

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

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NHK Trophy 2016 Day One #GPFigure

NHK Trophy opened Friday in Sapporo, Japan with the Pairs, Ladies and Men's Short Program. NHK Trophy is the sixth and last event in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2016/17 and thus provides the last opportunity for skaters to qualify for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. Skaters also compete for a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Cheng Peng/Yang Jin (CHN) take Pairs Short Program

Cheng Peng/Yang Jin of China edged Canada's Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford for a narrow lead in the Pairs Short Program. Xuehan Wang/Lei Wang of China are currently ranked third.

Peng/Jin's performance to "My Drag" featured a side by side triple toeloop, triple twist and throw triple loop. The Cup of China silver medalists picked up a level four for four elements to set a new personal best with 73.33 points. "Today we performed to our ability. The elements were not perfect yet, we still can improve some things, but in general we skated better than at the Cup of China", Jin commented.

Duhamel/Radford produced a strong triple twist, a level-four Axel Lasso lift as well as a level-four spin and death spiral in their program to "Killer" by Seal. However, she fell on the throw triple Axel and the triple Lutz was shaky. The two-time and reigning World Champions scored 72.95 points. "It wasn't our best performance today, but it wasn't our worst. We can do it (throw triple Axel), we did it very well in practice here, so that was disappointing, but I think the overall program was better than at our first Grand Prix, at Skate Canada. We'll have to clean up some mistakes on the side by side jumps, obviously the throw and I had a little mishap in the footwork. That stuff will have to be cleaned up for the next competition, but we look forward to a great long program tomorrow", Duhamel told the press.

Wang/Wang completed a triple twist and a throw triple loop in their routine set to "Steppin' Out With My Baby", but she underrotated the triple toeloop. The team from Beijing earned 65.66 points. "We have some regrets about our performance today. We did not get the highest level for all elements. The triple toe, the spin and the death spiral were not so good. Hopefully we will skate better tomorrow", Xuehan Wang noted.

Mari Vartmann/Ruben Blommaert (GER) came fourth at 61.23 points followed by Tarah Kayne/Danny O'Shea (USA) with 57.02 points.

Anna Pogorilaya (RUS) skates to lead in Ladies Short Program

Russia's Anna Pogorilaya skated to the lead in the Ladies Short Program followed by her teammate Maria Sotskova. Satoko Miyahara of Japan finished third.

Pogorilaya hit a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but underrotated the toe, a triple loop, double Axel and collected a level four for two spins and the step sequence in her Tango program to "Scent of a Woman". The 2016 World bronze medalist picked up 71.56 points. "Overall I'm satisfied, I was able to show my skating, but obviously there were some little errors that I need to work on. Now I'm already preparing for the free skating", the two-time European bronze medalist said.

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Skating to “Butterflies Are Free” by Alfred Schnittke, Sotskova landed a triple Lutz-triple toe, a triple flip and double Axel. The three spins were rated a level four and the World Junior silver medalist achieved a new personal best with 69.96 points. “I am very pleased with my performance and I really like my score, because it is a new record for me. My performance was not so good, I can do better and I will work on that”, the 16-year-old commented.

Miyahara fell on an underrotated triple Lutz, but recovered to land a triple loop-double toe and got a level four for her spins and the footwork. The 2015 World bronze medalist earned 64.20 points. “Today’s performance was very disappointing for me and I am not satisfied. But I am still in third place and I hope to do better tomorrow.”

Mirai Nagasu (USA, 63.49 points) and Wakaba Higuchi (JPN, 62.58 points) are within striking distance of the podium in fourth and fifth place. Yura Matsuda (JPN) is currently ranked sixth at 60.98 points.

Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) wins Men’s Short Program

Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan took a strong lead in the Men’s Short Program. Nathan Chen (USA) sits in second and Keiji Tanaka of Japan came third.

Performing to “Let’s Go Crazy” by Prince, Hanyu pulled off a quadruple Salchow-triple toe, triple Axel and quad loop with a step out. The reigning Olympic Champion picked up a level four for his spins and step sequence and scored a seasons best of 103.89 points. “I was not able to land the quad loop cleanly and I’m very disappointed about that, however, I really was able to enjoy my skating today and I hope it will carry over to tomorrow and the next competition”, the 2015 World silver medalist explained.

Chen completed a quadruple flip-triple toe combination, but fell on his opening quadruple Lutz and stumbled on his triple Axel. The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final Champion earned 87.94 points. “I’m a little bit disappointed with how I did with my short program. I made to pretty big mistakes, but I’m happy that I hit the (quad) flip and added a combination on to that. Overall I’m excited to be on the senior circuit finally and I’m excited for what’s to come”, the Californian said.

Tanaka’s Tango routine featured a triple Axel, triple flip-triple toe, but he stepped out of his quadruple Salchow. “I regret that I was not able to land the quad (Salchow). However, I was able to calm down and regroup and land my other jumps”, the 2011 World Junior silver medalist commented.

Mikhail Kolyada (RUS) placed fourth at 78.18 points followed by Elladj Balde (CAN) with 76.29 points and Nam Nguyen (CAN) at 75.33 points.

NHK Trophy continues Saturday with the Short Dance, Pairs, Ladies and Men’s Free Skating. A total of 54 skaters/couples from 15 ISU members compete at NHK Trophy. For full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isu.org/en/single-and-pair-skating-and-ice-dance/series/isu-grand-prix-of-figure-skating>

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