

October 24, 2020

Las Vegas, USA

Guaranteed Rate Skate America Day One

Two-time ISU World Figure Skating Champion [Nathan Chen](#) (USA), [Mariah Bell](#) (USA), [Alexa Scimeca Knierim/Brandon Frazier](#) (USA) and two-time Ice Dance ISU World Figure Skating medalists [Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA) took the lead as Guaranteed Rate Skate America opened in Las Vegas (USA) Friday with the Short Programs and the Rhythm Dance.

Following a decision of the ISU Council due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, the Grand Prix events are primarily domestically run events with domestic skaters and skaters who train in the host country or respective geographical region competing.

Mariah Bell (USA) captures lead in Ladies Short Program

Multiple ISU Grand Prix medalist [Mariah Bell](#) (USA) captured the lead over teammate [Bradie Tennell](#). [Audrey Shin](#) (USA) sits currently in third place.

Skating to “Glitter in the Air” and “Pink”, Bell landed a double Axel, triple flip-triple toeloop combination and triple Lutz. The 2020 National silver medalist collected a level four for her spins and footwork to score 76.48 points. “Obviously this is an interesting situation that we are all in. Even if there wasn’t a crowd, I really enjoyed performing. I had a great time,” Bell said and revealed that she skated in her long program costume as she did not feel comfortable with her Short Program costume. “I didn’t have a back up and I just thought, my long program costume sits well, so I’ll just wear that. It will be round two tomorrow with it,” she added.

Tennell’s performance to “Moderation” Florence and the Machine was highlighted by a triple Flip, double Axel and difficult spins and step, but she underrotated the back end of her triple Lutz-triple toe combination. The 2020 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating bronze medalist earned 73.29 points. “We are all so grateful to be here and that we have this opportunity,” the 22-year-old commented. “I also had a really great time performing today. It’s been so long since we’ve been able to go out there and skate our programs for people. Even if they are not here in person with us, we appreciate all the support they give us from afar.”

Shin delivered as strong performance to “The Giving” by Michael W. Smith, hitting a triple Lutz-triple toe, double Axel and triple loop to pick up 69.77 points. “I had a great time performing at my first senior Grand Prix,” the 16-year-old said. “I was just really excited getting back out there and start competing again. Coming in, I prepared very well. I will just focus on the long program, taking one element at a time,” she added.

2017 National Champion [Karen Chen](#) currently ranks fourth at 68.13 points followed by [Amber Glenn](#) with 67.85 points.

Nathan Chen (USA) dominates Men’s Short Program

Two-time ISU World Figure Skating Champion [Nathan Chen](#) (USA) skated to a strong lead of twelve points in the Men’s Short Program ahead of [Vincent Zhou](#) (USA) and Canada’s [Keegan Messing](#).

Chen nailed a quad toe-triple toe combination, a quad flip, triple Axel and level-four spins and steps in his Flamenco-themed routine to “Asturias” and “Cancion de Mariachi”. He posted a big score of 111.17 points. “Speaking of the program, I’m pretty happy with where I am, given the unusual circumstances what is going on,” the US Champion said. “The program itself is new to me and there is still a lot of work and improvement to be done to this sort of style. In this program, although it is oriented in Latin-American as well as Spanish music, I am not trying to necessarily hit the identical movements of those dances, but we’re more trying to bring out the character of the movie that it is drawing inspiration from,” he explained.

Zhou’s performance to “Vincent” (Starry Starry Night), featured a quad Lutz-triple toe, quad Salchow, triple Axel and a level four flying camel spin. The 2019 World bronze medalist scored 99.36 points. “I think I did a great job, especially with the components, the projection, the performance. I am proud of what I did tonight. I had some shaky practices, mentally maybe not the best day, but I got it together,” he added.

Skating to “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran, Messing put out a strong performance as well. He produced a triple Axel, triple Lutz and excellent spins. However, the quad toe in the combination was shaky and he slipped briefly in the footwork. The Canadian picked up 92.40 points. “I was overall very excited about how my performance went, this being the first time I’ve skated in front of a ‘crowd’ this year, I was very happy put a clean program out there. I’m just really happy to go out and feel the butterflies again,” the 28-year-old skater noted.

2019 ISU World Junior Figure Skating Champion [Tomoki Hiwatashi](#) (USA) sits in fourth (87.17 points) while [Alexei Krasnozhan](#) (USA) came fifth (78.06 points). 2016 ISU European Figure Skating silver medalist [Alexei Bychenko](#) (ISR) is not far behind in sixth at 77.48 points.

Newcomers Scimeca/Frazier (USA) storm to lead in Pairs Short Program

The new team of [Alexa Scimeca Knierim/Brandon Frazier](#) (USA) stormed to the lead in the Pairs Short Program. [Jessica Calalang/Brian Johnson](#) (USA) and [Audrey Lu/Misha Mitrofanov](#) (USA) came second and third.

Scimeca Knierim/Frazier impressed in their debut and competed a triple twist, side by side triple toe and throw triple loop in their routine set to “In the End” by Tommee Profitt. They skated first and set the bar high with 74.19 points. “I always like to dream big, but I did not expect to be where we are today so soon,” Scimeca Knierim said. “We’ve been working really hard at home. We didn’t have much expectation coming in since this is our first real event. We’re happy with how we skated, but we know we have a lot of work ahead of us.”

Calalang/Johnson’s program to “Light of the Seven” from the “Game of Thrones” soundtrack was highlighted by a triple twist, difficult lift and throw triple Lutz. However, she fell on a triple Salchow attempt while he doubled the jump. The team scored 71.08 points. “Our performance wasn’t the best, we did have a mistake at the beginning, but we really tried to focus on our performance and overall skating skills,” Calalang shared.

Lu/Mitrofanov put out a solid program to “The Show Must Go On”, landing a triple Salchow, triple twist and throw triple loop for a score of 67.52 points. “We put down a very solid program and this gives us confidence right now going into the free skate,” Mitrofanov commented. “It is surprising for us to be in third place, but we’re super happy. Going into tomorrow, we’re going to stay focused and do what we did today,” Lu added.

2018 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating silver medalists [Ashley Cain-Gribble/Timothy LeDuc](#) (USA) placed fourth on 64.21 points. 2018 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Champions [Tarah Kayne/Danny O'Shea](#) (USA) made some errors to finish fifth in the segment (59.86 points).

Hubbell/Donohue (USA) shine in Rhythm Dance

Two-time ISU World Figure Skating Ice Dance medalists [Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA) shone in the Rhythm Dance to take the lead. [Kaitlyn Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker](#) (USA) are currently ranked second ahead of [Christina Carreira/Anthony Ponomarenko](#) (USA).

Hubbell/Donohue debuted a new program to "Burlesque", executing level-four twizzles, a level-four Finnstep pattern dance and a level-four rotational lift. The two-time US Champions looked sharp throughout the routine and scored 85.30 points.

"We missed competing and tonight certainly was a nice way to get back into the swing of things. Although there was no live audience we did feel some of this familiar adrenaline," Hubbell told the press. "We certainly took a long time during the summer to make the final decision about what we wanted to do (for the Rhythm Dance). Zach and I really love the challenge of a new project and we felt like as we loved Marilyn, we didn't feel there wasn't so much left to squeeze out of the program. We wanted to take all of the things that we learned from that character and apply it to something that is a little bit more modern, sexy, powerful," she explained.

Hawayek/Baker had kept their popular and entertaining "Saturday Night Fever" program. The 2018 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Champions collected a level four for the Finnstep, the Pattern Dance Step Sequence and their straight line lift. The twizzles were rated a level four for Hawayek and a level three for Baker. The team earned 81.15 points.

"Honestly, this program is such a joy and so much fun to not only perform but also to train. It doesn't feel like work when you're going in, have the run throughs, get the mileage. It was really easy for us to choose to keep it, because we love it so much," Hawayek said.

Carreira/Ponomarenko looked very precise in their routine to "Too Darn Hot" from "Kiss Me Kate" and also notched three level-four elements to post 78.63 points. The two-time World Junior medalists had decided to keep the program from last season as well.

"After quarantine, when we got back on to the ice, we felt that this program still has room to grow. We wanted to improve our Finnstep. I think we felt this was our weaker element last season," Carreira commented. "Skating this Rhythm Dance the second year, we really want to show confidence in our skating. We made a big improvement last year in Vegas so we wanted to keep pushing this program to the limit and hopefully do our best at Nationals," Ponomarenko added.

[Caroline Green/Michael Parsons](#) (USA) came fourth at 74.98 points with a characteristic dance to "Thoroughly Modern Millie". [Molly Cesanek/Yehor Yehorov](#) (USA) are sitting in fifth on 66.01 points.

Guaranteed Rate Skate America concludes with the Ladies, Pairs, Men's Free Skating and the Free Dance Saturday. For full results, entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series please visit: <https://isu.org/GrandPrix>.

Where to watch and follow the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2020?

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating will be live streamed on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#).

Geo-restrictions will apply in markets where TV rights are in place. You will find the full list in the [Where to Watch news here](#).

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ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2020

- [2020 Guaranteed Rate Skate America, Las Vegas \(USA\) – October 22-24](#)
- [Shiseido Cup of China, Chongqing \(CHN\) – November 6-8](#)
- [Rostelecom Cup, Moscow \(RUS\) – November 20-22](#)
- [NHK Trophy, Osaka \(JPN\) – November 27-29](#)
- [ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final – Beijing \(CHN\) postponed](#)

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final that was to be held as an Olympic Test Event on December 10-13 has been postponed. The ISU, in consultation with all stakeholders and considering the pandemic developments, is evaluating the continuation of the 2020/21 season, in particular the re-scheduling possibilities for the important Olympic Test Events.

About ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series started in 1995 (previously known as the ISU Champions Series) and consists of six invitational international senior events and the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. Due to the current situation, the usual selection criteria do not apply. Please see the [ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating page](#) for further information.