

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2014 **Day One**

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2014 opened in Taipei City, Chinese Taipei, Wednesday with the Short Dance, Pairs and Men's Short Programs. 96 skaters from 15 ISU members have been entered for the Championships.

Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier (CAN) take the lead in Short Dance

Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier of Canada took a narrow lead over Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) in the Short Dance. Alexandra Aldridge/Daniel Eaton (USA) are currently ranked third.

Gilles/Poirier turned in a strong Quickstep and Swing that featured level four twizzles, a level four lift and one level four Finnstep sequence. The Canadians picked up a level three for the side by side diagonal footwork and a level two for the second part of the Finnstep to post a personal best of 62.38 points. "I'd say this is our best performance yet. We've had a little bit of an injury earlier this year, so we've been pushed back a little bit with our training time. We finally feel like we're starting to peak and we're very happy with what we did", Gilles said.

Hubbell/Donohue's dance to Quickstep and Foxtrot by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy was highlighted by a smooth Finnstep pattern (level four) and curve lift, but Hubbell stepped out of the twizzles (level two). The U.S. team still earned a personal best of 61.05 points. "Today's performance was shaky in parts. We obviously made an error during our twizzles sequences. Some things have improved. We got level four on both sides of the Finnstep and we're happy about that. All in all I think that we have improvement to make during our free dance and that's really our strong point. So we're looking forward to tomorrow", Hubbell told the press.

Dancing to Quickstep, Foxtrot and Swing, Aldridge/Eaton collected a level four for three elements and scored a new seasons best of 57.65 points. "Because of the quick turn around from Nationals we could come here and use our great skate and the hype from Nationals to come here and skate to the best of our ability. We feel really fortunate to be here", Aldridge commented.

Kharis Ralph/Asher Hill (CAN) are sitting in fourth at 53.97 points followed by Nicole Orford/Thomas Williams (CAN) and Lynn Kriengkrairut/Logan Giuletti-Smith (USA).

Wenjing Sui/Cong Han (CHN) claim Pairs Short Program

China's Wenjing Sui/Cong Han claimed the Pairs Short Program with a new personal best score. Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) and Tarah Kayne/Daniel O'Shea (USA) are currently sitting in second and third.

Sui/Han delivered an excellent program to "La Strada", reeling off a throw triple flip, triple toe, triple twist and four level-four elements. They set a new personal best with 75.26 points. "Even though we got a really high score today, we thought we were not even close to perfect. I thought that the quality of the elements still could be improved. Our strategy for this season was to showcase a more mature side of us with refined movements and a dramatic storyline", Han explained.

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Scimeca/Knierim's performance to "Papa Can You Hear Me" was highlighted by a high triple twist, an Axel Lasso lift, but she two-footed the throw triple flip. The team from Colorado Springs earned 66.04 points, another personal best score. "Honestly, we struggled a lot this season with our short program and this was our last one for the season and goal was to make it the best, so we're really proud that we did. I was actually nervous, but my difference was that I tried not to hold back", Scimeca commented.

Competing in their first major international event, Kayne/O'Shea put out a solid program to "James Bond" that included a triple Salchow, throw triple loop and four level-four elements. The skaters from Florida collected 62.05 points. "Our placement is surprising, however, how we skated to us isn't a surprise. We train every day a certain way. Today we went out and put out what we train. It's a good feeling to put out what you train and to feel strong on the ice", Kayne told the press.

Reigning World Junior Champions Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) came fourth at 58.57 points followed by World Junior silver medalists Margaret Purdy/Michael Marinaro (CAN) with 51.97 points.

Takahito Mura (JPN) leads Men after Short Program

Takahito Mura of Japan leads the Men following the Short Program. Richard Dornbush (USA) finished second and Nan Song of China is currently ranked third.

Performing to "Minnie the Moocher" and "Jumpin' Jack", Mura landed a quad toe, triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe and picked up a level four for two spins. The 22-year-old set a new personal best for himself with 84.21 points. "I couldn't qualify for the Olympic Games and originally I wasn't going to the Four Continents Championships. I was really disappointed. So when I got to go to this competition, I was really positive about it and I have been doing well. The short program was really good. Since I am here I am enjoying the practices and I when I went out to compete I was in a good mood and confident. I was really dancing without thinking about anything else. That's why the short program went really well", Mura noted.

Dornbush stumbled out of his opening quad Salchow that was underrotated, but he rallied back to produced a triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe and three level-four spins in his routine to "The Sons of Italy". The Californian achieved a new seasons best with 82.13 points. Going to the short, I wasn't really focused on placement or anything. I was really focused on the program and I knew what I needed was a good attempt on the quad and skate the rest of the program cleanly and I was able to do that. I think that it was a good confidence boost, but mostly I think after a good short I just need to get down on my knees and focus on the long", the 22-year-old said.

Song's program to "The Middle East Side" was highlighted by a quad-triple toeloop combination, triple Lutz and level-four spins, but he stepped out of the triple Axel. The Chinese skater still got a new seasons best with 78.71 points. "I brought out my A game. The quad toe was really good, so I kind of relaxed and I stumbled on the triple Axel. I am not nervous at all for the free skating. I feel really confident", Song told the press.

Takahiko Kozuka (JPN) currently is ranked fourth (76.85 points), just ahead of reigning World silver medalist Denis Ten (KAZ) with 76.34 points. Jeremy Ten (CAN) round up the top six at 75.21 points.

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Jin Seo Kim (KOR) withdrew before the Men's Short Program due to injury (tendonitis in his left foot) and Michael Christian Martinez (PHI) did not appear.

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships continue Thursday with the Free Dance and the Ladies Short Program.

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and <http://www.fc2014.com>.

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