

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating 2015 **Team USA strikes gold**

The ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating 2015 continued Saturday in Tokyo, Japan, with the Pairs and Ladies Free Skating. The six top ranked national teams of the 2014/15 season have qualified for the event. Each team consists of two Men, two Ladies, one Pair and one Ice Dance couple. More than 25 000 spectators attended the three days of competition at Yoyogi National Stadium.

Team USA strikes gold

Team USA struck gold and won their third ISU World Team Trophy title after 2009 and 2013 with 110 points. In the final event, the Ladies Free Skating, Team Russia overtook Team Japan to take the silver, their first medal in the World Team Trophy. Japan earned the bronze. Russia scored 109 points and Japan had 103 points.

U.S. Champions Alexa Scimcea/Chris Knierim were the top scoring team members on the final day. They came third in the Pairs Free Skating (10 team points) with a strong performance that included a quadruple twist. Ashley Wagner came fourth in the Ladies Free Skating (9 team points), one spot ahead of Gracie Gold (8 team points). „This was an amazing competition. Watching I think is so much more stressful than being on the ice and skating. Especially towards the end when the ladies were skating and it started to get really close and we were not sure what was going to happen, some of the most nerve wrecking moments I remember experiencing in the sport. It is just thrilling to experience that as a team and to have our fates tied together and to rely on one another is really the essence of this event. It's wonderful", team captain Evan Bates said.

Russia could rely on their Ladies that collected 12 and 11 team points. Skating to oriental themed music, World Champion Elizaveta Tuktamysheva hit a triple Axel and five more triple jumps to finish first in the Ladies Free Skating. World bronze medalist Elena Radionova turned in a strong performance as well, landing seven triples, but she stumbled on a double Axel. The 16-year-old came second. However, European Champions Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov ranked fourth in the Pairs (9 team points) as she fell on an underrotated triple toeloop. "I think the girls did their job a 100 percent, while for the others there is still room for improvement. We could have had more points in the pairs and men, but we are still satisfied with result and pleased overall", team captain Smirnov noted.

For team Japan, World silver medalist Satoko Miyahara turned in an excellent performance to "Miss Saigon" that was highlighted by six clean triple jumps and beautiful spins. She ranked third in the Ladies Free Skating, adding 10 points to the team score. Kanako Murakami placed sixth (7 team points) and pair skaters Ami Koga/Francis Audet Boudreau were ranked sixth as well (7 team points). "Of course it was a three days event and not much time had passed since the World Championship. I know all skaters very tired but even though they are tired they put all their energy into their performances and did everything they can in the competition", captain Takahito Mura commented.

Canada's World Champions Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford won the Pairs Free Skating and scored 12 team points, but overall their team finished fourth with 82 points.

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Team China came fifth with 77 points. World silver medalists Wenjing Sui/Cong Han were the top scoring team members again when they placed second in the Pairs Free Skating.

Team France remained in sixth place with 59 points.

The ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating 2015 concludes Sunday with the exhibition gala. For full entries and results please refer to www.isu.org and <http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/figure/>.