

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **Audi Cup of China 2016 Preview #GPFigure**

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2016/17 continues this week with the Audi Cup of China in Beijing November 18 to 20. Audi Cup of China is the fifth of six events in the series. 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.

### **Overview over the top contenders**

Three-time World Champion Patrick Chan (CAN) headlines the Men's event. The 2014 Olympic silver medalist wants to follow up on his win at Skate Canada International and book his ticket to the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final next month. Competition should come from 2016 World bronze medalist Boyang Jin (CHN), who wants to improve on his fifth place finish at Progressive Skate America. 2016 Four Continents bronze medalist Han Yan (CHN), Michal Brezina (CZE), Sergei Voronov (RUS), Maxim Kovtun (RUS) and Max Aaron as well as 2016 World Junior Champion Daniel Samohin (ISR) are challenging for the podium as well.

2016 World silver medalist Ashley Wagner (USA) leads the Ladies. Competition should come from Skate Canada silver medalist Kaetlyn Osmond (CAN), European silver medalist Elena Radionova (RUS) and 2015 World Champion Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS). Wagner, who won Progressive Skate America as well as Osmond and Radionova, who both have a silver medal from their first Grand Prix event, have a good chance to qualify for the Final. Other contenders are Rostelecom Cup bronze medalist Courtney Hicks (USA), Skate America bronze medalist Mai Mihara (JPN), Rika Hongo (JPN) and Zijun Li (CHN).

The Pairs event looks wide open with a mix of new and experienced teams. Xiaoyu Yu/Hao Zhang (CHN) only have been skating together since last spring, but already took silver at Skate Canada International and have a good shot at making the Final with another podium finish here in Beijing. Two-time European Champions Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS) want to do better than at Skate Canada International where they had come fifth. Skate Canada bronze medalists Liubov Ilyushechkina/Dylan Moscovitch (CAN) hope for another Grand Prix medal while Cheng Peng/Yang Jin (CHN) debut as a team on the circuit.

In the Ice Dance event, World silver medalists Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) are looking to earn their spot for the Grand Prix Final after winning gold at Skate America. The main challenge should come from two-time World medalists Kaetlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje (CAN), who took bronze at Rostelecom Cup. Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin (RUS) and Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) are aiming at the podium as well.

A total of 58 skaters/couples from 11 ISU members compete at Trophée de France. 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>

### **The schedule of Audi Cup of China is as follows:**

Friday, November 18: Short Dance, Ladies, Men's and Pairs Short Program  
Saturday, November 19: Free Dance, Ladies, Men's and Pairs Free Skating  
Sunday, November 20: Exhibition Gala

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