

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

Lillehammer 2016 Winter Youth Olympic Games Figure Skating Review

76 athletes from 24 countries competed in the Figure Skating competitions between February 13 and 20, 2016. Five medal events including the Ladies, Men, Pair Skating, Ice Dance and Mixed NOC Team event took place at the Hamar Olympic Amphitheatre.

Out of the 24 Figure Skating medals awarded, nine (5 gold, 1 silver, 3 bronze) were won by Russian skaters. Latvia ranks second in the medal table with three medals (2 silver, 1 bronze) and China (1 gold, 1 bronze) the Czech Republic (2 silver) and USA (1 gold, 1 silver) tallied two medals each. Japan (gold), Canada (Bronze), France (silver), Hungary (bronze), Kazakhstan (bronze) and Ukraine (silver) all received one medal.

Pair Skating

The Pairs were the first to open the Figure Skating Competition on February 13 with the Short Program and continued with the Free Skating on February 15. Ranked second after the Short Program, ISU Junior Grand Prix Final gold medalists Ekaterina Borisova and partner Dmitry Sopot (RUS) turned in an almost-flawless free skate performance to the music from classic movie Lawrence of Arabia scoring 168.66 points "We were nervous in the beginning, before the start. The program was not as clean as it could be, but we did better than we thought," Sopot said.

Although the silver ISU Junior Grand Prix Final medalists Anna Duskova and Martin Bidar from Czech Republic went into their Free Skating program ranked first, they made several mistakes and got 2 points deduction. With a final score of 166.13 they took silver in Hamar "but we feel happy because we got silver. It was not perfect, we made mistakes and we are disappointed that we did not do our best."

While another Russian couple, Alina Ustimkina and Nikita Volodin won the bronze medal with 152.77. Canada's Justine Brasseur and Mathieu Ostiguy finished fourth (140.59) and Ying Zhao and Zhong Xie (CHN) finished fourth (139.06).

Men

The Young Olympian Men performed their Short Program on February 13 and concluded their competition on February 15 with the Free Skate. Yamamoto went into the free skate in first place, with a comfortable lead on those chasing him when he stepped onto the ice. The 16-year-old Japanese delivered a smooth performance to clinch the gold medal, with a total score of 215.52. "I had a lot of pressure and going last made me feel even more nervous." Yamamoto said "My parents texted me and they said they were watching back home in Japan, where it is very late at night. My parents are proud of me. One of my aims was to get gold, and I did, but I still wasn't very happy with my performance. I could have done better."

Latvia's Deniss Vasiljevs had the strongest Free Skate and came very close to the gold medal and jumped to second place from third and mined silver with a score of 214.43. The bronze medal went

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to Russia's Dmitri Aliev. He finished fifth in the Short Program but gave the second best performance in the Free Skating raking a total of 209.77 points. Although Canada's Roman Sadovsky was second after the Short Program, a fall on a triple axel cost him and he ended up out of the podium positions in fourth spot. Jun Hwan Cha (KOR) finished fifth with 198.90 points.

Ladies

Finishing fourth in the Short Program on February 14, 2015 Junior Grand Prix gold medalist, Russia's Polina Tsurskaya skated a clean Free and pulled up to finish first with 186.04 points. "I'm very satisfied that I did everything I was supposed to do," she said. And added that she was proud "that my national anthem was playing because of me. Because of my achievements, we did well in the Youth Olympic Games." Maria Sotskova, also from Russia, struggled with a disappointing short program but in an impressive comeback in the Free Skating on February 16 she recovered from eighth position to climb the podium at the Hamar Olympic Amphitheatre to collect the silver medal thanks to a score of 169.50. Sotskova, who also finished in second position behind Tsurskaya at the Junior Grand Final, said "I am really happy, because my performance was not so perfect. I thought I wouldn't take a medal. I'm happy I took silver. I was so nervous, but my family will be very proud."

Kazakhstan's Elizabet Tursynbaeva, who was lying second after the short program, won the bronze medal with 167.88 points. Although her Program Component Score was good, she was weaker on the Technical Element Score and made some mistakes that cost her two deductions. "It was a good experience for me, it was a good competition. I had an injury and I almost couldn't practice. I'm just so happy I won a medal," she said.

Yuna Shiraiwa (JPN), who finished Sunday's short program in first place, missed out on a podium place by 1.22 points (166.66). Latvia's Diana Nikitina finished fifth with 165.60 points.

Ice Dance

On February 16 Anastasia Shpilevaya and Grigory Smirnov (RUS) danced in 10th earning 141.88 points. They had to wait for the US couple Skoptcova and Aleshin in order to know which medal they would get. "It was very hard. We were scared. We didn't want to watch the others. We sat here [in the corridor of the stadium] and didn't watch," Shpilevaya said. "We did it clean and all together, that is what helped us win," Smirnov said. "Coming off the ice we felt relieved."

Silver medalists Chloe Lewis and Logan Bye (USA) were satisfied with their performance cumulating 136.37 points. "[This medal] means so much. Being here is an honor and getting a medal, it definitely inspires us quite a bit. All of our work for the season has paid off, and we'll keep working," Bye said. "We really wanted to [win a] medal. We skated the program that we wanted to skate and it was the best that we have done it yet," Lewis said.

Dancing last among the 12, Russia's Anastasia Skoptcova and Kirill Aleshin knew that a total of 134.62 meant a step down from the second position they had reached after the Short Dance on Sunday. "I'm not that happy with the bronze medal, we could have taken silver or gold," Eighteen year old Aleshin said. "Going last usually isn't that bad, but today it was too much pressure for my partner. We had a fall during one of the elements and that is what cost us one of the [other] medals."

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Canadians Marjorie Lajoie and Zachary Lagha (125.87) were consistent finishing fourth after the Short and Free Dance. Anzhelika Yurchenko and Volodymyr Byelikov (UKR) finished fifth with 114.96 points.

Mixed NOC Team Event

The Figure Skating competition came to an end on February 20 with the mixed NOC team event, a unique format of the Winter Youth Olympic Games in which one man, one lady, one pair and one ice dance couple from different NOCs compete as a team.

Team members cheered in the Kiss and Cry, by the rink boards or in the stands for their teammates. In the end Team Desire composed of Ice Dancers Anastasia Skoptcova / Kirill Aleshin (RUS), Sarah Rose / Joseph Goodpaster (USA), Xiangning Li (CHN) and Dmitri Aliev (RUS) took the team gold medal. "I'm very happy. We had a good team, I'm glad we all did very well. We had a very friendly team," Aliev said. "I felt good going last. I was very focused and that's why I was able to do well." Pairs skater Rose enjoyed the team atmosphere around the rink. "It was great having our teammates to cheer us on," she said. "This is something we don't ordinarily get to do in our sport, and it really adds a fun element to know there are people cheering us on." Her ice partner Goodpaster echoed her thoughts, saying: "It is great to have more teammates for once. We just met them yesterday, but they are all really cool."

The silver medal went to Team Future, composed of Ivan Shmuratko of Ukraine, Latvia's Diana Nikitina, Anna Duskova and Martin Bidar of Czech Republic, and French pair Julia Wagret and Mathieu Couyras. Nikitina was satisfied with her performance in the ladies' singles element of the competition: "It was really good and I did well," she said. "My energy [level] was very high. Being on a team is very, very good. You have big energy and all of the team gives special support. They helped me believe in myself."

Marjorie Lajoie / Zachary Lagha (CAN), Yumeng Gao / Bowen Li (CHN), Fruzsina Medgyesi (HUN) and Deniss Vasiljevs (LAT) competed for Team Discovery and won the bronze medal. After a flawless performance that closed the competition, Vasiljevs said: "This is perfect. We are all so happy, we each did our jobs and did everything we could. We had the perfect Canadian dancers, the wonderful Chinese skaters and the beautiful lady from Hungary. Together we are perfect." Ice dancer Lagha, was also excited about the event. "This is a really good experience," he said. "We are making a lot of friends from other countries and this event encourages us to talk to people we wouldn't normally meet."

Additional information

Results: <http://www.lillehammer2016.com/sportresult/>

Videos available on Olympics YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/olympic>

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