

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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November 27, 2015

For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 NHK Trophy, Day One

NHK Trophy opened Friday with the Pairs, Men's and Ladies Short Programs in Nagano (JPN). NHK Trophy is the sixth and last event in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/2016 series and thus provides the last opportunity for skaters to qualify for the Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final.

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford (CAN) take Pairs Short Program

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford of Canada skated to the lead in the Pairs Short Program. Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) came second followed by China's Xiaoyu Yu/Yang Jin.

Duhamel/Radford's performance to "Your Song" by Elton John featured a triple twist, throw triple Lutz and three level-four elements, but Radford touched down on the side by side triple Lutz. The reigning World Champions scored 71.04 points. "We had a couple of little miscues out there, but we're really proud of ourselves that we stayed calm and still managed to get everything done", Radford said. "Our wish for tomorrow is to execute both our throw quads. We'll try the throw quad Sal and if that is successful, we'll go for the quad Lutz", Duhamel added.

Skating to "Nothing Else Matters", Scimeca/Knierim produced a high triple twist, a throw triple flip and level-four lift and pair combination spin, but he put his hand down on the side by side triple Salchow. The Skate America silver medalists earned 68.43 points. "We had a couple of issues while we were skating, it wasn't the most comfortable we've been in a performance. We lost a couple of things here and there, so we left a lot on the table. Tomorrow we'll just go out get all elements done, get comfortable and put out a good performance for everybody", Knierim commented.

Yu/Jin landed a triple toe, level-four triple twist and throw triple loop in their routine to "Yulunga Spirit Dance", picking up 67.00 points. "The short program was one of our best performances. At first I didn't feel well, but in the end I could give my best effort", Yu commented. "We feel a little pressure because of the (Grand Prix) Final, but we hope to turn this pressure into motivation and energy", added Jin.

Vera Bazarova/Andrei Deputat (RUS) are not far behind in fourth place at 64.06 points followed by Lubov Iliushechkina/Dylan Moscovitch (CAN) with 63.80 points.

Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) skates to lead in Men's Short Program

Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan skated to a strong lead in the Men's Short Program, setting a new highest Short Program score en route. China's Boyang Jin is currently ranked second and Takahito Mura of Japan finished third. All three skaters achieved a new personal best score.

Hanyu reeled off a quadruple Salchow, quadruple-triple toeloop, triple Axel and four level four elements in his program to "Ballade No. 1" by Frederic Chopin to score 106.33 points, improving his personal best and own record Short Program score by almost five points. "The score doesn't matter, I'm just happy to finally skate a clean short program to this music", the Olympic Champion shared. "I practiced very, very hard, and I'm glad about the result. Like in the Olympic season I could do very well in the short program. I'd like to be relaxed and do my best for the free skating", he continued.

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Jin nailed a quadruple Lutz-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel and quadruple toeloop as well as three level-four spins in his program to “Tango Amore” to score 95.64 points. “My jumps in the short program were all good, like in training, also the quad Lutz. Tomorrow in the free skating I want to show what I can do in training and I hope to stay calm”, the World Junior silver medalist told the press.

Mura’s performance to “Dark Eyes” was highlighted by a quad toeloop, triple Axel and triple Lutz-triple toe combination. The 2014 Four Continents Champion earned 88.29 points. “After Skate America I was very disappointed, but after that the quantity and quality of my practice has been very good. There were still some mistakes like in the steps that were a level three and not such many (positive) GOEs for the quad, so I have to improve something in my next performance”, the 24-year-old explained.

Maxim Kovtun (RUS) placed fourth at 82.27 points ahead of Michal Brezina (CZE) with 81.04 points.

Satoko Miyahara (JPN) takes Ladies Short Program

Satoko Miyahara of Japan took the Ladies Short Program. Courtney Hicks (USA) came second, followed by teammate Ashley Wagner.

Miyahara turned in a strong performance to “Firedance”, completing a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, triple flip, double Axel as well as level-four spins and footwork. The World silver medalist posted a new personal best of 69.53 points. “I’m very happy to do my program with clean jumps, spins and steps. I was not happy with my performance at Skate America and I worked hard on steps and spins and I wanted to skate with full confidence”, the 17-year-old said.

Skating to “Passion – The Feeling Begins”, Hicks landed a shaky triple flip-triple toeloop combination, triple Lutz and also picked up a level four for her spins and footwork. The Californian set a new personal best for herself with 65.60 points. “It was one of the best (short programs) I’ve done. Going into the free skate I’d just really want to focus on continuing the jumps and the choreography at the same time without getting too far ahead of myself on either one”, Hicks commented.

Wagner stumbled on her opening triple flip, couldn’t do the combination, but added a double toe to the triple loop later in her program to “Hip Hip Chin Chin”. The ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist received 63.71 points. “Today was not my day. I got a little bit too far ahead of myself. It is one of those things when I tried too hard. But If I had started off a program like that last year I know for a fact I wouldn’t have been able to keep it together. That program is so fast and so difficult, for me even to get off the combination as my last jump is something I’m pretty proud of”, the U.S. Champion pointed out.

Mao Asada (JPN) fell on her triple Axel and popped the Lutz to finish fourth (62.50 points). Mirai Nagasu (USA) is currently ranked fifth (61.10 points).

NHK Trophy continues Saturday with the Short Dance, Pairs, Men’s and Ladies Free Skating. For full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/16 please refer to www.isu.org under Single& Pair Skating/Ice Dance then select Grand Prix.

For further information please contact

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating & Final

NHK Trophy

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