

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2015 **Pairs Free Skating**

The 2015 ISU European Figure Skating Championships concluded in Stockholm, Sweden, on Sunday with the Pairs Free Skating and the Exhibition Gala at Ericsson Globe.

Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS) strike gold

Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov of Russia struck gold and led a Russian sweep in the Pairs event. Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov settled for the silver medal and Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov moved up from fifth to earn the bronze medal.

Kavaguti/Smirnov, who skated last, pulled off a triple toe-triple toe sequence, throw quadruple Salchow, triple twist and two level-four lifts in their dramatic performance to the “Manfred” Symphony by Peter Tchaikovsky. The only glitch came when they struggled with the last lift. The two-time World bronze medalists scored 137.81 points and totaled 207.67 points to win their second European title since 2010. “At last we did what we have to do and what we can do. We did our best. The whole performance in itself was the highlight”, Kavaguti said. “It’s a medal in the European Championships and we are just so pleased. We’re pleased the skate went well and we made everybody, the coaches and spectators, very happy”, Smirnov added.

Stolbova/Klimov’s program to “Notre Dame de Paris” featured a triple twist, a triple toe-double toe-double toe combination as well as difficult lifts and spins, but after Klimov fell they omitted the last element, a throw Salchow. With 129.73 points, the Olympic silver medalists were ranked second in the Free Skating and slipped to second overall at 201.11 points. “There is nothing positive I can say about our performance today. It was our worst performance of the season. There’s no reason. Everything was good in the practice this morning and before”, Klimov commented.

Skating to “Hello” by Lionel Ritchie, Tarasova/Morozov produced a side by side triple Salchow and triple toe-double toe combination, a huge triple twist as well as a throw triple loop and Salchow. The 2014 World Junior silver medalists earned 125.89 points and took the bronze in their debut at the European Championships with 183.02 points. “We’re very happy with that skate, apart from the lift obviously where we made a mistake. Evgenia almost fell onto my hand because her skirt was slippery and I could not do anything about it. But everything else was good and after a bad short to come and do what we could here in the free was great”, Morozov told the press.

Russia had swept the Pairs podium at the European Championship 13 times before, the last time in 2014.

Newcomers Valentina Marchei/Ondrej Hotarek (ITA) placed fourth at 175.39 points while Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres (FRA) dropped from third to fifth (167.29 points). Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise (ITA) finished sixth (155.77 points).

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and the official event website <http://skatesweden.se/en/ec2015/>

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