

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

Media Advisory

March 1, 2003

2003 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final St. Petersburg, Russia

Day 2

The 2003 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in St. Petersburg, Russia, continued Saturday with the second Free Skating (B).

Competing in the Final are the top six skaters and couples of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series. The skaters collected points in two Grand Prix events in order to proceed to the Final. The athletes skated in the reverse order of yesterday's results.

Ice Dancing, Free Dance B

The Ice Dancers started the competition. Irina Lobacheva/Ilya Averbukh of Russia took the gold and their first victory in the Grand Prix Final. Tatiana Navka/Roman Kostomarov danced to the silver while Albena Denkova/Maxim Staviski captured the bronze medal. Both teams competed in their first Grand Prix Final.

Lobacheva/Averbukh got the crowd going with their entertaining Rock'n'Roll routine. The program contained daring lifts and moves as well as fast paced footwork. The reigning World Champions scored marks ranging from 5.7 to 5.9 for technical merit/required elements and from 5.8 to one 6.0 for presentation. "It was harder to skate than at Europeans, so I think the program at Europeans was better", Averbukh explained. "The 6.0s we received there felt a bit better, because we knew that the Russian judge wasn't on the panel and couldn't have awarded one of them. Actually, since the judging is anonymous, there are more 6.0s. This was a tough competition, but a good practice for Worlds."

Navka/Kostomarov skated their oriental Free Dance to "The Feeling Begins" by Peter Gabriel with a lot of expression and elegance. The European bronze medalists impressed especially with their rotational lifts. Their marks went up to 5.8 for technical merit/required elements and up to 5.9 for presentation. "I think this is our best Free Program so far in this season. It was so easy to skate. The audience was amazing", Navka told the press. Her partner added: "We are very excited to have skated in this Final here in St. Petersburg. Now we're going to work hard and focus on Worlds."

Denkova/Staviyski also put out a strong performance. The European silver medalists' Egyptian program featured interesting lifts, intricate footwork and a nice dance spin. The performance earned them marks as high as 5.8 for both technical merit and presentation.

"I hurt my groin in practice the other day, and I felt some pain during the program", Staviyski revealed. "We have new costumes that have been designed in St. Petersburg. The first costumes somehow didn't work out so well. They sent the sketches via internet and we sent them back with our comments. This time, we travelled to St. Petersburg one week before this event, and they took measures. I think we'll keep these costumes for Worlds as well."

The other couples also skated very well. Grushina/Goncharov (UKR) remained in fourth position and Chait/Sakhnovski (ISR) were fifth. Dubreuil/Lauzon (CAN) finished sixth.

Ladies, Free Skating B

In the Ladies event, Sasha Cohen (USA) fought back after losing the first Free Skating to Irina Slutskaya (RUS) to win the title in her first Grand Prix Final. Slutskaya settled for the silver and the bronze medal went to her teammate Viktoria Volchkova.

Cohen reeled off a triple Lutz-double toeloop, another triple Lutz and a triple Flip in the first minute of her program to Sergei Rakhmaninov's Second Piano Concerto. The 18-year-old then singled the loop, but recovered to produce three more triple jumps, a double Axel and excellent spins and spirals.

Cohen's marks went up to 5.8 for technical merit and to 5.9 for presentation. "Tatiana (Tarasova) told me to do triple-double, and she's my coach. I need to listen to her, so I did that. For this competition, I didn't need to do more than that", Cohen said when asked about not going for her planned triple Lutz-

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

triple toeloop combination.

Slutskaya started with a triple loop and a high triple Lutz-double toeloop combination into her "La Traviata" routine, but she doubled her next two elements, a Salchow and the second Lutz. The reigning World Champion rallied back to land a triple flip, Salchow and toeloop and showed a combination spin with many changes of position, but overall she looked somewhat slow. The judges awarded the Muscovite marks from 5.6 to 5.8 for both technical merit and presentation, which was not enough to beat Cohen. "Emotionally, it was very difficult to skate for her", coach Zhanna Gromova said. "Yesterday she did very well, and today, after all this stress, she didn't have more left than what she put out today."

Volchkova had some ups and downs in her performance as well. She landed a triple Lutz-double toeloop combination and three more triples, but she doubled the Flip and she stepped out of her triple loop. The 20-year-old received marks up to 5.6 for technical merit and up to 5.7 for presentation of her program to the soundtrack of "Gone with the Wind."

"I felt much better today than yesterday, I had more energy", Volchkova commented. "I like to skate this program very much. We made some changes to the old program to improve it."

Japan's Shizuka Arakawa produced a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and four other triple jumps to move up to fourth place. She was ranked third in Free Skating B, but she was too far behind to make the podium. Elena Liashenko (UKR) finished fifth, while Four Continents Champion Fumie Suguri (JPN) remained in sixth place.

Men, Free Skating B

Evgeni Plushenko performed an outstanding Free Program to skate to the gold in the Mens' event. The 2001 World Champion had dominated the competition from the first day and pulled off a spectacular quadruple-triple toeloop-triple loop combination, six solid triple jumps including a triple Axel-triple toeloop combination as well as sparkling footwork in his program named "St. Petersburg 300". The crowd roared for every jump he landed. Each element, each move came exactly on the beat of the music. The 20-year-old scored the highest marks of the entire event: one 5.8 and nine 5.9s for technical merit, four 5.9s and six 6.0s for presentation. "The best thing today was to do the quadruple-triple combination again", Plushenko said. "I felt calm and confident out there. It was great to skate at home. I think I never had so many 6.0s before. Now there are two weeks left to prepare for Worlds. I will train hard for it. I hope to do the combination again and maybe another quad", he announced.

Ilya Klimkin of Russia presented a brand new program, "Mr. Diesel", that contained many difficult linking elements and moves. The Muscovite opened his program with a triple Axel-triple toeloop combination and thrilled the crowd with his triple Salchow out of a camel spin and his trademark cantilever. The original performance earned him marks up to 5.7 for technical merit and up to 5.8 for presentation, and he captured the silver, his first medal in the Grand Prix Final. "It's a new program, I've just completed it a few weeks ago", Klimkin said about his program. "It's not quite ready yet. The steps and spins were fine, but I still missed some jumps. It's a story about a man who is the devil. I have to finish this program and to improve my jumps for Worlds."

Frenchman Brian Joubert clinched the bronze medal in his first Grand Prix Final with a solid program to "The Untouchables" that featured a quadruple toeloop and five triple jumps. He missed his second quadruple toeloop and his Lutz, but he pushed through to the end. "I'm quite happy with my program tonight. It's not bad for my first Grand Prix Final", Joubert said. "I did a mistake on the triple Lutz, but it doesn't matter so much. Each competition that I enter, I learn from. Here, I learned how to deal with the stress and the difficulties of my program."

Alexander Abt (RUS) made a few errors to slip to fourth. Chengjiang Li (CHN) was ranked fourth in the Free Skating, but remained in fifth place. His compatriot Min Zhang landed three quadruple jumps, but missed some triples to stay in sixth place.

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

Pairs, Free Skating B

The Pairs concluded today's competition. Maria Petrova/Alexei Tikhonov (RUS), who stood in third place after the first day, skated first of the leading couples. Tikhonov doubled the opening side by side triple toeloop, while his partner landed a triple. Unfazed, the team went on to complete a double Axel-double toeloop sequence, a triple twist and excellent lifts. Petrova also landed a high throw triple Salchow, but she two-footed the throw triple loop. The 2002 World Champions had chosen last year's program to "Chess", but had changed the choreography. Their marks ranged from 5.4 to 5.6 for technical merit and from 5.5 to 5.7 for presentation. "We skated pretty well today, the whole program felt strong", Tikhonov said. "I think the program worked very well for us with the changes we did, and we like it a lot. We're not sure yet which program we'll skate at Worlds – this (Chess) or the other (Symphonic Dances). We'll decide in the next five days."

Reigning World Champions Xue Shen/Hongbo Zhao of China were next. Shen fell on the toe in the double Axel-triple toeloop sequence, but she recovered quickly to hit a huge throw triple Salchow. The dynamic program to "Turandot" also featured a triple twist and a side by side double Axel out of a spread eagle position, but Shen also stepped out of the throw triple loop. The couple received marks up to 5.8 for both technical merit and presentation. They had to wait and see what the next competitors would do.

Overnight leaders Tatiana Totmianina/Maxim Marinin (RUS) were greeted with thunderous applause. The home crowd started to clap along the beat of the "Cotton Club" music immediately. The team from St. Petersburg pulled off a side by side triple Salchow, a triple twist, a stunning throw triple loop, and their only glitch came when Marinin stumbled on the triple toeloop. The European Champions finished on a high note with an effortless throw triple Salchow and a nice carry lift. When their marks came up, they knew they had the title and beat Shen/Zhao for the first time in competition.

Totmianina/Marinin got marks from 5.7 to 5.9 for technical merit and all 5.9s for presentation. "I'm completely tired, but I'm so satisfied and happy", Marinin commented. "We worked so hard for it. It was so important for us to skate well at home, in St. Petersburg. It's a very important step towards Worlds. I didn't make my favourite mistake (referring to the triple toeloop), but in the last moment I stepped out. Somehow I was too nervous and tired."

Shen was a little disappointed. "We had some mistakes today. We felt really worn out. After I fell on the triple toe, I tried not to think about it and to focus on the rest of the program. We had to continue. I'm a bit disappointed, but I tried my best. Now we want to get more energy and to prepare well for Worlds."

Petrova/Tikhonov took the bronze. Julia Obertas/Alexei Sokolov (RUS) finished fourth in their first Grand Prix Final. Poland's Dorota Zagorska/Mariusz Siudek came in fifth ahead of Anabelle Langlois/Patrice Archetto (CAN).

The 2003 ISU Grand Prix Final will conclude tomorrow with the Exhibition Gala.

Full results are also directly available on the ISU Internet site on www.isu.org

Patricia Mayor, ISU Sports Coordinator Figure Skating
Tel: +41 78 710 0672
E-mail: mayor@isu.ch

Ilia Bronski, Press Officer
Tel: +7 812 118 52 05
Fax: +7 812 118 65 98

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

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final St. Petersburg, Russia

Ice Dance

FPI.	Name	Nat.	TFP	OD	FDA	FDB
1	Irina Lobacheva/Ilia Averbukh	RUS	2.0	1	1	1
2	Tatiana Navka/Roman Kostomarov	RUS	4.0	2	2	2
3	Albena Denkova/Maxim Staviyski	BUL	6.0	3	3	3
4	Elena Grushina/Ruslan Goncharov	UKR	8.0	4	4	4
5	Galit Chait/Sergei Sakhnovski	ISR	10.0	5	5	5
6	Marie-France Dubreuil/Patrice Lauzon	CAN	12.0	6	6	6

Ladies

FPI.	Name	Nat.	TFP	SP	FSA	FSB
1	Sasha COHEN	USA	2.6	1	2	1
2	Irina SLUTSKAYA	RUS	3.4	2	1	2
3	Viktoriya VOLCHKOVA	RUS	7.0	3	3	4
4	Shizuka ARAKAWA	JPN	7.8	6	4	3
5	Elena LIASHENKO	UKR	9.6	4	5	5
6	Fumie SUGURI	JPN	11.6	5	6	6

Men

FPI.	Name	Nat.	TFP	SP	FSA	FSB
1	Evgeni Plushenko	RUS	2.0	1	1	1
2	Ilia Klimkin	RUS	4.0	2	2	2
3	Brian Joubert	FRA	7.0	4	4	3
4	Alexander Abt	RUS	8.0	3	3	5
5	Chengjiang Li	CHN	9.4	6	5	4
6	Min Zhang	CHN	11.6	5	6	6

Pairs

Pl.	Name	Nat.	TFP	SP	FSA	FSB
1	Tatiana Totmianina/Maxim Marinin	RUS	2.0	1	1	1
2	Xue Shen/Hongbo Zhao	CHN	4.0	2	2	2
3	Maria Petrova/Alexei Tikhonov	RUS	6.0	3	3	3
4	Julia Obertas/Alexei Sokolov	RUS	8.0	4	4	4
5	Dorota Zagorska/Mariusz Siudek	POL	10.0	5	5	5
6	Anabelle Langlois/Patrice Archetto	CAN	12.0	6	6	6