 2023 SWC Final in Wroclaw was their first medal outside of Great Britain over the four-team format since England won bronze at the 1992 FIM Speedway World Team Cup Final in Kumla, Sweden – a gap of 31 years.
- But their current generation of stars has become the nation's most successful group of riders for three decades.
- Robert Lambert, Dan Bewley and Tom Brennan, who all race for the Lions this weekend, ended GB's 32-year wait for a world team title when they triumphed at the 2021 FIM Speedway of Nations Final in Manchester.
- The trio repeated the feat at the 2024 SON Final, also in Manchester, but the Lions had to make do with fifth place at the 2025 SON Final in Torun, which saw Bewley crash out.
- Lambert, Bewley and Brennan are joined by GB debutants Leon Flint and Will Cairns in Semi-Final 1.
- Flint has raced for host club Landshut in Poland's National League since last year, while Cairns comes into the side as a late call-up following an injury for initial pick Adam Ellis in Gniezno, Poland last Sunday.
- Great Britain boss Oliver Allen initially named a seven-rider squad but was forced to add Cairns and another 16-year-old sensation Cooper Rushen to it earlier this week due to injuries to Ellis and Charles Wright.
- Allen leads GB into his first SWC or SON event as sole team manager, having served as joint boss with close friend Simon Stead since September 2019. The Sheffield team manager has stepped down due to family and business commitments.

CZECH REPUBLIC

- The Czech team could prove to be dark horses in Landshut as a young side appears to be growing in stature by the year.
- They have a potent threat at No.5 in Jan Kvech, who has spent the past two seasons in Speedway GP and lines up as SGP second substitute for 2026. He has been named as FIM Speedway GP of Czech Republic – Prague wild card for May 23.
- Kvech is joined in the side by Prague teammate Adam Bubba Bednar, who could be a real challenger to his status as the nation's No.1. Bednar finished fourth in the 2025 SGP2 series, just a point short of the FIM Speedway Under-21 World Championship podium.
- Hard-charging Vaclav Milik also joins the side – the most recent Czech rider to reach the Speedway GP podium, when he finished third in Prague in 2017.
- Milik is the only member of the 2026 team to have previously appeared in an SWC Final, having raced at the 2013 event in Prague, which the Czechs were seeded into as host nation. They finished fourth.
- A secret weapon for the Czechs could be Daniel Klima, who is developing rapidly after joining British Championship club Plymouth. Klima's high-scoring heroics at reserve in Devon could have European clubs on alert for his signature.
- Their side is completed by 17-year-old Adam Nejezchleba, whose name translates as 'no bread' in English. He rose to eighth place in the 2025 SGP3 Final in Prague on a 250cc bike and now moves on to senior action on a 500cc machine.

GERMANY

- After failing to reach the Race Off when they finished last at 2023 SWC Semi-Final 1 in Wroclaw, Germany will fancy their chances of mounting a Final bid on home soil.
- The national squad was energised by their under-21 team's shock FIM Speedway of Nations – SON2 win in Torun last October – the country's first world team title at any level.
- Norick Blodorn combined with Mario Hausl to great effect in Poland, and both are selected for Landshut on Friday.
- Blodorn is set for double duty this weekend – he also serves as WWK Schwaiger & Partner FIM German Speedway GP wild card on Saturday. Landshut rider Kevin Wolbert is listed as track reserve.
- Hausl, who is also a citizen of the Seychelles, makes his senior debut for Germany on his home track. He will bid to put his local knowledge to good use. The Munich-born racer is also competing for Glasgow in the British Championship for 2026.
- The team is captained by Kai Huckenbeck, who is ready to jump into action at any time as the team's No.5.
- Huckenbeck spent the past two seasons in Speedway GP but lost his spot for 2026 after finishing 15th in 2025. He was named as third substitute for the 2026 championship.

UKRAINE

- Ukraine makes its first-ever FIM SWC Semi-Final appearance after finishing fourth at 2025 FIM SON Semi-Final 2 to qualify. They only just missed out on Final qualification, losing out to Latvia in a Final Qualifier.
- It's an historic time for Ukraine as the nation's No.1 Nazar Parnitskyi becomes the country's first-ever full-time Speedway GP rider on Saturday.
- He was due to start 2026 as SGP first substitute, but he was promoted into the full line-up when triple world champion Tai Woffinden withdrew to continue his gradual recovery from the injuries he suffered in March 2025.
- Parnitskyi was partnered by captain Marko Levishyn in Torun last year, and he steps into the No.5 position, potentially offering the team an interesting tactical option.
- Roman Kapustin didn't take a ride in 2025 SON Semi-Final 2 and will hope to make his Ukrainian senior debut after impressing in this year's Argentinian Championship, winning round 10 on his way to fifth place overall.
- Stanislav Melnychuk is the team's elder statesman. He was part of the Ukrainian team that won the European Pairs Championship in their main speedway city Rivne in 2012.
- With the country still gripped by war following Russia's invasion in 2022, Ukraine's riders all train and race in Poland, and it's clear they have made the most of this opportunity as they make history this weekend.

WHERE TO WATCH

Fans can catch every moment of Speedway GP and SWC action live on global broadcaster Warner Bros. Discovery's streaming platforms HBO Max or discovery+. Coverage of every Speedway GP Qualifying session is also available on these platforms.

HBO Max is available across Europe, with FIM-MOTO TV providing coverage around the world.

ACROSS EUROPE: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

BRITAIN: Live on HBO Max and TNT Sports

POLAND: Live on Eurosport 3, HBO Max and Player

SWEDEN: Live on Kanal 9 and HBO Max

DENMARK: Live on 6'eren and HBO Max

AUSTRALIA: Live on Fox Sports

GERMANY: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

ACROSS THE BALTICS: Live on Go3, TV3 Sport and HBO Max

CZECHIA: Live on CT Sport and HBO Max

SLOVAKIA: Live on STVR Sport and HBO Max

USA/Canada: Live on Racer

REST OF THE WORLD: Live on FIM-MOTO TV