

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND  
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Event 2 (of 6)

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## **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating: Rostelecom Cup Day One**

The Rostelecom Cup opened Friday with the Compulsory and Original Dance, the Ladies, Men's and Pairs Short Programs. The Rostelecom Cup is the second of six events in the 2009/2010 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series. The skaters compete for a global prize money of US \$ 180, 000 per individual event of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating and receive points according to their placements. The top six skaters/couples in each discipline advance to the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Tokyo, Japan, in December.

### **Ice Dance, Compulsory & Original Dance**

The Compulsory Dance at the Rostelecom Cup was the Tango Romantica. The Tango Romantica is a romantic, sinuous dance which expresses the soft, lyrical interpretive characteristics of the Tango. It must be skated with deep edges. The judges are looking for very erect carriage, precise timing and continuous flow. The difficulty of the steps should not be revealed in awkward or stressed upper body positions. The dance was created by 1976 Olympic Ice Dance Champions Ludmilla Pakhomova/Alexander Gorshkov and their coach Elena Tchaikovskaya. It was first performed in Moscow in 1974.

The Original Dance of the 2009/10 season is the Folk/Country Dance. The couples chose folk/country dances for example from Russia, Italy, Lithuania and even India.

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) captured the lead in the Compulsory Dance and defended it in the Original Dance ahead of Italy's Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte and Ekaterina Rubleva/Ivan Shefer of Russia. Davis/White gave a smooth performance of the Tango Romantica and received 37.87 points (19.00 element score/18.37 program component score). The Four Continents Champions presented an exotic Indian dance in the Original Dance that was highlighted by a curve lift with her changing positions – first she was behind his back, then in front – and fast twizzles. The lift and the twizzles were graded a level four while the circular steps and the side by side step sequence were awarded a level three by the Technical Panel. Davis/White got 62.21 points (30.70/31.51) and accumulated a total of 100.08 points so far. "We had a really nice original dance out there today. I feel like we had a very good connection and we were able to do our elements pretty well. (There were) Some level threes, we still like to get level fours, but overall we are very happy and ready to move on to the free dance", White told the post event press conference.

Cappellini/Lanotte finished second in the Tango Romantica and scored 32.73 points (16.32/16.41). They chose Italian carnival as their theme, performing to "La Danza" by Giacomo Rossini and a Tarantella. Lanotte even wore a typical Italian carnival mask. The couple completed a level-four straight line lift and received a level three for the footwork section, but the twizzles were somewhat shaky and got only a level two. Cappellini/Lanotte earned 52.58 points (26.40/26.18) for the Original Dance and remained in second place at 85.31 points overall. "We feel good about our OD. We are trying to skate with more power and hopefully you could see that", Cappellini said. "The mask (Lanotte wore) is a typical Italian carnival mask from the Napoli area and the music also comes from this region", she continued.

Rubleva/Shefer delivered a solid Compulsory Dance and were ranked third in this segment with a seasons best score of 30.33 points (15.64/14.69). The National silver medalists built on this performance with an entertaining Russian dance, "Valenki", wearing elaborate costumes. They produced synchronized twizzles and a straight line lift that were graded a level four and had a level three for the midline side by side footwork and the diagonal step sequence to pick up another seasons best of 50.92 points (27.00/23.92). Their score added up to 81.25 points. "This was a good day for us, maybe it's helping to compete at home", Shefer commented. "We didn't expect to be in third place, but we are just doing our job. Our job is to skate well", his partner added.

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2008 World Junior silver medalists Vanessa Crone/Paul Poirier (CAN) came in fourth with a Spanish Flamenco (78.39 points). Anastasia Platonova/Alexander Grachev (RUS) were ranked seventh in the Compulsory Dance but moved up to fifth with a Dagestan "Lezginka" dance (75.81 points).

## Men, Short Program

To the delight of the home crowd, Russia's Evgeni Plushenko won the Men's Short Program ahead of Takahiko Kozuka of Japan and Johnny Weir (USA).

Plushenko had to skate first as he had no ISU ranking anymore after retiring from competition in 2006. The reigning Olympic Champion opened his routine to "Concierto de Aranjuez" with a rock-solid quadruple-triple toeloop combination followed by a triple Axel but doubled the Lutz. He achieved a level four for the combination spin and the change foot sit spin as well as a level three for both step sequences. Plushenko collected 82.25 points (43.80 element score/38.45 program component score). "I am very pleased to have come back to competition after almost four years", commented the three-time World Champion. "I'm happy with my quad-triple combination and with my triple Axel, but then I relaxed a little and did a double Lutz. I need to pay attention to each element", he continued.

Skating to "Bold As Love" by Jimmy Hendrix, Kozuka landed a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel and a triple flip. His change foot sit spin was graded a level four while the other two spins were a level three and the footwork a level two. The 2009 Four Continents bronze medalist scored 75.50 points (40.30/35.20). "I skated well and I'm very happy with my performance", Kozuka said. "I didn't expect that I'd ever compete against Evgeni Plushenko. I watched the Torino Olympic Games on TV and wanted to be there. Now I feel honored to be in this competition and at this press conference together with Evgeni Plushenko and Johnny Weir", he added.

Weir opened his program titled "I Love You, I Hate You" with a triple Lutz-double toeloop, but then put down his hand on the triple Axel. He hit the triple flip and got a level four for two spins and a level three for both the circular and straight line step sequence. The 2008 World bronze medalist picked up 72.57 points (36.72/35.85). "I am very disappointed with the jumps and today's performance, but I think for the first competition, it's okay. I think I can step over this and tomorrow I can be free and trust my training", Weir noted.

Artem Borodulin (RUS) finished fourth at 72.07 points. He completed a triple Axel, a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but got deductions for the triple flip for the wrong edge take-off. Adrian Schultheiss (SWE) placed fifth with a solid performance that included a triple Axel and a triple Lutz-triple toe (67.74 points).

## Pairs, Short Program

Qing Pang/Jian Tong of China won the Pairs Short Program with Russia's Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov and Keauna McLaughlin/Rockne Brubaker (USA) following in second and third.

Pang/Tong put out a lyrical performance to "The Pearl Fishers" by Georges Bizet that included a high triple twist, a big throw triple loop, and a level-four pair combination spin and death spiral. However, Tong doubled the side by side triple toeloop. The 2006 World Champions earned 65.40 points (35.16 element score/30.24 program component score). "Today, we didn't skate too well. We made an error on the side by side jump", Pang said. "This program is still new to us and not yet so comfortable."

Kavaguti/Smirnov had to overcome a shaky start when she went down on the side by side triple toeloop. But the reigning World bronze medalists recovered to complete a triple twist, a throw triple loop and a difficult lift in their balletic program to "The Swan" by Camille Saint-Saens. The couple was awarded a level four for their spins and received a score of 61.61 points (33.10/29.52). "We skated well overall, we showed the choreography and skated to our new music, but just the technical aspect of our performance wasn't perfect. Hopefully we can improve on that", explained Smirnov.

McLaughlin/Brubaker turned in a solid performance to "Unchained Melody" that featured a triple twist, a side by side triple Salchow and two-level four spins. Only the landing of the throw triple loop was wobbly.

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The Americans scored 61.34 points (36.26/25.08). "I think for us this was a good start of the season. We know we missed a level in our death spiral. I think technically we did well, but for the second mark we felt a little slow, a little shaky, but I think overall it was a good way to start", Brubaker told the press.

Vera Bazarova/Yuri Larionov (RUS) came in fourth. They hit a triple twist, but Bazarova landed forward on the side by side triple toeloop (54.42 points). Nicole Della Monica/Yannick Kocon (ITA) are sitting in fifth with 53.56 points. They produced a side by side triple Salchow, a throw triple Salchow and level-four spins.

## Ladies, Short Program

Julia Sebestyén of Hungary upset the favourites to take the Ladies' Short Program. Alissa Czisny (USA) and Japan's Miki Ando came in second and third.

Skating to "Song from a Secret Garden", Sebestyén nailed a high triple Lutz-double toeloop combination followed by a triple flip and a double Axel. The 2004 European Champion also produced a level-four combination spin and spiral sequence while the layback was graded a level one. The Hungarian earned 57.94 points (32.90 element score/26.04 program component score). "I am very happy to have skated a clean short program", said Sebestyén. "My goal was to skate clean, but I didn't expect to be in first place. After my injuries, my goal for this season was to qualify for the Olympic Games, and I did that. Now I just want to enjoy skating and to compete and I want to skate better and better with each competition."

Czisny landed a triple Lutz-double toeloop combination and a triple flip in her "Zorro" routine, but she had to fight for the landing of the double Axel. The U.S. Champion drew extra applause for her difficult and beautiful spins that all were a level four and got 57.64 points (32.44/25.20). "My short program today was fairly good. It wasn't my best. I just tried to go out and stay with each jump and get my best outing out there, feel comfortable in front of the judges. I was pleasantly surprised with how I ended up", Czisny offered.

Ando went for a triple Lutz-triple loop combination in her program to "Requiem" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, but she underrotated and stumbled on the loop. She also cheated the triple flip that was downgraded as well, but came back to hit a double Axel. The current World bronze medalist picked up a level four for the flying sit and the combination spin and a level three for the layback spin and the footwork to score 57.18 points (28.98/28.20). "I am a little disappointed", admitted the 2007 World Champion. "I knew that I'd miss the combination because I had less speed than in practice. But I'm happy that I got a level four for my flying sit spin for the first time in my life. I also got good component scores in spite of my mistakes."

Alena Leonova (RUS) came in fourth at 56.78 points. She landed a triple Lutz and double Axel, but stumbled on the back end of her triple flip-double toeloop combination. Ashley Wagner (USA) is currently sitting in fifth. Her program contained a triple flip-double toeloop combination, but she received deductions for her triple Lutz for the take-off from the inside edge. 2008 World Champion Mao Asada (JPN) placed sixth with a sub-par performance. She popped her opening triple Axel and stumbled on it. Her double Axel later in the program didn't count as the first Axel was called as a double Axel (although downgraded) and it is not allowed to repeat a jump in the Short Program.

For full results please refer to [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org). An extended version of this report will be available later on the website. The Rostelecom Cup continues Saturday with the Free Dance, the Men's, Ladies and Pairs Free Skating.

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