

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final #JGPFigure Day One

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating and ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating opened Thursday in Marseille (FRA) with the Junior Short Dance, Junior Men, Junior Pairs and Junior Ladies Short Programs. The events feature the top six skaters/couples in each category from the ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating series.

Alla Loboda/Pavel Drozd (RUS) capture Junior Short Dance

Alla Loboda/Pavel Drozd of Russia captured the Junior Short Dance. USA's Rachel Parsons/Michael Parsons and Lorraine McNamara/Quinn Carpenter follow in second and third.

Dancing to "St. Louis Blues" and Swing, Loboda/Drozd picked up a level four for the twizzles, first Blues pattern and straight line lift while the second Blues pattern and the side by side circular footwork was rated a level three. The 2016 World Junior bronze medalists set a new personal best with 67.58 points. "We are very pleased with how we skated the short dance today. We made some changes and they paid off. This time we came to win. After winning silver twice, it is now time for us to get on the top of the podium, in our last Junior Final", Drozd commented.

Parsons/Parons' Hip Hop "A Little Party Never Killed Nobody" and Blues "Born to Die" featured four-level four elements and a level-three side by side step sequence. The reigning World Junior silver medalists achieved a seasons best of 66.91 points. "That felt really good, I feel like we accomplished exactly what we set out to. We put our best skate out there and whatever happens, happens. I don't think we can relax at all, one good skate doesn't necessarily equal another good skate", Rachel Parsons commented.

McNamara/Carpenter put out a solid dance to Blues and Hip Hop and picked up a level four for three elements, but the second Blues pattern was graded a level two. The 2016 World Junior Champions scored 63.73 points. "This year we've been focusing more on our personal skating skills and just want to show the improvement we know we've made this year", McNamara said.

Christina Carreira/Anthony Ponomarenko (USA) placed fourth at 61.39 points followed by Angelique Abachkina/Louis Thauron (FRA) at 60.08 points and Anastasia Shpilevaya/Grigory Smirnov (RUS) with 59.29 points.

Dmitri Aliev (RUS) skates to lead in Junior Men's Short Program

Dmitri Aliev led a Russian sweep of the Junior Men's Short Program with his teammates Alexander Samarin and Roman Savosin coming in second and third.

Aliev's performance to "Oblivion" by Astor Piazzolla was highlighted by a triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe, triple loop and two-level four spins. The 2015 ISU Junior Grand Prix Final silver medalist set a new personal best of 81.37 points. "Of course I am pleased with the score but most of all I am pleased with my skate. I think today I really did all the elements with quality and precision. In the lead up to the Grand Prix Final we changed the way we worked and I have been very focused", the 17-year-old said.

Skating to "Come With Me Now" by Kongos, Samarin landed a triple Axel, the required triple loop, a triple Lutz-triple toe combination and collected a level four for all three spins to score a

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personal best of 81.08 points. “I did everything I planned to do, but I still can do more. I really want to skate a good free program, because it’s my coach’s birthday on Saturday and I need to skate especially well for her”, the Muscovite commented.

Savosin completed a triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe and triple loop in his routine to “Bella Ciao” to earn 72.98 points, slightly surpassing his previous personal best score. “I tried my best, I could still skate better. This is my first time at the Final and it is a completely different experience for me, there are so many people and it all totally differs from what I am used to. But I think it will get easier”, the 17-year-old said.

Jun Hwa Cha (KOR) currently sits in fourth place (71.85 points). Alexei Krasnozhan (USA) ranks fifth (71.48 points) and Ilia Skidra (RUS) came sixth (68.31 points).

Anastasia Mishina/Vladislav Mirzoev (RUS) take Junior Pairs Short Program

Anastasia Mishina/Vladislav Mirzoev of Russia took the lead in the Junior Pairs Short Program. Czech Republic’s Anna Duskova/Martin Bidar placed second followed by Alina Ustimkina/Nikita Volodin of Russia.

Performing to “Saragina Rumba” Mishina/Mirzoev produced a triple twist, throw triple Lutz, side by side double Axel as well as level-four lift, side by side spin and step sequence. The World Junior silver medalists achieved a new personal best of 64.73 points. “We’re really pleased but of course it is too early to congratulate us! Now our main aim is to skate the free program cleanly, which is a bit more complicated”, Mishina told the press.

Duskova/Bidar opened their Tango program with a double Axel, but then she almost fell on the exit of the triple twist. The World Junior Champions recovered to complete a level-four reverse lasso lift and throw triple Lutz and picked up 61.38 points. “It could have been better. I messed up the landing on the twist. We can do a really good twist. Last season we worked on the technical scores and this season we’re working on the components. They’re important for going on to senior a new personal best competitions because senior pairs have more experience”, Duskova commented.

Ustimkina/Volodin’s performance included a double Axel, triple twist and throw triple toeloop. The couple from St. Petersburg scored 59.05 points. “It was very good; there were some small issues, like getting a level three for the twist when we should get a four, but the atmosphere was great, we could feel the warmth and the noise all around us and it felt great”, Ustimkina said.

Alina Zagitova (RUS) wins Junior Ladies Short Program

Alina Zagitova of Russia won the Junior Ladies Short Program. Kaori Sakamoto of Japan finished second and Russia’s Anastasiia Gubanova is standing in third place.

Zagitova’s performance to “Samson and Delilah” featured a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, triple loop, double Axel as well as level-four spins and footwork. The 14-year-old picked up 70.92 points, a new personal best. “I trained well for this, it is my biggest competition so far, so of course I prepared well for it. I worked on all my elements and developed the program”, Zagitova commented.

Sakamoto landed a double Axel, triple flip-triple toeloop combination, triple loop and level-four spins in her program to “The Artist” to score 64.48 points. “I’m quite satisfied with the performance, but I didn’t do quite well enough in some spins. As a total, I think I did a good job”, the Japanese Junior Champion noted.

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Gubanova completed a double Axel, triple loop and level-four footwork in her program set to “The Swan”, but fell on her triple Lutz. The 14-year-old earned 60.30 points. “I wasn’t nervous at all, quite the opposite. But I lost concentration for a moment and made a technical mistake. You need to be able to get your head together at the most difficult moments”, the skater from St. Petersburg explained.

Elizaveta Nugumanova (RUS) placed fourth at 58.34 points and Rika Kihira (JPN) is currently ranked fifth (54.78 points). Marin Honda (JPN) withdrew before the Short Program as had fallen sick with the flu.

The ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating is available as a live stream and on demand on the ISU Junior Grand Prix Youtube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/ISUJuniorGrandPrix> .

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final continued with the Pairs and Men Short Program. For full results please refer to www.isu.org .

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