

Press release

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ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2017/18: Audi Cup of China Preview

Reigning World Pairs Champions [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) (CHN), two-time World Ice Dance Champions [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) (FRA) as well as two-time World Champion [Javier Fernandez](#) (ESP) open their Grand Prix season this week at Audi Cup of China in Beijing while other skaters already enter their second event and hope to earn a spot at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. Audi Cup of China is the third event of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2017/18. A total of 57 skaters/couples from 11 ISU members compete in Beijing.

Overview of the top contenders

Top seed Fernandez headlines the men's event. The five-time European Champion already has a victory at Autumn Classics this season under his belt. Competition should come from two-time and reigning World bronze medalist [Boyang Jin](#) (CHN), World Junior Champion [Vincent Zhou](#) (USA) and European bronze medalist [Mikhail Kolyada](#) (RUS). Kolyada took a bronze medal at the first Grand Prix event, Rostelecom Cup, two weeks ago and has a chance to qualify for the Final here in Beijing. Other contenders include [Max Aaron](#) (USA), [Keiji Tanaka](#) (JPN), [Han Yan](#) (CHN) and [Kevin Reynolds](#) (CAN).

2017 World bronze medalist [Gabrielle Daleman](#) (CAN) leads the Ladies and enters her first Grand Prix this season. She will face 2017 Four Continents Champion [Mai Mihara](#) (JPN), 2015 World Champion [Elizaveta Tuktamysheva](#) (RUS) and two-time European silver medalist [Elena Radionova](#) (RUS), who finished fourth in Moscow. Rostelecom Cup bronze medalist [Wakaba Higuchi](#) (JPN) aims for another podium finish and a spot in the Grand Prix Final. All of them have to watch out for 2017 World Junior Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) (RUS), who debuts on the senior Grand Prix circuit. 2017 World Junior silver medalist [Marin Honda](#) (JPN) looks to improve on her fifth place finish at Skate Canada International last week. [Zijun Li](#) (CHN) has withdrawn and has not been replaced.

World Champions Sui/Han are the top contenders in the Pairs event. They have to expect competition from ISU Grand Prix Finalists [Xiaoyu Yu/Hao Zhang](#) (CHN), [Valentina Marchei/Ondrej Hotarek](#) (ITA), [Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#) (ITA) and [Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) (CAN). There are seven teams competing as [Anna Duskova/Martin Bidar](#) (CZE) have withdrawn due to Duskova being injured and could not be replaced.

“Audi Cup of China will be our first international competition this season, we only competed nationally. I think we are in a good shape and we are looking forward to the event”, Han said.

Three-time European Champions Papadakis/Cizeron (FRA) headline the Ice Dance event will be up against two-time World medalists [Madison Chock/Evan Bates](#) (USA) and multiple European medalists [Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev](#) (RUS). Other competitors include [Tiffani Zagorski/Jonathan](#)

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[Guerreiro](#) (RUS), [Elliana Pogrebinski/Alex Benoit](#) (USA) and 2016 World Junior Champions [Lorraine McNamara/Quinn Carpenter](#) (USA), who debut on the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating.

The schedule of Audi Cup of China is as follows:

Friday, November 3: Short Dance, Ladies, Men and Pairs Short Programs
Saturday, November 4: Free Dance, Ladies, Men and Pairs Free Skating
Sunday, November 5: Exhibition Gala

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**.

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