

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

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ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2015 **Preview**

The ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2015 will open in Shanghai, China, on March 25. China hosts the ISU World Figure Skating Championships for the first time.

164 skaters/couples from 37 ISU Members have been entered for the Championship. Following a decision of the ISU Congress in 2012, no Preliminary Rounds are held. All skaters/couples compete in the Short Program/Short Dance and the top 24 single skaters, top 16 Pairs and 20 Ice Dance couples will proceed to the Free Skating/Free Dance. Participants need to have obtained a minimum total element score in Short Program and Free Skating in order to be eligible for the Championships.

Overview over the top contenders

Reigning Olympic and World Champion Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) leads the Men, but has to expect tough competition. Hanyu won the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final earlier this season and has a seasons best of 288.16 points. 2015 Four Continents Champion Denis Ten (KAZ) looks ready to challenge the champion (seasons best 289.46 points). Three-time European Champion Javier Fernandez (ESP) travels with a seasons best of 260.01 points to Shanghai. Several other men are aiming at the podium as well: 2015 Four Continents Championships silver medalist Joshua Farris (USA), 2015 Four Continents bronze medalist Han Yan (CHN), 2015 European silver medalist Maxim Kovtun (RUS) and 2015 European bronze medalist Sergei Voronov (RUS).

2015 European Champion Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS) is the top-ranked Lady in Shanghai. The ISU Grand Prix Final winner posted a seasons best of 210.40 points. Competition should come from her teammate and European silver medalist Elena Radionova (RUS/seasons best 209.54 points), ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist Ashley Wagner (USA/seasons best 189.50) and European bronze medalist Anna Pogorilaya (RUS/seasons best 191.81 points). Other top contenders are 2015 Four Continents Champion Polina Edmunds (USA), 2015 Four Continents silver medalist Satoko Miyahara (JPN), Gracie Gold (USA) and Zijun Li (CHN).

ISU Grand Prix Final and Four Continents Champions Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford (CAN) are looking to crown a successful season with their first world title. The 2014 World bronze medalists come with a seasons best of 220.72 points to Shanghai and are unbeaten so far this season. However, 2015 European Champions Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS/seasons best 209.16 points) and a strong Chinese squad consisting of returning two-time World Champions Qing Pang/Jian Tong (seasons best 199.99), 2015 Four Continents silver medalists Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang (seasons best 201.45 points) and current ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalists Wenjing Sui/Cong Han (seasons best 200.68 point) are chasing the Canadians. Other contenders include European bronze medalists Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov (RUS), U.S. Champions Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim, Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov (RUS) and Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA).

In Ice Dance, 2014 World silver medalists Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje (CAN) top the seasons best list with 181.14 points, achieved at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. The 2015 Four Continents ISU

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Grand Prix Final Champions have to watch out for 2015 European Champions Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron (FRA/seasons best 179.97 points), ISU Grand Prix Final and Four Continents silver medalists Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA/seasons best 176.18 points) and defending World Champions Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte (ITA/seasons best 171.52 points). 2015 Four Continents bronze medalists Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA), Russian Champions Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin, European bronze medalists Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin (RUS) and Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) are looking to get to the podium as close as possible as well.

Prize Money

The ISU awards a global prize money of US\$ 710,000 at the World Championships to skaters/couples placed 1st to 12th. The prize money is awarded to winners and placed skaters/couples as follows:

Men and Ladies

1st place US\$ 45,000
2nd place US\$ 27,000
3rd place US\$ 18,000
4th place US\$ 13,000
5th place US\$ 10,000
6th place US\$ 7,000
7th place US\$ 6,000
8th place US\$ 5,000
9th place US\$ 3,500
10th place US\$ 3,000
11th place US\$ 2,500
12th place US\$ 2,000

Pairs and Dance (per couple)

1st place US\$ 67,500
2nd place US\$ 40,500
3rd place US\$ 27,000
4th place US\$ 19,500
5th place US\$ 15,000
6th place US\$ 10,500
7th place US\$ 9,000
8th place US\$ 7,500
9th place US\$ 5,250
10th place US\$ 4,500
11th place US\$ 3,750
12th place US\$ 3,000

The schedule of the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2015 is as follows:

Wednesday, March 25: Short Dance and Pairs Short Program

Thursday, March 26: Ladies Short Program and Pairs Free Skating

Friday, March 27: Free Dance and Men's Short Program

Saturday, March 28: Ladies and Men's Free Skating

Sunday, March 29: Exhibition Gala

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and <http://www.wfsc2015.com>

For further information please contact:

Selina Vanier, ISU Media Coordinator

+41 21 612 66 66

email: media@isu.ch

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email: wfsc2015_media@163.com