

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Progressive Skate America 2016 #GPFigure #SkateAmerica Day Two

Progressive Skate America, the first of six events of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2016/17, continued Saturday with the Men's Short Program, Ladies Free Skating, Short Dance and Pairs Free Skating in Chicago/Hoffman Estates, IL. Skaters compete for points to qualify for the Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Shoma Uno (JPN) wins Men's Short Program

Shoma Uno of Japan won the Men's Short Program with USA's Adam Rippon and Jason Brown following in second and third.

Uno hit a quadruple flip, triple Axel and three level-four spins in his program to "Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra" by Nigel Hess, but he fell on the back end of his quad toe-triple toe combination. The reigning ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist picked up 89.95 points, a seasons best. "I believe my body moved very well today I had a good feeling while I was jumping and I think my skate itself went very well. However, in my combination, the triple (toe), I did not do well. Also the triple Axel in terms of quality I have something I need to remind myself. In other words, I have some challenges left but at the same time I did some of my homework as well", Uno commented.

Skating to "Let Me Think About It", Rippon produced a triple flip-triple toe, triple Axel, triple Lutz and two level-four spins to score 87.32 points. "It's always so exciting to skate at home and skate well and have the audience on their feet. It wasn't my best skating today but I'm really proud of what I did. Later in the season I'd like to add a quad to the short program and improve the overall quality. I had a lot of fun today, but I'm going to take what I did today right into the free skate. I've been working really hard", the U.S. Champion said.

Jason Brown's routine to "Writing's On the Wall" included a triple Axel and triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but he fell on the quadruple toeloop and did not get credit for his camel spin. Brown earned 85.79 points. "As a performance, I'm super, super excited with my skate. I think it's one of the best performed short programs of the season. The technical side it wasn't my strongest skate, I'm especially disappointed in missing a spin. I'm sure and confident it will not happen again because I will totally make sure that my hand is grabbing my blade before I change positions", the 2015 Skate America bronze medalist explained.

Nam Nguyen (CAN) is currently ranked fourth at 79.63 points and Sergei Voronov (RUS) placed fifth with 78.68 points.

Ashley Wagner (USA) skates to Ladies' gold

Ashley Wagner (USA) skated to the Ladies' gold medal. Mariah Bell (USA) rose from sixth to win her first Grand Prix medal, a silver, and Mai Mihara of Japan took the bronze in her debut at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series.

Wagner's program to "Exogenesis Symphony" by Muse featured four triples and two double Axels, but a triple toe and triple flip were underrotated. The World silver medalist picked up a level four

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for the flying sit spin and a level three for her combination spins and the footwork. Wagner was ranked second in the Free Skating with 126.94 points and remained in first overall at 196.44 points. "I think that the weight of this competition shook out. I'm so proud of that short program. That is the athlete I really want to be this season. The long program... it would be amazing to have perfect programs every single time, but sometimes you need programs like that where they're not bad but they're not great and it kind of keeps you in check on where you are and what you need to work on," Wagner told the post-event press conference.

Performing to "East of Eden", Bell landed a triple Lutz-triple toe and four more triples to score a personal best of 130.67 points and to win the Free Skating. She totaled 191.59 points. "I'm very, very proud of my performance today. My goal this season has been to improve on my personal best. I haven't really been thinking about results or placements, but being on the podium is very exciting, but I'm mostly excited about improving on my personal best for the season so far and I'm looking forward to the rest of the season," the 20-year-old noted.

Mihara completed five clean triples including a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but she doubled a Salchow and landed forward on a triple toe in her routine to "Cinderella" by Patrick Doyle. The 17-year-old received 123.53 points and slipped from second to third at 189.28 points overall. "I definitely feel a lot of regret about my free program. I am surprised with the result here. It was unexpected. I'd like to take this confidence level into my next competition, the Cup of China," the Japanese skater said.

Gabrielle Daleman (CAN) remained in fourth place (186.63 points) while Gracie Gold (USA) dropped from third to fifth (184.22 points). Three-time World Champion Mao Asada (JPN) finished sixth at 176.78 points after some errors.

Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) lead after Short Dance

Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) danced to the lead in the Short Dance. Russia's Ekaterina Bobrova/ Dmitri Soloviev came second and Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) finished third.

Dancing to "That's Life" in a Blues and Hip Hop version, Shibutani/Shibutani earned a level four for the Blues sequence and the twizzles. However, the step sequence and the side by side footwork were rated a level two. The World silver medalists scored 73.04 points. "We've been working hard this whole off season to really come up with a concept we believe in. It's a really exciting program for us and were looking forward to see how it will grow," Maia Shibutani said. "We saw the protocol and we got a level 4 on the blues, which we were happy about. The rest I think we'll just have to wait and get some feedback because we're focused on tomorrow," she added.

Bobrova/Soloviev's Blues "Mercy On Me" by Christina Aguilera and Swing "Sing Sing Sing" was highlighted by level four-twizzles and a level-four straight line lift. The other three elements garnered a level two and the Russian Champions collected 68.92 points. "This is not our first performance in this season and we, unfortunately, are not happy. We will have to investigate why the levels are so low. In some places we do agree and in some places we are surprised. When we'll get back home we'll analyze it in detail," Soloviev shared.

Hubbell/Donohue produced three level-four elements in their Blues and upbeat Hip Hop dance to earn 68.78 points, a seasons best. "I'm someone that loves hip hop and so does Zach. We love watching it, but it's not a dance style that we're doing all the time. It definitely takes a lot of facial expression, a lot of attitude, it's very in your face. It's difficult to train on a daily basis given both

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the technical side and the performance side but we are enjoying the process. We wanted to give it a really hip hop competition feel with all the music cuts, the crazy mix, bringing in all the genres and all the decades. It's growing well and by the end of the season it's going to be a huge hit," Hubbell explained.

Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin (RUS) are not far behind in fourth place at 66.60 points followed by Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri (ITA) with 64.79 points.

Julianne Seguin/Charlie Bilodeau (CAN) claim Pairs gold

Julianne Seguin/Charlie Bilodeau of Canada claimed victory in the Pairs event, taking their first Grand Prix gold medal. Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) earned the silver medal, as they had two years ago at Skate America in Chicago while Russia's Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov settled for the bronze.

Performing to "Cinema Paradiso", Seguin/Bilodeau produced a triple twist, triple toe-double toe combination, triple Salchow, throw triple Lutz and loop to score 130.82 points. Overall the team from Quebec racked up 197.31 points to move up from third place after the Short Program. "We are really happy with what we did today we have been able to focus on the long program even with the mistake we did in the short program, so we're happy with that. We got the gold so, it's amazing," Bilodeau commented. "We are always working the same way. We keep in our mind that we are not focusing on any place, any podium or anything. We are just working hard, do our job, do our best, skate with our heart and that's what we were able to do tonight," Seguin noted.

Denney/Frazier turned in a strong performance as well, completing a triple twist, throw triple loop and Salchow and picking up a level four for five elements. The only major glitch came when Denney singled the Axel. The 2013 World Junior Champions, who missed last season as she recovered from a knee injury, set a new personal best in the Free Skating with 125.36 points and overall with 192.65 points. "We're very appreciative with every opportunity we've been given this week. Training has been quite a process coming back. I told Haven earlier this week that it was just great to be able to come to this arena where we came in second two years ago and had a strong performance in the free skate. It was a good emotional feeling this week to come out and put out two respectable programs", Frazier said.

Overnight leaders Tarasova/Morozov had a shaky start when she fell on the quadruple twist and then singled the side by side Salchow while he doubled the toeloop. The two-time European bronze medalists recovered to land a throw triple Salchow and loop as well as two level-four lifts, but were ranked only fifth in the Free Skating with 110.70 points. They dropped to third at 185.94 points. "This morning I started feeling not very well and I had a high temperature. When the quad twist went wrong one mistake led to the other. Only in the second half of the program we calmed down", Morozov offered.

Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres (FRA) remained in fourth place (174.65 points) and Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov (RUS) placed fifth (174.52 points).

Progressive Skate America concludes Sunday with the Men's Free Skating, Free Dance and Exhibition Gala. A total of 57 skaters/couples from 13 ISU members compete at Progressive Skate America. For full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isu.org/en/single-and-pair-skating-and-ice-dance/series/isu-grand-prix-of-figure-skating>

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