

February 15, 2022

Beijing, China

Kamila Valieva (ROC) leads after Women's Short Program

Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games

[Kamila Valieva](#)* (ROC) took the lead in the Women's Short Program followed by teammate [Anna Shcherbakova](#) and Japan's [Kaori Sakamoto](#).

Kamila Valieva skates to the lead

Valieva (ROC) stepped out of her opening triple Axel but landed a triple flip, triple Lutz-triple toe and produced exquisite spins and footwork in her routine to "In Memoriam" by Kirill Richter. The 2022 ISU European Champion earned 82.16 points. She declined to comment.

Performing to "Dangerous Affairs" and "Total View" by Inon Zur, Shcherbakova (ROC) produced a double Axel, triple flip, triple Lutz-triple toe combination as well as level-four spins and footwork to post a seasons best with 80.20 points.

"To my surprise, I was not nervous at all today. This is very important for me, because from the very first accent of the music I was in control of each move, each gesture, each jump and spin. I knew I am skating at the Olympic Games and I wanted to show the best of my abilities and I am glad that I managed to do that today," the reigning World Champion said. She revealed that she had to change her skating boots two days ago. "These things happen. It did not affect my performance and therefore I would like not to pay attention to that," the 17-year-old Skater explained.

Kaori Sakamoto overcomes nerves

Sakamoto's (JPN) performance to "The Gladiator" soundtrack featured a double Axel, a triple Lutz, triple flip-triple toe as well as difficult spins and steps. The NHK Trophy Champion set a new personal best score of 79.84 points.

"In the Short Program I was very nervous to be honest with you. I was the last Skater, but of course some of the benefit was, I was determined to make that huge impact. I was quite satisfied with my performance," the 2018 ISU Four Continents Champion told the press. "Before going on to the ice I was very nervous and I almost started to cry. I looked back at the past four years and I had happy moments and difficult moments. This is the stage to put all my emotions through, this is what I have worked for so hard the past four years and I was able to complete my performance to the end. When I went back to the rink side and saw my coach's face, all my nerves turned into tears," she shared.

The 2021 World bronze medalist [Alexandra Trusova](#) (ROC) placed fourth at 74.60 points. She completed three triple jumps, but fell on her underrotated triple Axel. "Back in Moscow I did the Axel all the time in training. Then something happened and here I started to make mistakes, but the last three days it started to work and I started to feel the jump. I don't know what happened now," she said.

[Wakaba Higuchi](#) (JPN) pulled off a nice triple Axel, but underrotated the back end of her triple Lutz-triple toe combo to finish fifth at 73.51 points. "I am actually quite satisfied with my triple Axel, but I think it was a pity because one of the jumps got downgraded. The score was not as high as I expected. It was actually lower than the Team Event," the 2018 World silver medalist said.

2020 Youth Olympic Games Champion [Young You](#) (KOR) went for a triple Axel as well, but it was downgraded. She currently sits in sixth position at 70.34 points. "I feel my skating today was ok. I think I am very happy with it, but still things were not perfectly done," she commented. [Loena Hendrickx](#) (BEL) came seventh (70.09 points) ahead of [Alysa Liu](#) (USA) at 69.50 points.

*Following the hearing of the Ad hoc Division of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in the arbitration procedures relating to Figure Skater Kamila Valieva (ROC), the International Skating Union (ISU) duly noted and will respect the ruling namely that the provisional suspension of Kamila Valieva remains lifted. Following on a request of the IOC for reasons of fairness, the ISU allowed a 25th Skater - [Jenni Saarinen](#) (FIN) - to participate in the Women Free Skating as Ms. Valieva ranked in the first 24 of the Short Program. [Further information on ISU website.](#)

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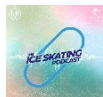
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Thursday, February 17, 2022
Women's Free Skating, 18:00 (local time)

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The International Skating Union (ISU), founded in 1892, is the oldest governing international winter sport federation and the exclusive international sport federation recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) administering the sports of Figure Skating (Single & Pair Skating and Ice Dance), Synchronized Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating worldwide. The objectives of the ISU are to regulate, govern, promote and develop its sports on the basis of friendship and mutual understanding between athletes. Currently three ISU disciplines are included in the Olympic Winter Games program (Figure Skating, Speed Skating and Short Track Speed Skating). For further information please visit [isu.org](#).