

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 **Short Dance and Men's Free Skating**

The ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 continued in Saitama, Japan, on Friday with the Short Dance and the Men's Free Skating in front of a capacity crowd of 18,000 spectators at Saitama Super Arena.

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte (ITA) clinch lead in Short Dance

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte of Italy clinched a narrow lead in the Short Dance, edging out Canadians Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje by less than one point. France's Nathalie Pechalat/Fabian Bourzat follow closely in third place.

Cappellini/Lanotte's Quickstep and Foxtrot to "42nd Street" and "Lullaby of Broadway" was highlighted by fast twizzles, smooth steps and a rotational lift. The European Champions picked up a level four for the twizzles, the first Finnstep pattern and the lift to score 69.70 points, just below their seasons best. "We're really happy especially because it's the last time we're dancing this dance and we were able to pull out the best performance of the year; also scorewise. It couldn't have happened at a better time than at the world championships and we're really going to miss this program", Cappellini said.

Weaver/Poje had also chosen "42nd Street" for their Short Dance. Their twizzles and curve lift merited a level four, the Finnstep sequences and the side by side footwork a level three. The Canadians earned 69.20 points. "I feel like we've worked so hard this season. Obviously it is showing in the results today. In our free dance, I feel that it is our secret weapon. So wherever the chips fall we are going to put out a strong free dance tomorrow and let everything else take care of itself", Weaver explained.

Dancing to "Roxy", "Sing Sing Sing" and "Mein Herr", Pechalat/Bourzat produced a level four Finnstep sequence and level four rotational lift, but the second Finnstep pattern was a level two and the two-time European Champions received 68.20 points. "We are not a 100 percent happy with this performance. We skated much better at the Olympics. We had two little mistakes and hopefully we'll skate stronger tomorrow", Pechalat said. "We thought to end our career in Japan is a good idea because we want to get a beautiful medal before leaving. We did not get a medal in Sochi", she added.

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) are not far behind at 67.11 points. Olympic bronze medalists Elena Ilinykh/Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) are currently ranked fifth as he missed the twizzles (65.67 points). Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) finished sixth (63.55 points).

Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) crowned World Champion

Yuzuru Hanyu skated to the title, edging out teammate Tatsuki Machida by just 0.23 points for the gold medal. Spain's Javier Fernandez claimed the bronze medal like he had one year ago.

Hanyu's program to "Romeo and Juliet" featured a quadruple Salchow, quadruple toeloop, triple flip, triple Axel-triple toe and five more triple jumps. The Olympic Champion earned a level four for two spins and the step sequence and picked up 191.35 points for the Free Skating. Overall the 19-year-old racked up 282.59 points to move up from third to first to take his first world title. "That was very close. There was a mistake in the short program so that is why my overall score ended up as it is. Overall, I did enjoy this competition.

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However, I hope that I can become a skater who can always end with strong performances. They (the quads) are still not perfectly consistent in practices yet, so I would like to go back and practice more. I felt the responsibility I have to win this event” Hanyu commented.

Performing to “The Firebird” by Igor Stravinski, Machida produced a quad toe, a quad toe-double toe, a triple Axel-triple toe as well as five more triple jumps, but two were shaky. Two spins and the footwork garnered a level four. Machida improved his personal best by about 10 points with 184.05 points and totaled 282.26 points. He slipped from first to second at 282.26 points. “It’s been a very long and enduring season. I feel happy and a sense of achievement. This season, Yuzuru’s successes really encouraged me and pushed me through the season. As a result, I am here today. I was a little short of first place, but I hope that I can improve for the next season we can walk through this journey together and I can become a better rival to him”, the 25-year-old noted.

Fernandez nailed three quads and five triples in his program to the “Peter Gunn” soundtrack, but the first Salchow was wobbly and he later singled a Lutz. The 22-year-old scored a seasons best with 179.51 points and dropped to third at 275.93 points overall. “I did a good program, this is it, my season is done and I am completely happy. I am going to go home with my medal. It was a great competition, there was nothing more I could do these two skaters were amazing today and they deserve to be here”, the European Champion told the press.

Maxim Kovtun (RUS) moved up from seventh to fourth at 247.37 points and Jeremy Abbott pulled up from eighth to fifth with 246.35 points. Takahiko Kozuka (JPN) remained in sixth place (238.02 points).

The ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 continue Saturday with the Free Dance and the Ladies Free Skating. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and www.wfc2014.jp

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