

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2014/2015 Hilton HHonors Skate America, Day Two

Hilton HHonors Skate America continued Saturday in Hoffman Estates (Chicago), USA, with the Pairs and Ladies Short Program, the Men's Free Skating and Free Dance. Hilton HHonors Skate America is the first of six events in the the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2014/2015. Skaters compete for points towards the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS) take Pairs Short Program

Russia's Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov took the lead in the Pairs Short Program. Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang of China placed second and Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) are currently ranked third.

Performing to "Meditation" from "Thais", Kavaguti/Smirnov produced a triple toe, triple twist, throw triple loop and picked up a level four for the twist, lift, footwork, death spiral and side by side spin. With 69.16 points, the 2010 European Champion set a new seasons best for themselves. "We are so, so happy to be back here in competition, so we were very excited today", Kavaguti said. "Last season we had a (free) program that we really loved, so to finish the season without showing it made us very sad. That's why we continued this season", she added regarding their comeback after sitting out the past season due to him being injured.

Peng/Cheng's program to the "Arabian Dance" from Peter Tchaikovski's "Nutcracker" featured a triple twist, throw triple loop and a level-four lift, but she fell on an underrotated triple toe. The ISU Grand Prix Finalists earned 62.38 points. "In our performance today we had a mistake so it was not to the level of our training", Peng noted.

Denney/Frazier completed a triple twist, throw triple loop and triple Salchow in their routine to "The Godfather" to pick up a personal best of 61.08 points. "Today was a really good start to the Grand Prix Series. That was a personal best for us, which is something to be very proud of. We just want to keep moving forward from here", Frazier told the press.

Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) finished fourth at 60.61 points ahead of Madelin Aaron/Max Settlege (USA) with 58.41 points.

Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS) captures Ladies Short Program

Elizaveta Tuktamysheva of Russia captured the Ladies Short Program, followed by teammate Elena Radionova. Gracie Gold (USA) finished third.

Tuktamysheva's program to "Bolero" was highlighted by a triple toe-triple toe, triple Lutz and three level-four spins. The 17-year-old posted a new personal best with 67.41 points. "Today I am very happy that I was able to cope with my nervousness and I was happy that I could show a good performance. It was already the fourth competition for me so I feel a little tired. I hope tomorrow I

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can make you happy one more time with my performance”, the 2013 European bronze medalist commented.

Skating to a Flamenco, Radionova hit a triple Lutz-triple toe, triple loop and double Axel to score 65.57 points. “I think that was a quite okay performance. Obviously that jumps could have been better but that is just the beginning of the season for me”, the 15-year-old said.

Gold completed a triple loop, double Axel and two level-four spins in her routine to “Adagio from Piano Concerto in A minor” by Edvard Grieg, but she two-footed the triple Lutz-triple toe combination and fell out of her combination spin. The U.S. Champion earned 60.81 points. “It wasn't my best performance, but I am still very happy with it. It is tough to skate last after two wonderful competitors. In a competition like this I can't give any points away and make mistakes like I did on my spin and the small error on the triple toe landing. I'm going to have to really fight in the long program to move up in the ranks. I look forward to another great competition tomorrow”, the 19-year-old told the press.

Samantha Cesario (USA) came fourth at 58.96 points followed by So Youn Park (KOR) with 55.74 points and Elene Gedevanishvili (GEO) with 55.39 points.

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) dance to gold

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) danced to the gold medal in the Ice Dance competition. Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) took the silver medal and the bronze went to Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin of Russia.

Chock/Bates put out an upbeat performance to “An American in Paris”, completing four level-four elements. The circular step sequence was graded a level two and the diagonal steps as well as rotational lift were a level three. The National silver medalists earned 102.07 points, a new personal best, and totaled 171.03 points to take their first Grand Prix gold medal. “We picked the music early in the season it was actually Evan and (coach) Igor (Shpilband) that kind of had the same thought. It worked out that they were thinking the same thing and I loved the music so we were all on board. We are trying to do a more modern interpretation of *An American in Paris*, put our own spin on it, as if the movie had been remade and was set in 2014”, Chock said.

Shibutani/Shibutani turned in a dance to Strauss Waltzes and picked up a level four for the three lifts while the twizzles and diagonal steps merited a level three. The brother-and-sister-team scored 96.19 points which added up to 160.33 points. “It's definitely a classical approach. We are so lucky to have coaches that did a beautiful job choreographing the program. We are really aiming to hit all of our musical nuances and show dance in its purest form. It's already one of our favorite programs and we are looking forward to the progress we can make with it this season”, Alex Shibutani explained.

Stepanova/Bukin's performance to “Eleanor Rigby” included a level-four spin and level-four lifts. The 2013 World Junior Champions collected 87.50 points for this Free Dance and accumulated 143.87 points. It was the first senior Grand Prix medal for the couple from Moscow. “We are very

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happy with how things came together at the competition for us. This is our second Grand Prix senior season and we are very pleased that it is going a lot better than last year”, Stepanova said.

Elisabeth Paradis/Francois-Xavier Ouellette (CAN) moved up from eighth to fourth at 137.30 points and Anastasia Cannuscio/Colin McManus (USA) placed fifth (135.61 points).

Tatsuki Machida (JPN) repeats as Skate America Champion

Japan's Tatsuki Machida repeated as Skate America Champion. Jason Brown (USA) took the silver medal and Nam Nguyen of Canada rose from seventh to claim the bronze in his ISU Grand Prix series debut.

Machida produced two quadruple toeloops, a triple Axel-triple toe and three more clean triples as well as two level-four spins in his program to Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. The World silver medalist racked up 175.70 points and overall got 269.09 points. “This is my first competition of the season and my preparation was not quite ready so that is why the second half of the free program quality went down a little bit. But at the same time, I was quite pleased. I was able to maintain that certain level. I want to develop my program throughout the season and polish up my programs”, the 24-year-old noted.

Skating to “Tristan and Isolde” by Maxime Rodriguez, Brown landed a triple Axel, a triple Lutz-single loop-triple Salchow sequence and level-four spins and footwork, but he missed the second triple Axel. The 2013 World Junior silver medalist was ranked third in the Free Skating with 154.42 points but overall pulled up to second at 234.17 points. “Going into the second triple Axel, it is just go for it. I did fall but it's all part of that growing experience. I had a few slips after that but I was fighting through the whole thing and I wasn't going to let that stop me. I'm really excited about that recovery and it makes me that much more excited about the growth to come with the program”, the 19-year-old told the post-event press conference.

World Junior Champion Nguyen delivered a flawless Free Skating to “La Strada”, reeling off a quadruple Salchow and eight triple jumps and picked up a level four for all three spins and the footwork. The 16-year-old scored 158.53 points and jumped on to the podium with 232.24 points. “I'm very happy with how well I skated today and yesterday. For me at this competition, I wasn't expecting too much and to have a bronze medal was a big bonus. This is my first senior Grand Prix and I'm so excited”, the Canadian commented.

Olympic bronze medalist Denis Ten (KAZ) remained in fourth place (224.74 points) while Jeremy Abbott (USA) slipped from second to fifth (219.33 points). World Junior silver medalist Adian Pitkeev (RUS) came sixth (212.07 points).

For full entry lists of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2014/15 please refer to www.isu.org/en/single-and-pair-skating-and-ice-dance/series/isu-grand-prix-of-figure-skating. Skate America concludes Sunday with the Pairs and Ladies Free Skating and the Exhibition Gala.

For further information please contact

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating & Final

Hilton HHonors Skate America

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