

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 Progressive Skate America, Day Two

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/2016 continued Saturday with the Free Skating and Free Dance at Progressive Skate America, the first of six events in Milwaukee, WI (USA).

Sui/Han (CHN) claim Pairs gold

China's Wenjing Sui/Cong Han claimed the Pairs gold. Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) took the silver and Canadians Julianne Seguin/Charlie Bilodeau earned the bronze medal. It was the first Grand Prix title for the Chinese team and the first Grand Prix medal for the Americans and Canadians.

Sui/Han opened their routine to "Samson and Delilah" by Camille Saint-Saens with a quadruple twist and followed up with a triple toe-double toe-double toe combination and a throw triple Salchow. Han went down on a cheated triple Salchow solo jump, but the World silver medalists recovered to produce a throw triple flip and two level-four lifts. Sui/Han scored 133.72 points and totaled 202.00 points. "This is our first time to win a Grand Prix event. America is a very lucky place for us. But today I didn't do very well. Usually I can do this jump almost always successful, but today I failed. Our next competition is the Cup of China and in our home we want to show we can do it very well", Han commented.

Overnight leaders Scimeca/Knierim had a strong start into their program set to "Elizabeth the Golden Age" soundtrack with a quadruple twist and also hit a throw triple flip and four level-four elements, but they struggled with the solo jumps. The U.S. Champions were ranked fourth in the Free Skating with 122.28 points and slipped to second at 191.97 points overall. "We are very fortunate to get the silver medal. We knew it was going to be a tough competition with the teams that were slotted to skate. We are super happy, there's still lots we can work on. It was kind of a learning experience to skate last in the long because we really haven't done that yet", Knierim explained.

Seguin/Bilodeau turned in a solid performance to "A Whiter Shade of Pale" that included a triple twist, side by side triple Salchow and a throw triple loop to score 124.64 points. With 189.49 points the World Junior silver medalists moved up from fourth place to win the bronze in their senior Grand Prix debut. "Wow. I mean when I arrived here, our only goal was to increase our score and that's it. We just skate like we do at home. The bronze medal is really great for our first Grand Prix and I'm really proud of that", Bilodeau told the press.

Olympic silver medalists Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov (RUS) were ranked second in the Free Skating and pulled up to fourth place. They landed a triple toe-triple toe-double toe combination, but she fell on a triple Salchow attempt (189.06 points). Xuehan Wang/Li Wang (CHN) dropped from third to fifth at 171.77 points.

Evgenia Medvedeva (RUS) skates to Ladies gold

Evgenia Medvedeva of Russia skated to the Ladies gold in her debut at the senior Grand Prix. Gracie Gold (USA) claimed the silver and the bronze went to Japan's Satoko Miyahara.

Performing to the "W.E." soundtrack and "Allegro" by Rene Aubry, Medvedeva reeled off seven triples including a triple flip-triple toe and triple Salchow-triple toeloop combination as

well as difficult spins, but she fell on a double Axel. The 2015 World Junior Champion picked up a personal best score of 135.09 and was ranked second in the Free Skating. Overall the 15-year-old remained in first place with 206.01 points. "You are always a bit nervous, especially since this is the first big competition of the season. A fall can happen to anyone but you have to get up and continue. You have to give 100 percent and you also learn from that. Nobody is perfect", Medvedeva said.

Gold's "Firebird" was highlighted by a triple Lutz-triple toe, a double Axel-triple toe-double toe combination and three more triples as well as level four spins and footwork. However, she doubled her last jump, a Salchow. The 20-year-old set a new personal best for herself with 137.41 points and won the Free Skating portion but overall finished second with 202.80 points. "I'm happy with how the competition went. I had a really good short program and a very solid long program, which has been harder for me in the past to put two together. One usually burns really bright and then one might fizzle out. So we've been working really hard all summer on putting two programs together and I want to continue doing that all season", the 2014 U.S. Champion shared.

Miyahara's program to "Un sospiro" by Franz Liszt included five clean triples, but she missed a triple Lutz. The World silver medalist earned 122.95 points, a seasons best, and accumulated 188.07 points overall. "Today was not my best. I'm a little bit regretful but it was a good experience and I learned a lot of things. I want to do my best at my next event NHK Trophy", the two-time Four Continents silver medalist noted.

Elizabet Tursynbaeva (KAZ) moved up from seventh to fourth with a solid performance (178.56 points) and Karen Chen (USA) finished fifth in her Grand Prix debut (172.54 points).

Chock/Bates (USA) dance off with gold

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) danced to victory in the Ice Dance competition. Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov of Russia took the silver medals while Canadians Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier settled for the bronze.

Chock/Bates turned in a strong performance to Concerto No. 2 by Sergei Rachmaninov that featured level four lifts and twizzles. The step sequences garnered a level three and a level two. The World silver medalists posted a new seasons best with 102.66 points which added up to 173.22 points overall. „This free dance was a little bit of a fight for us tonight. It makes it that much easier the next time we go to competition to know that we will always have that fighting spirit. This is a program that is really special to us and we enjoy every time we perform it. We have lots of work to do and we are excited for the season", Chock said.

Dancing to "Io Ci Saro", Sinistina/Katsalapov produced smooth footwork and lifts, picking up a level four for four elements. The Russian duo set another personal best with 99.45 points and totaled 162.21 points. "We are very happy with the first competition of the season and to have skated to clean programs. We did everything we can do. We'll continue to work on our programs and elements and move forward from here", Katsalapov commented.

Gilles/Poirier performed an original dance to "She Said" and "Neverland". Their twizzles, lifts and spin merited a level four and the 2014 Four Continents silver medalists scored 96.25 points for their Free Dance. They remained in third with 157.58 points. "I think Piper and I are really pleased with the progress we've made this season. This year has definitely been an improvement in terms of consistency early in the season. This isn't the placement that we

wanted necessarily, but we are definitely going to look at the judges' comments and implement as much as we can before the Grand Prix in France", Poirier offered.

Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) finished fourth (150.69 points) followed by Anastasia Cannuscio/Colin McManus (USA, 143.67 points).

Max Aaron (USA) strikes gold

Max Aaron (USA) struck gold in the Men's event. Shoma Uno of Japan took the silver medal and USA's Jason Brown pulled up from eighth place after the Short Program to clinch the bronze.

Overnight leader Aaron hit two quadruple Salchows, two triple Axels and four more triple jumps in his program to "Black Swan", but he stumbled on a double Axel. The 2013 U.S. Champion collected 172.28 points and was ranked second in the Free Skating, but defended his lead to win his first Grand Prix title with 258.95 points. He improved his personal best score significantly. "This win is amazing. It's my first big win in a while. I'm not going to think about it a lot. I want this to be the start of a lot of things", the 23-year-old told the press. "It feels great to come out here and do what I've done in practice every single day. I had a little mishap on the last jumping pass when I started thinking about the whole performance and what I had put out there. Prior to that, I was staying in the moment and listening to the music. I enjoyed every second of it", he added.

Skating to "Turandot" Uno, who stood in fourth place following the Short Program, produced two quadruple toeloops, a triple Axel-triple toe, another triple Axel as well as four more triples and three level four spins. The 2015 World Junior Champion set a new personal best of 176.65 points and ranked first in the Free Skating. Overall he moved up to second at 257.43 points in what was his debut on the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating. "In the short program, there were a few mistakes. The free went much better. I'm quite happy to win my (Grand Prix) first silver medal and I hope to keep on improving", the 17-year-old said.

Brown's performance to "The Scent of Love" by Michael Nyman featured six clean triples, but he fell on an underrotated quadruple toe loop. The U.S. Champion earned 159.83 points and had 238.47 points overall. "It's such an honor to be up here with Max (Aaron) and Shoma (Uno). They are amazing and it was so cool to watch them today. I'm super excited about my performance today. I fought the whole way through. It wasn't perfect by any means but I'm proud of the fight. I continued to perform through entire thing", the 2014 Skate America silver medalist commented.

Han Yan (CHN) slipped from second to fourth place (236.03 points) and Konstantin Menshov (RUS) dropped from third to fifth (230.79 points). Olympic bronze medalist Denis Ten finished 9th (201.52 points).

Progressive Skate America concludes Sunday with the Exhibition Gala. For full results please refer to www.isu.org under Single & Pair Skating/Ice Dance then select Grand Prix. The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating continues next week with Skate Canada in Lethbridge, AB.

For further information please contact

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating & Final
Selina Vanier, Media Coordinator
+41 21 612 66 66 (phone)
email: vanier@isu.ch

Progressive Skate America
Renee Felton, Press Officer
+1 303 717 77 49 (cell phone)
email: rfelton@usfigureskating.org

