

Press release

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ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2017/18: Rostelecom Cup Day One

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2017/18 opened Friday with the Short Programs and the Short Dance at Rostelecom Cup in Moscow (RUS) on Friday.

Chen (USA) shocks Hanyu (JPN), jumps to lead in Men's Short

USA's Nathan Chen jumped into the lead as the ISU Grand Prix Rostelecom Cup opened with the Men's Short Program on Friday in Moscow. Olympic Champion Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) had to settle for second place for now as he fell on his jump combination. Dmitri Aliev, of Russia, came out strong in his Grand Prix debut to place third in the first phase of the competition.

Skating to 'Nemesis', Chen nailed a quad Lutz+triple toe combo and followed up with a quad flip and somewhat shaky triple Axel, as well as two level-four spins and level four footwork to score a season's best of 100.54 points. "I am happy with the scores that I got and happy that I did fairly clean program that early in the season. I definitely have a lot of work going into the (PyeongChang 2018 Olympic Winter) Games et cetera, but I am happy with what I did and I just need to keep my mind straight and keep working hard", the 18-year-old told the press.

Hanyu, who skated last out of the 12 men, stepped out of his opening quad loop that was under-rotated but recovered to hit a brilliant triple Axel. However, the world champion then fell on the back end of his quad toe-triple toe combination. He earned 94.85 points. "I've competed in Moscow six and seven years ago and it was here that I won my first Grand Prix event, so I have good memories," the two-time world champion said, adding: "Today I made some mistakes in my short program, but overall it didn't feel bad. I hope I will skate better tomorrow."

2017 world junior silver medallist Aliev turned in a clean performance to 'Masquerade Waltz' that included a triple Lutz-triple toe, quad toe and a triple Axel. Aliev picked up a personal best score of 88.77 points. "The only thing that didn't work today is the Lutz that was planned as a quad. I think I rushed it and I was a little nervous. I have to get used to this atmosphere and do my job, though," the Russian junior champion commented.

Russian champion Mikhail Kolyada fell out of his quad toe and currently sits in fourth place at 85.79, almost tied with Misha Ge (UZB) at 85.02 points in fifth. Deniss Vasiljevs (LAT) stands in sixth (82.44 points).

Shibutani/Shibutani (USA) edge Bobrova/Soloviev (RUS) in Short Dance

Three-time world championship medallists Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) edged home-crowd favourites Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev (RUS) by 0.97 points as the ISU Grand Prix of Figure

Skating Rostelecom Cup continued with the Short Dance on Friday. Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin, of Russia, came third.

Shibutani/Shibutani brought a real Latin feel to the Megasport Arena with their dynamic performance to ‘Mambo No. 5’, ‘Cherry Pink And Apple Blossom White’ and ‘Mambo Jumbo’. The brother-and-sister team picked up a level four for four out of five elements, their excellent synchronized twizzles in particular drawing extra applause from the crowd. The 2017 world championship bronze medalists scored 77.30 points, just below their personal best of 77.97 points.

“We’re so excited to be here and to begin our Grand Prix season, our Olympic season, here in Moscow. Our practices have been going great and we really enjoyed our performance today,” Alex Shibutani said. “We really love this program, the music is so dynamic and fun. The Latin rhythms I think will be really entertaining for the audience, and we really changed ourselves with our choreography this year,” his sister added.

Dancing to the rumba ‘Latin Lover’ and the samba pieces ‘Dance’ and ‘Quand je vois tes yeux’, Bobrova/Soloviev got the crowd going as well. The six-time Russian champions earned a level four for the twizzles, side by side footwork, the rumba pattern and their rotational lift to record a personal best 76.33 points. “I think we were able to do a good job since our last event in preparation for the Grand Prix, although it was only two weeks. But we fixed some technical things and in the choreography and the score reflected that,” Soloviev commented.

Stepanova/Bukin’s upbeat dance to rumba and samba rhythms was highlighted by their curve lift and well-executed twizzles. The 2013 world junior champions posted a season’s best with 71.32 points. “We are really pleased to skate here at home and we feel like we have improved since Finlandia Trophy last week,” Stepanova said.

Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier (CAN) remain close to the podium in fourth place at 69.67 points. Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri (ITA) follow in fifth place with 68.99 points. World junior champions Rachel Parsons/Michael Parsons (USA) debuted on the senior Grand Prix and are currently ranked seventh with 59.41 points.

Russia’s Tarasova/Morozov and Stolbova/Klimov go one-two in Pairs Short Program

Russian Pairs dominated the Short Program with European champions Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov finishing ahead of 2014 Olympic silver medallists Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov at the Rostelecom Cup on Friday. Italy’s Valentina Marchei/Ondrej Hotarek sit in third place.

Performing to Piano Concerto No.2, by Sergei Rachmaninov, Tarasova/Morozov produced a huge triple twist, a throw triple loop and level-four spin, lift and footwork. However, both wobbled on the solo jump, the triple toeloop. The ISU Grand Prix Final champions earned 76.88 points. “It was not a bad performance. There was a minor error, but all elements except for the jump (triple toe) were done well,” Tarasova said.

Stolbova/Klimov opened their routine to a tango version of ‘Besame Mucho’ with a triple twist and a throw triple flip, but Stolbova crashed on the triple toe. The 2014 world championship silver medallists still collected a season’s best with 71.39 points. “It was not bad, there was one mistake which I would say happened by chance,” Klimov told the post-event press conference.

Marchei/Hotarek entertained the crowd at Megasport Arena with their performance to “Tu vuo fa l’Americano” that was highlighted by a side-by-side triple Salchow, throw triple Lutz and a rhythmic step sequence. The Italians scored 68.48 points, setting a season’s best for themselves. “We really enjoyed our performance. The audience was so supportive and that made it easy to relax and do our job,” Marchei commented.

Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov (RUS) are within striking distance of the podium in fourth at 67.14 points, followed by Julianne Seguin/Charlie Bilodeau (CAN), who are on 67.06 points.

Mevedeva (RUS), Kostner (ITA) impress in Ladies Short Program

Two-time world champion Evgenia Medvedeva of Russia ruled once again in the Ladies Short Program at the Rostelecom Cup in Moscow, while five-time European champion Carolina Kostner, of Italy, returned to the Grand Prix series with a bang, placing second. Japan’s Wakaba Higuchi finished third in the first segment of the competition.

Medvedeva was dazzling in her program, performing to ‘Nocturne No.20’ by Frederic Chopin. The Muscovite nailed a triple flip-triple toeloop, triple loop, level-four spins and footwork and made it look easy. The two-time European champion scored 80.75 points, just 0.10 points below her own record score. “Overall I am pleased, but there were some small things in my performance that I didn’t like. I can’t say anything about the result now, because today is only a small part of what has to be done. The main job has to be done tomorrow,” the 17-year-old said.

Kostner gave a stunningly beautiful performance to ‘Ne me quitte pas’, the highlights of which were a triple toe-triple toe, triple loop, double Axel and difficult footwork. The Olympic bronze medallist scored 74.62 points, a season’s best. The Italian, at 30 years of age the oldest competitor, has not competed on the Grand Prix circuit for three years. “I am glad to be here in Moscow, in Russia, because I lived many amazing moments of my career here. I won my first world (championship) medal in Moscow many years ago and everything started here,” the 2012 world champion said.

Higuchi turned in a dynamic ‘Gypsy Dance’ (by Leon Minkus), hitting a big double Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe and triple flip. She earned 69.60 points. “Today in the short program I skated like in practice and my body felt good. I am a little disappointed with my score, but it is obvious what the mistake was and it is easy to fix for tomorrow,” the two-time world junior bronze medallist said.

2017 world junior bronze medallist Kaori Sakamoto (JPN) is not far behind in fourth at 68.88 points, followed by 2015 world championship bronze medallist Elena Radionova (RUS) in fifth with 68.75 points. Elizabet Tursynbaeva (KAZ) completes the top six (63.92 points). Mirai Nagasu (USA) landed



INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS AVENUE JUSTE-OLIVIER 17 - CH 1006 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
PHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 FAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL media@isu.ch

a triple Axel, but it was under-rotated and she fell on the jump combination and the triple Lutz to finish ninth (56.15 points).

Rostelecom Cup continues Saturday with the Men Free Skating, Free Dance, Pairs and Ladies Free Skating.

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series consists of six events and culminates in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Nagoya (JPN) in December. The top six skaters/couples in each discipline qualify for the Final. The global prize money for the Grand Prix is US \$ 272,000. Full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2017/18 are available [here](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#GPFigure #FigureSkating**.

For further information please contact:

Selina Vanier
ISU Communications Coordinator
media@isu.ch
Tel: +41 21 612 66 66