

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

## **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 Audi Cup of China, Day Two**

The Audi Cup of China continued Saturday in Beijing (CHN) with the Free Dance and the Free Skating.

### **Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte (ITA) dance off with gold**

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte of Italy danced off with the gold medal. Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) settled for the silver and the bronze went to Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin of Russia.

Dancing to “La Dolce Vita”, Cappellini/Lanotte produced smooth footwork and impressive lifts, picking up a level four for five elements. The 2014 World Champions set a new personal best of 106.91 points and totaled 173.30 to win the first Grand Prix gold medal in their career. “It is a very sweet win, a bit anachronistic, because we won Worlds two years ago and we never won a Grand Prix before. It is nice, especially since we were able to skate well. Definitely today we skated the best we could”, Cappellini said.

Chock/Bates delivered a strong performance to Piano Concerto No. 2 by Sergei Rachmaninov. The 2015 World silver medalists earned a level four for the lifts, twizzles and spin, but the two step sequences were rated a level two. The U.S. Champions posted a new seasons best with 103.80 points and remained in second place with 169.16 points. “We were very happy with how we skated today. Our free dance kept building and growing and this is just another step that we hoped to take continuing forward in the season. We got a little lower technical score so we definitely have to take a look at that when we get home”, Chock commented.

Ilinykh/Zhiganshin’s dance to “Frida” included level-four twizzles, lifts and a level-four spin. The Russian Champions scored 95.46 points which added up to 159.00 points overall. “In some places we messed up and we got a deduction because the flower fell out of my hair. But overall it was a good start for us. It is better to make some mistakes in the first competition and to know what to expect”, Ilinykh told the press.

Federica Testa/Lukas Csolley (SVK) ranked fourth (136.17 points) followed by Yue Zhao/Xun Zheng (CHN) with 129.65 points. Kaitlyn Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) withdrew following the warm up as she suffered from a stomach upset.

Chock/Bates are now qualified for the Grand Prix Final with a gold and a silver medal. Cappellini/Lanotte and Ilinykh/Zhiganshin will compete again in two weeks at the Rostelecom Cup of Russia.

### **Mao Asada (JPN) wins Ladies gold**

Mao Asada of Japan won gold in her first Grand Prix following her year-long competition break. Rika Hongo, also from Japan, claimed the silver medal and Elena Radionova (RUS) rose from sixth to take the bronze.

Asada opened her program to “Madame Butterfly” with a big triple Axel and landed three clean triples, but made some errors on other jumps. The three-time World Champion was ranked third in the Free Skating with 125.75 points but overall held on to first place with 197.48 points. “I am not

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satisfied with my free skating today as I didn't do all elements. I have some problems to solve. I won thanks to my short program but it doesn't satisfy me to have won this way", Asada explained.

Hongo's routine to "Riverdance" featured a triple flip-triple toe combo and five triple jumps as well as three level-four spins. The 2015 Four Continents bronze medalist won the Free Skating portion with a new personal best score of 129.97 points and accumulated 195.76 points. "I felt very happy at the end of my program, because I gave my best performance. I didn't pay so much attention to my ranking", Hongo told the press.

Skating to the "Titanic" soundtrack Radionova landed five clean triples including a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but fell on a triple Lutz. The 2015 European silver medalist picked up 125.77 points and moved up to third at 184.28 points. "It was not my best skate, but I am very pleased with my result, after everything I've been through. My coach fell sick and was hospitalized the day before our departure. So she couldn't come here and I felt completely lost at first", the 16-year-old said.

Anna Pogorilaya (RUS) remained in fourth place at 184.16 points and Karen Chen (USA) finished fifth (175.93 points). Courtney Hicks (USA), who stood in third after the Short Program, dropped to sixth (166.00 points).

## **Javier Fernandez (ESP) strikes gold**

Spain's Javier Fernandez struck gold in Beijing. China's Boyang Jin and Han Yan came second and third.

Fernandez nailed a quadruple toeloop, a somewhat shaky quadruple Salchow-double toeloop combination as well as five triples, but missed his third quad, another Salchow in his routine set to "Guys and Dolls". The reigning World Champion picked up 177.36 points and collected 270.55 points overall. "I felt good at the Grand Prix in China. It is an important goal for me to go to the Grand Prix Final and I have to do one more step to be there. I will keep practicing, every day I improve and I learn from this competition. It was a good day, with mistakes, and hopefully at my next Grand Prix I can perform a clean program", Fernandez noted.

Jin's performance to "Dragon Racing" was highlighted by a huge quadruple Lutz, but he made errors on the other three quads. He still had six triple jumps. Jin is the first skater to go for four quadruple jumps in one program. The 2015 World Junior silver medalist scored 171.18 points and had 261.23 points overall to win the silver in his debut at the senior Grand Prix circuit. "It was a tough program with the four quads and only one of them was good. I still have to work on the quads and I also need to improve my program components", the 18-year-old analyzed.

Yan produced six triples in his „Romeo and Juliet“ program but stepped out of his quad toe. The 2015 Four Continents bronze medalist scored 156.36 points and moved up from sixth to third at 230.33 points. „I didn't have the most difficult content in my program today, but I still made mistakes. It wasn't my best today and I made the podium only because others made more mistakes than me“, the 19-year-old commented.

Grant Hochstein (USA) finished fourth with 222.74 points and Sergei Voronov (RUS) slipped from third to fifth at 222.17 points.

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## **Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS) skate to Pairs gold**

Yuko Kawaguti/Alexander Smirnov of Russia skated to the Pairs gold. China's Wenjing Sui/Cong Han and Xiaoyu Yu/Yang Jin earned the silver and bronze medals respectively.

Kavaguti/Smirnov's dramatic performance to the "Manfred" Symphony by Petr Tchaikovsky was highlighted by side by side triple toe, throw quadruple Salchow and difficult lifts. The Russians were the first pair to include a quadruple throw loop into their program, but Kavaguti landed on two feet. The reigning European Champions achieved a new personal best in the Free Skating with 143.55 points and overall with 216.00 points to overtake overnight leaders Sui/Han.

"I am very pleased with our performance today. I am glad that we did the two quad throws and that we gave an emotional performance. I am happy for us, for our coach Tamara Nikolaevna (Moskvina) and our fans", Smirnov commented.

Skating to "Samson and Delilah", Sui/Han landed a quadruple twist, throw triple Salchow and flip as well as level-four spins and lifts, but they side by side jumps were not perfect. The 2015 World silver medalists got a seasons best of 141.22 points and were edged out of the gold by just 0.38 points with 215.62 overall. "We wanted to do two quads today, but I hurt my foot in practice on Tuesday and so we couldn't train the throws very much. For today we did the best we could", Sui explained.

Yu/Jin's program to the "Creation" soundtrack included a side by side triple toe, a triple twist and throw triple loop, but she fell on a throw quadruple Salchow attempt. The reigning World Junior Champions were awarded 127.69 points, a new personal best, and remained in third with 197.75 points. "We almost did our best today. I just regret that we missed the throw quad Salchow, because we missed it rarely in practice", Yu shared.

Xuehan Wang/Li Wang (CHN) completed a strong showing of the Chinese pairs by finishing fourth (186.76 points) ahead of Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov (RUS, 173.36 points).

Sui/Han qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final with a gold from Progressive Skate America and the silver from Audi Cup of China. Kavaguti/Smirnov will compete again in two weeks in Moscow at Rostelecom Cup. Yu/Jin are scheduled for NHK Trophy in Japan.

The Audi Cup of China concludes Sunday with the Exhibition Gala. For full results please refer to [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org). The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2015/16 continues next week with the Trophée Eric Bompard in Bordeaux (FRA).

### **For further information please contact**

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