

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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February 13, 2017

ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2017 Preview #4ContsFigure

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2017 will open in Gangneung, Korea, on Thursday. The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships return to Gangneung for the second time. Gangneung has hosted the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in 2005 and the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships in 2011. The Four Continents Championships 2017 serve as a test event for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. A total of 111 Skaters from 14 ISU Members have been entered for the Championships. Skaters/Couples need to have obtained a minimum total technical score in the Short Program and Free Skating in order to compete at the Four Continents Championships. Three reigning Four Continents Champions are back and hope to defend their title.

Men

In the Men's event three-time and reigning Four Continents Champion Patrick Chan (CAN) is aiming for a fourth title, but has to expect strong competition. Chan (seasons best 279.72 points) will face current Olympic and ISU Grand Prix Final Champion Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN/seasons best 301.47 points), ISU Grand Prix Final silver medalist Nathan Chen (USA/seasons best 282.85 points) as well as ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist Shoma Uno (JPN/seasons best 285.07 points) and 2016 World bronze medalist Boyang Jin (CHN/seasons best 278.54 points). Other contenders include two-time Four Continents bronze medalist Han Yan (CHN), 2017 Universiade silver medalist Keiji Tanaka (JPN) and Jason Brown (USA).

Ladies

There will be definitely a new champion in the Ladies event with several contenders in the mix. ISU Grand Prix Finalist Kaetlyn Osmond (CAN) has a seasons best 212.42 points and looks like the favorite, but competition should come from 2016 Four Continents silver medalist Mirai Nagasu (USA/seasons best 189.11 points), Wakaba Higuchi (JPN/seasons best 194.48 points) and Gabrielle Daleman (CAN/seasons best 192.10 points). 2015 and 2016 Four Continents bronze medalist Rika Hongo (JPN), 2014 Four Continents bronze medalist Zijun Li (CHN), 2016 Skate America silver medalist Mariah Bell (USA) and 2016 Skate America bronze medalist Mai Mihara (JPN). 2016 Four Continents Champion Satoko Miyahara (JPN) has withdrawn due to injury.

Pair Skating

In the Pairs event, two-time and reigning World Champions Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford (CAN/seasons best 218.30 points) will meet two-time and reigning World silver medalists Wenjing Sui/Cong Han (CHN). Sui/Han will compete in their first event this season as she recovered from foot surgery. Other podium contenders include ISU Grand Prix Finalists Xiaoyu Yu/Hao Zhang (CHN/seasons best 206.71 points), Cheng Peng/Yang Jin (CHN/seasons best 197.96 points) and 2016 Skate America silver medalists Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA/seasons best 192.65 points). 2016 Four Continents silver medalists Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) are entering their first event this season as she recovered from surgery. Other teams to watch out for include Lubov Iliushechkina/Dylan Moscovitch (CAN) and Ashley Cain/Timothy Leduc (USA).

Ice Dance

The Ice Dance event is headlined by reigning ISU Grand Prix Final Champions Tessa Virtue/Scott Moir (CAN/seasons best 197.22 points), who returned to competition after sitting out two seasons. The challenge should come from 2016 Four Continents Champions and World silver medalists

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Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA/seasons best 189.60 points) and 2016 World bronze medalists Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA/seasons best 188.24 points). Other podium contenders include two-time Four Continents Champions Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje (CAN), 2014 Four Continents Champions Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) and 2014 Four Continents silver medalists Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier (CAN).

Please note that for the seasonal best total scores only the ISU Grand Prix competitions (senior and junior) and ISU Challenger Series events have been taken into consideration, not other international competitions or National Championships.

Prize money

The ISU awards a global prize money of US\$ 289,500 at the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships to single skaters placed 1st to 8th, to pair skating couples placed 1st to 5th and Ice Dance Couples placed 1st to 6th. The prize money is awarded as follows:

Men and Ladies

1st place US\$ 20,000
2nd place US\$ 13,000
3rd place US\$ 8,000
4th place US\$ 6,500
5th place US\$ 5,000
6th place US\$ 4,000
7th place US\$ 3,500
8th place US\$ 3,000

Pairs and Dance (per couple)

1st place US\$ 30,000
2nd place US\$ 19,500
3rd place US\$ 12,000
4th place US\$ 9,750
5th place US\$ 7,500
6th place US\$ 6,000 (only Ice Dance)

The schedule of the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2017 is as follows:

Thursday, February 16: Short Dance, Pairs & Ladies Short Program

Friday, February 17: Free Dance, Men's Short Program

Saturday, January 18: Pairs & Ladies Free Skating

Sunday, January 19: Men's Free Skating, Exhibition Gala

For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and the official event website <https://www.hellopyeongchang.com/FigureSkating/en/sub/index>

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