

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2015 **Day One**

The 2015 ISU European Figure Skating Championships opened in Stockholm, Sweden, on Wednesday with the Men's Short Program. 156 skaters from 32 ISU members have been entered for the Championships. Skaters/couples need to have obtained a minimum total technical score in Short Program and Free Skating in order to compete at the European Championships.

Javier Fernandez (ESP) wins Men's Short Program

Spain's Javier Fernandez took the first step to defending his European title by winning the Men's Short Program. Sergei Voronov of Russia sits in second followed by Michal Brezina of the Czech Republic.

Skating to "Black Betty" by Ram Jam, Fernandez hit a good triple Axel, but fell out of his quad Salchow and stepped out of the triple Lutz-triple toe combination. The two-time European Champion recovered to pick up a level four for the spins and footwork and scored 89.24 points. "I dealt with the pressure well today, this time my problem was that I was too relaxed, in fact Brian (Orser, coach) said to me that I was working at "level 2" (second gear), sometimes it is very difficult to find a good balance between being very excited and/or skating too relaxed", the World bronze medalist noted.

Voronov opened his program to "Danse Macabre" with a quadruple-triple toeloop combination, but he doubled the Axel. He also executed a triple loop and three level-four spins to earn 81.06 points. In general I can't say that everything went well, I didn't feel the drive but it was a struggle, firstly, the struggle with myself. As it's the eighth competition in this season, it was quite difficult to skate. The main goal for today was to overcome myself", the reigning European silver medalist said.

Brezina's routine to "Game of Thrones" featured a triple Axel a quad Salchow and two level-four spins, but he fell on the triple flip. The 2013 European bronze medalist picked up 80.86 points. "It felt pretty good until I fell on the combination (triple flip) which cost me around ten points. Apart from the combination I think it was my strongest performance of the season. I hope I can do better than that in the long program", the 24-year-old commented.

Maxim Kovtun (RUS) was the only skater to attempt two quads, toe and Salchow, but stumbled on both of them. He came fourth at 78.21 points. Peter Liebers (GER) placed fifth (75.48 points) and 2011 European Champion Florent Amodio (FRA) is currently ranked sixth (74.06 points).

The event continues with the Ice Dance Short Dance. The ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2015 continue Thursday with the Ladies Short Program and the Free Dance. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: <http://www.isuresults.com/events/fsevent00051597.htm> and the official event website <http://skatesweden.se/en/ec2015/>

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