

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Day 3

Lausanne, 14 February 2003

## **ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships** **Beijing (CHN) 12-16 February**

The 2003 Four Continents Championships in Beijing, China, continued Friday with the Ladies' Free Program and the Free Dance.

### **Ladies, Free Program**

The Ladies' event concluded with the final Free Skating. Japan's Ladies were able to confirm their strong showing in the Short Program by sweeping the podium today.

The three Japanese had drawn to skate one after another in the final flight. Yukari Nakano was the first to take the ice. The reigning World junior silver medalist opened her program to French ballet music with a triple Axel, but the jump was under-rotated. The 17-year-old went on to complete a triple flip-triple toeloop combination, four more triples and good spins, she only missed her triple loop. Nakano scored marks up to 5.8 for technical merit and up to 5.7 for presentation. "I'm very happy that it's all over now!" the skater exclaimed. "I felt pressure because I had done a clean Short Program. I was afraid of the Free Program. I lost speed towards the end because of that. I skated first in the last group and therefore I felt nervous." Shizuka Arakawa, who stood in second place following the Short Program was next. She had planned two triple-triple combinations, but did a triple Lutz-double toeloop and a triple Salchow-double loop instead. Her routine to the "Titanic" soundtrack also featured a triple flip, a second triple Lutz and a triple toeloop-double toeloop combination, but her loop was off-balance and she just held on to it. Overall, the Asian Games Champions seemed a little slow. The judges awarded her marks ranging from 5.4 to 5.7 for technical merit and from 5.3 to 5.7 for presentation. She took the lead temporarily, but overnight leader Fumie Suguri was still to come. "I'm not too happy with this performance. I was nervous and tired. I wanted to go for two triple-triple combinations, but I didn't do any of them", Arakawa told the press.

Suguri had to overcome a shaky start when she stepped out of her triple Lutz (in combination with double toeloop), but she recovered quickly to produce a triple flip, triple-double toeloop and good spins. She hit also the triple loop and Salchow, but doubled the second Lutz. Her elegant program to a selection from Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" included nice transitions between the elements and looked polished. It earned her marks from 5.3 to 5.7 for technical merit and from 5.5 to 5.9 for presentation. The Japanese Champion had recaptured the title she had won in 2001 for the first time. "I didn't really think about the title, I wanted to do what I can do right now and I tried my best. It wasn't yet a 100 percent of what I can do, so I'm not too satisfied", Suguri explained. "This was an important competition, but not yet the final goal for me. Worlds are the final goal, but this event was a step towards it."

Arakawa had captured the silver medal, as she did last year, while Nakano took her first medal at an ISU senior Championship.

World Junior Champion Ann Patrice McDonough (USA) had a few shaky landings and doubled the Salchow to remain in fourth place.

### **Ice Dancing, Free Dance**

The evening finished on a high note with top class Ice Dancing event.

First to skate in the final flight were Canada's Marie-France Dubreuil/Patrice Lauzon who charmed the audience with their romantic routine named "Dance with my heart". Then it was the turn of Naomi Lang/Peter Tchernyshev (USA), who stood in second place after the Compulsory and Original Dances. The defending champions delivered a powerful dance to the rock ballad "Still Loving You" by The Scorpions. Their dance featured original lifts that drew special applause from the crowd. Lang/Tchernyshev earned marks up to 5.7 for technical merit and up to 5.8 for presentation. They would have to wait and see where that would get them. "I feel a little bit under the weather, so I was nervous about holding up to the whole program, but I think I did my best. I did the whole thing without any problems", Lang said. "I think we skated better than at Nationals. We have another few weeks, almost a month to prepare for Worlds, and then we're going to be on the top of the game", her partner added.

Megan Wing/Aaron Lowe (CAN) had opted for a completely different theme, skating to a Beatles Medley in "flower power" costumes.

Then it was the turn of reigning World Junior Champions Tanith Belbin/Benjamin Agosto. The young American couple excited the crowd with an entertaining Elvis Presley Medley. Agosto, dressed in white with sparkling stones, and Belbin in a black costume really got into their respective roles. They performed a difficult dance combination spin and innovative lifts in interesting positions. The program was packed with footwork at high

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speed and earned them technical marks ranging from 5.4 to 5.9 and presentation marks from 5.6 to 5.9. That meant they moved ahead of their team mates and beat them for the first time in competition.

“We did it really, really well. We didn’t know how to feel going into it, we just wanted to go and do our best, doing it like we’ve been training it so many times every day”, Belbin commented. “It is great to beat two teams that we’ve never beaten in the past including our National Champions. We feel that at our Nationals we had a really poor performance in our Free Dance. It feels very good for us to be able to show how we can perform.”

Belbin/Agosto took the lead at this point, but one couple was still to come. Overnight leaders Shae-Lynn Bourne/Victor Kraatz of Canada had drawn to skate last. They were dressed in black and purple. Their program “Adagio of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”, based on Tomasino Albinoni’s classical piece, captivated the crowd from the first moment on. It was program that never ceased to build, highlighted by intricate footwork with many changes of holds, difficult lifts and finishing with an interesting serpentine lift that featured various positions. The dance also included the couple’s trademark hydro-blading moves. Then the marks came up: 5.7 to 5.9s for technical merit and 5.8 to five 6.0s for presentation. Bourne/Kraatz had won their third Four Continents title after 1999 and 2001. Belbin/Agosto took the silver as last year, while Lang/Tchernyshev had to settle for the bronze this time.

“It felt great”, a delighted Shae-Lynn Bourne told the press. “This whole week has been great, starting from day one with the compulsory. Today, the crowd got into our program, and the judges obviously enjoyed it with five 6.0s. That is very exciting. It gives us more confidence going into the Worlds in Washington.” Kraatz explained: “Tonight’s performance was really important. The way we skated and that we skated it clean and the way we received the marks. Having skated great here is a good boost for the World Championships in Washington D.C.”

Dubreuil/Lauzon finished fourth while last year’s bronze medalists Wing/Lowe came in 5<sup>th</sup>.

Natalie Buck/Trent Nelson-Bond (AUS) withdrew before the Free Dance due to illness. They had been in 12<sup>th</sup> place after the Original Dance.

The 2003 Four Continents Championships will continue tomorrow with the Mens’ Free Program.

Results are attached. Live results are available from [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)

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2003 Four Continents Championships - Ladies					
FPl.	Name	Nat.	Points	SP	FS
1	Fumie SUGURI	JPN	1.5	1	1
2	Shizuka ARAKAWA	JPN	3.0	2	2
3	Yukari NAKANO	JPN	4.5	3	3
4	Ann Patrice McDONOUGH	USA	6.0	4	4
5	Jennifer ROBINSON	CAN	9.0	8	5
6	Dan FANG	CHN	9.0	6	6
7	Amber CORWIN	USA	9.5	5	7
8	Joannie ROCHETTE	CAN	11.5	7	8
9	Anastasia GIMAZETDINOVA	UZB	14.5	11	9
10	Miriam MANZANO	AUS	15.0	10	10
11	Siyin SUN	CHN	16.5	9	12
12	Annie BELLEMARE	CAN	18.0	14	11
13	Bit-Na PARK	KOR	19.0	12	13
14	Yan LIU	CHN	20.5	13	14
15	Joanne CARTER	AUS	23.0	16	15
16	Shirene HUMAN	RSA	24.5	17	16
17	Young-Eun CHOI	KOR	24.5	15	17
18	Sun-Bin LEE	KOR	27.5	19	18
19	Sarah-Yvonne PRYTULA	AUS	28.0	18	19
20	Ana Cecilia CANTU	MEX	30.0	20	20
21	Jenna-Anne BUYS	RSA	32.5	23	21
22	Diane CHEN	TPE	34.0	24	22
23	Abigail PIETERSEN	RSA	34.0	22	23
24	Gladys OROZCO	MEX	34.5	21	24
25	Shirley Hsin Hui TSAI	TPE		25	
26	Imelda-Rose HEGERTY	NZL		26	
27	Ingrid ROTH	MEX		27	

Ice Dancing						
FPl.	Name	Nat.	Points	CD	OD	FD
1	Shae-Lynn BOURNE / Victor KRAATZ	CAN	2.0	1	1	1
2	Tanith BELBIN / Benjamin AGOSTO	USA	4.8	4	2	2
3	Naomi LANG / Peter TCHERNYSHEV	USA	5.6	2	3	3
4	Marie-France DUBREUIL / Patrice LAUZON	CAN	7.6	3	4	4
5	Megan WING / Aaron LOWE	CAN	10.0	5	5	5
6	Melissa GREGORY / Denis PETUKHOV	USA	12.0	6	6	6
7	Weina ZHANG / Xiaoming CAO	CHN	14.0	7	7	7
8	Rie ARIKAWA / Kenji MIYAMOTO	JPN	17.0	9	9	8
9	Nozomi WATANABE / Akiyuki KIDO	JPN	17.0	8	8	9
10	Fang YANG / Chongbo GAO	CHN	20.0	10	10	10
11	Xiaoyang YU / Chen WANG	CHN	22.6	11	12	11
12	Olga AKIMOVA / Ramil SARKULOV	UZB	24.6	12	13	12
R	Natalie BUCK / Trent NELSON-BOND	AUS		13	11	