

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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January 27, 2017

ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2017

Day Three

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2017 continued in Ostrava, Czech Republic, Friday with the Men's Short Program and the Ladies Free Skating.

Javier Fernandez (ESP) rules in Men's Short Program

Four-time European Champion Javier Fernandez of Spain skated to a strong lead in the Men's Short Program. Russia's Maxim Kovtun came second followed by Alexei Bychenko of Israel.

Fernandez reeled off a quadruple toeloop-triple toeloop combination, a quadruple Salchow, triple Axel and received a level four for his spins and footwork in his routine to "Malaguena" to post a new personal best of 104.25 points. "This was the first clean short program of the season. Half of the work is done. But I've seen skaters that were 10 points ahead and then they were not first after the free program. I cannot relax and I need to deliver a good performance", the four-time European Champion said.

Kovtun's program to "Bahamout" featured a quad Salchow-triple toeloop combination, quad toe, triple Axel as well as level-four steps and spins. The 2016 European bronze medalist earned 94.53 points, a new personal best. "Finally, everything just worked out today as I planned. I think it was worth putting the main focus on the mental preparation rather on the physical preparation. I am really pleased that I got highest level on all the elements, I do not think I have ever gotten that before. Tomorrow is a new and very important day and I hope I can bring a medal to Russia", the 2015 European silver medalist commented.

Skating to "Chambermaid Swing", Bychenko nailed his quad toe, triple flip-triple toe and triple Axel to pick up 86.68 points. "I felt great on the ice today. I did exactly what I had expected. My goal is always to show the best I can, we'll see the result in the end. In the free skate I have planned two quads, and there again, my goal is to skate clean", the 2016 European silver medalist noted.

Mikhail Kolyada (RUS) is currently ranked fourth at 83.96 points after singling the Axel. Jorik Hendrickx (BEL) came fifth (82.50 points) followed by Deniss Vasiljevs (LAT) at 79.87 points.

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships continue Saturday with the Free Dance and the Men's Free Skating. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and the official event website <http://ostrava2017.eu/en/>. #EuroFigure