

## Press release

28 September 2017

### **Figure skaters take first step towards Olympic qualification at Nebelhorn Trophy**

ISU Challenger Series Nebelhorn Trophy 2017: Olympic Qualifying Competition Day One The ISU Challenger Series Nebelhorn Trophy 2017 opened Thursday with the Short Dance, Men's and Pairs Short Programs in Oberstdorf, Germany. Nebelhorn Trophy is the designated Olympic Qualifying Event this season. 25 Men, 34 Ladies, 11 Pairs and 16 Ice Dance couples compete for six available spots in Men's, Ladies and Ice Dance and five spots in Pair Skating. More spots might become available if countries return Olympic quota places.

#### **Coomes/Buckland (GBR) take confident lead, poised for Olympic berth Great Britain's**

Penny Coomes/Nicholas Buckland took a confident lead in the Short Dance and are now in a prime position to secure an Olympic berth for Great Britain. Kana Muramoto/Chris Reed of Japan are currently ranked second, followed by Germany's Kavita Lorenz/Joti Polizoakis.

Coomes/Buckland turned in a strong dance to "Rhumba d'Amour" and the Samba "Batacudá", scoring a personal best of 71.79 points. "I am so thankful to be back, I worked very, very hard to be here and today made all of that hard work worth it. I really enjoyed it and I think it made me appreciate the moment more. I was out there and I just loved every second", said Coomes, who missed the whole past season due to a severe knee injury.

Muramoto/Reed performed to the Cha Cha "Like It Like That", Rhumba "Mondo Bongo" and Samba "Batucada de Sambrasil" and picked up a seasons best of 62.67 points. "We really enjoyed every moment out there. It is such a fine program and we are looking forward to skating our free dance the day after tomorrow", Muramoto commented.

Lorenz/Polizoakis earned 61.09 points for their dance to Salsa "Aquarelle", Rhumba "Mil Pasos" and Samba "Magalenha". "It is always a pleasure to skate at home and we can't wait until Saturday to perform our free dance", Lorenz told the press.

Allison Reed/Saulius Ambrulevicius (LTU) are standing in fourth place at 58.34 points followed by Cecilia Törn/Jussiville Partanen (FIN) with 56.32 points and Lucie Mysliveckova/Lukas Csolley (SVK) at 55.97 points.

19 Olympic spots for Ice Dance were allocated at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2017 and six more spots are available at Nebelhorn Trophy. Originally five spots were available, but since Denmark returned their Ice Dance quota place, a sixth spot has opened up for the competitors at Nebelhorn Trophy.

**Tarasova/Morozov (RUS) lead after Pairs Short Program**

European Champions Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov of Russia skated to the lead in the Pairs Short Program Thursday at Nebelhorn Trophy. World silver medalists Aliona Savchenko/Bruno Massot of Germany are sitting in second place before the Free Skating on Friday while Austria's Miriam Ziegler/Severin Kiefer came third.

Tarasova/Morozov put out a strong performance to «Piano Concerto No 2 » by Sergei Rachmaninov, that was highlighted by a triple twist, side by side triple toe and a triple throw loop. They scored 77.52 points. « For the first competition of the season the short program was not bad, it was good, but we had some little mistakes », Morozov noted.

Savchenko/Massot produced a big triple twist and three level-four elements in their Flamenco routine « Fuego », but she fell on the throw triple Axel and stepped out of the landing of the triple Salchow. The World and European silver medalists scored 72.99 points. « It is our first competition and still a practice for us. We still need to practice this program. But we feel good and we know that we still have to work for the Grand Prix », Massot explained.

Ziegler/Kiefer landed a triple twist, triple toe and throw triple flip in their program to « Sunshine to Leith » to set a new personal best of 65.09 points. « This is our only chance to qualify for the Olympic Games and we got off to a good start and we hope to continue like that tomorrow », Kiefer told the press.

World Junior Champions Ekaterina Alexandrovskaya/Harley Windsor (AUS) placed fourth (64.91) and are in the running for an Olympic berth right now as are Tae Ok Ryom/Ju Sik Kim (PRK, 60.19 points) in fifth, Anna Duskova/Martin Bidar (CZE) in seventh place (58.80 points) and Paige Connors/Evgeni Krasnopolski (ISR) in ninth (55.85 points).

16 Olympic spots for Pairs were allocated at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2017 and five more spots are available at Nebelhorn Trophy. Originally four spots were available, but since France returned their second Pairs quota place, a fifth spot has opened up for the competitors at Nebelhorn Trophy.

**Jorik Hendrickx (BEL) claims Men's Short Program at Nebelhorn Trophy**

Jorik Hendrickx of Belgium skated first and finished first in the Men's Short Program at Nebelhorn Trophy Thursday in Oberstdorf, Germany. Alexander Johnson (USA) came second and Sweden's Alexander Majorov sits in third place.

Hendrickx turned in a solid performance to "Je suis malade", landing a triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe and triple loop. The Belgian Champion earned 85.15 points, setting a new personal best score. "I skated first, but it wouldn't influence my skating. I just went out there, I tried to get all my elements, I skated with my heart and I trusted in the judges and the technical panel to judge me the right way and I think they did and I skated my best", Hendrickx commented.

Johnson's program to "Legends" by Sacred Spirits included a triple Axel, triple flip, triple Lutztriple toe and smooth footwork. The 27-year-old scored 82.55 points, a new personal best score. "I'm thrilled. As a senior, I've never skated a clean program internationally. So today was a big day for me and I'm really proud of myself for doing that, especially under the circumstances of skating last and having a long day", Johnson said.

Skating to "Bang Bang" by Asif Avidan, Majorov landed a quadruple toeloop and triple Axel, but he reduced his planned triple toe-triple toe combination to triple-double. The Swede picked up 77.01 points. "It was okay, not the best one, but I'm satisfied. I could have done a triple-triple, but I didn't do it. It's a sport and anything can happen", Majorov shared. "It (competing for an Olympic spot) is not nerve-wrecking, if you are nervous you do stuff that you don't do otherwise and you need to be calm", he added.

The race for the Olympic spots is still wide open with several contenders having a chance. June Hyoungh Lee (KOR) ranks fourth at 74.37 points, Matteo Rizzo (ITA) is in fifth (72.97 points) and Julian Zhi Jie Yee (MAS) sits in sixth place (71.93 points).

24 Olympic spots for Men were allocated at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2017 and six more spots are available at Nebelhorn Trophy. Of the 26 Men only Johnson is not competing for a spot as the USA already have qualified three men.

For further information including [results](#) and follow the discussion on social media by using **#FigureSkating #NebelhornTrophy** and watch the live stream [here](#).

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