

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

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Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games **Figure Skating Ice Dance Free Dance**

The figure skating competition at the 2014 Olympic Winter Games continued in Sochi, Russia, on Monday with the Free Dance.

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) dance off with Olympic gold

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) danced off with the gold medal at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games at the Iceberg Skating Palace on Monday, winning the first Olympic Ice Dance gold for the USA. 2010 Olympic champions Tessa Virtue/Scott Moir of Canada earned the silver medal and Russia's Elena Ilinykh/Nikita Katsalapov claimed the bronze.

Performing to "Sherazade", Davis/White impressed the audience and judges with their difficult lifts and fast footwork. The 2013 world champions picked up a level four for all their elements. Their free dance score of 116.63 points was not only a personal best but another highest score as was their total score of 195.52 points. "We're so excited we're kind of in shock a little," Davis said. "I'm not sure what we're feeling. It kind of all came together for us and we're so pleased to be here. We're kind of in disbelief", she added. "It felt like we had done everything we could from the beginning of this competition, in practice, team event, this event. And 17 years of hard work was justified. To come away with a gold medal is amazing", White noted.

Virtue/Moir's dance to music by Alexander Glazunov and Alexander Scriabin was highlighted by innovative lifts and flowing step sequences. The Canadians picked up a level four for all elements as well and scored 114.66 points, a personal best in the Free Dance and 190.99 points overall. But it was not enough to overtake Davis/White, who led following the short dance. "This is the biggest stage in the world so, of course, it's stressful. It's a pretty ambitious program, and it's a loaded program, and I think we did it pretty well. We felt immense pressure. We trained 17 years for this moment," Virtue commented. "It was what we wanted to do today. That was our best performance of the year for that program. That program was our baby and it's special for us to perform it for the last time," Moir explained.

Ilinykh/Katsalapov shone in their dramatic interpretation of "Swan Lake" and produced level-four lifts, twizzles, a level-four diagonal step sequence and combination spin. The European silver medalists earned 110.44 points and accumulated 183.48 points, which was a new personal best as well. "At first I didn't even realize that the program was over. There was a pause and only then did I understand that we did it. We skated our Olympic Games and now we have our bronze", Katsalapov told the press. "We went to sleep thinking about the Olympics home in Sochi and it is great thing, it was not pressuring us. It all worked out for us tonight. I am overwhelmed with emotions", Ilinykh said.

Nathalie Pechalat/Fabian Bourzat (FRA) put out an enjoyable performance entitled "Le Petit Prince et Sa Rose" and remained in fourth place with 177.22 points. 2013 World bronze medalists Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev (RUS) finished fifth with 172.92 points ahead of European Champions Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte (ITA, 169.50 points).

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The figure skating competition at the Sochi 2014 Olympic Winter Games continues Wednesday with the Ladies Short Program. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and www.sochi2014.com

For further information please contact:

Selina Vanier, ISU Media Coordinator
+7 938 454 21 32 (cell phone)
email: vanier@isu.ch