



## Press release

03 November 2017

### ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2017/18: Audi Cup of China Day One

Reigning World Pairs Champions [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) (CHN) and two-time World Ice Dance Champions [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) (FRA) skated into the lead as the ISU Audi Cup of China in Beijing opened with the Short Dance and the Short Programs in Beijing on Friday. Audi Cup of China is the third event of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2017/18.

#### **Papadakis/Cizeron (FRA) smash Short Dance, score personal best**

France's [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) smashed the competition in the Short Dance, taking the lead by more than eight points. Two-time World medalists [Madison Chock/Evan Bates](#) (USA) and multiple European medalists [Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev](#), of Russia, are almost tied in second and third place.

Papadakis/Cizeron's samba and rumba to 'Shape of You' and 'Thinking Out Loud' featured smooth footwork and well-synchronized twizzles. The two-time World Champions picked up a level four for the twizzles, rumba pattern and the straight line lift, while the side-by-side step sequence merited a level three. The three-time European Champions set a personal best of 81.10 points. "It was a very good performance, especially for the beginning of the season. We made a lot of improvement on the technical score compared to the beginning of the season but also to last year," Papadakis commented. "We worked with Christopher Dean on the short dance and he came up with the idea (to skate to Ed Sheeran), which we loved. The music has this urban Latin feeling. It is very popular and fun to dance to," Cizeron added.

Dancing to salsa, rumba and samba, Chock/Bates produced level-four twizzles and a level-four lift, as well as two level-three elements, to score 72.66 points. "We're so happy to be back at the Grand Prix in China. This is our first event this season. We felt we skated really well today, it was a fun performance for us. There were a few low levels, so we have to go back to the drawing board and have a look at that and make some improvements," Chock said.

Bobrova/Soloviev's dance to rumba and two samba pieces included level-four twizzles and a level-four rotational lift, but the side by side footwork was rated a level two, like for Chock/Bates. The 2013 European Champions scored 72.34 points, four points below their season's best. "We have mixed feelings," admitted Soloviev. "We were very pleased with our performance, but we are a bit upset with some of the levels. It is still the beginning of the season and some mistakes can happen. But tomorrow is a new day and we love our free dance and hope it will be better," Soloviev said.



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[Tiffani Zagorski/Jonathan Guerreiro](#) (RUS) came fourth at 67.62 points followed by 2016 World Junior Champions [Lorraine McNamara/Quinn Carpenter](#) (USA/63.65 points) and [Angelique Abachkina/Louis Thauron](#) (FRA) with 59.91 points.

## **Daleman (CAN) leads in close Ladies Short**

2017 World bronze medalist [Gabrielle Daleman](#), of Canada, took a narrow lead as the Audi Cup of China continued Friday in Beijing with the Ladies Short Program. Daleman edged out Japan's [Wakaba Higuchi](#) and Russia's [Elena Radionova](#) by less than a point to take the lead.

Daleman opened her program to 'Habanera' (from Carmen) by George Bizet with a high triple toe-triple toe combination and followed up with a triple Lutz and double Axel. Only the layback spin was somewhat wobbly. The Canadian earned 70.65 points, a season's best. "I was very happy with how today went. It is another stepping stone to a long season and I'm very happy I'm starting off my Grand Prix season with a new season's best," Daleman said. "There is still lots of room for improvement and I can't wait building to it. "At the end of the day, tomorrow is a new day, it's a new program, I'm just going to skate the long program I've been doing in training, focus on what I can control, and the rest is out of my hands," she added when asked about the closeness of the competition.

Higuchi's performance to 'Gypsy Dance', by Leon Minkus, was highlighted by a big double Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe, triple flip and two level-four spins. The Rostelecom bronze medalist scored 70.53 points. "I felt I skated well in the Short Program, but some details I can do better and this is something I will work hard for," the two-time World Junior bronze medalist told the post-event press conference. "We still have the free skating tomorrow, my goal is to make the Grand Prix Final, so I will work hard for that", the Japanese skater continued.

Radionova produced a triple Lutz-triple toe, triple loop, double Axel as well as level-four spins and footwork in her routine to 'Porgy and Bess' to collect a season's best of 70.48 points. "After Rostelecom Cup I didn't have to travel anywhere so I went right back to training, because there was not so much time before the next Grand Prix," the two-time European silver medalist said. "I think I skated with more confidence and better and the scores reflect that. The difference in points indeed is very small, so everything will be decided tomorrow in the free skating."

The skaters ranked fourth to seventh still have a good chance to fight for the podium. 2017 World Junior Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) (RUS) fell on the back end of the triple Lutz-triple loop combination, but landed a triple flip to come fourth at 69.44 points. 2015 World Champion [Elizaveta Tuktamysheva](#) (RUS) finished fifth with 67.10 points. 2017 World Junior silver medalist [Marin Honda](#) (JPN) and 2017 Four Continents Champion [Mai Mihara](#) (JPN) follow in sixth and seventh place, respectively. They are virtually tied with 66.90 points each, but Honda's slightly higher technical score placed her ahead.

## **Kolyada (RUS) upsets Jin (CHN), Fernandez (ESP) to win Men's Short**

Russia's [Mikhail Kolyada](#) upset reigning World bronze medalist [Boyang Jin](#), of China, and Spain's two-time World Champion [Javier Fernandez](#) to take the lead in the Men's Short Program.

Skating to Piano Concerto No. 23 by Mozart, Kolyada reeled off a quad Lutz, quad toe-triple toe, triple Axel and two level-four spins, but wobbled on his camel spin. The Russian Champion recorded a personal best 103.13 points, joining the exclusive '100+' club for the first time. "I did not look so happy at the end of my program because this is only the Short Program and everything will be decided tomorrow," the European bronze medalist said. "So I did not let my emotions out. Overall, I enjoyed my performance today. The only negative thing was the change foot camel spin – I somehow lost my focus," the 22-year-old added.

Jin touched down with his hand on the quad Lutz in the combination jump and also turned out of the quad toeloop in his program to 'Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon'. The two-time and current World bronze medalist recovered to hit a solid triple Axel and difficult spins to set a season's best with 93.89 points. "It is a season's best, but it is not my personal best," the 20-year-old commented. "The performance was OK but the jumps did not work so well. I got level fours for my spins – that was good."

Fernandez landed a quad Salchow and level four spins and footwork in his Charlie Chaplin routine. However, the five-time European Champion reduced his combination to a triple toe-double toe and stepped out of the landing of the triple Axel. He earned 90.57 points. "Sometimes I skate well, sometimes not so well. I have been training well during the competition, but I was not able to do a great Short Program," Fernandez said. "The judges did not seem to like my program, I got low component scores."

[Keiji Tanaka](#) (JPN) follows in fourth with a personal best score of 87.19 points. [Max Aaron](#) (USA) ranks fifth (83.11 points) and [Han Yan](#) (CHN) completes the top six on 82.22 points.

### **Sui/Han (CHN) dominate in Pairs Short Program**

Reigning World Champions [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#), and [Xiaoyu Yu/Hao Zhang](#), led China's pairs to a one-two finish in the Short Program at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Audi Cup of China, with Italy's [Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#) in third.

Sui/Han, who are also Four Continents Champions, sparkled in their romantic 'Hallelujah' program, completing superb elements such as a throw triple flip, a level-four triple twist and side-by-side triple toeloop. Their side-by-side spin, the lift and the step sequence were rated a level four and the pair scored 80.14 points. "It is our first Grand Prix of the season so I was a bit nervous but we kept everything under control. We performed our regular level like in training and we really felt the support of the audience," Han said.



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Yu/Zhang delivered a solid performance to ‘Swan Lake’, the highlights of which were a huge triple twist and a throw triple loop. They picked up a level four for all five elements that are given levels. Yu had a shaky landing on only the side-by-side triple toe. The ISU Grand Prix Finalists earned 71.37 points. “We are satisfied with today’s program,” Yu said. “We are especially pleased with our component score. I think we did a good job there. The big throws went very well today, but I could have done the solo jump better.”

Skating to ‘Magnificat’, Della Monica/Guarise completed a triple twist, throw triple loop and three level four elements, but Guarise stepped out of the side-by-side triple Salchow. The Italian Champions picked up 63.76 points. “The program was a bit difficult today. We had to fight through some of the elements and we struggled with the (solo) jump, but overall I think it was a good program and we had good energy throughout,” the 29-year-old said.

[Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) (CAN) – on 62.52 points – remain within striking distance of the podium, while [Valentina Marchei/Ondrej Hotarek](#) (ITA) finished fifth (59.53 points).

Audi Cup of China continues Saturday with the Free Dance, Ladies, Men’s and Pairs Free Skating. A total of 57 skaters/couples from 11 ISU members compete in Beijing. 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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## **About ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2017/18 Series**

The **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating** Series started in 1995 (previously known as the ISU Champions Series) and consists of six international senior invitational events and the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final.

The individual Grand Prix of Figure Skating Events are held in Canada, China, France, Japan, Russia and USA each season.