

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Event 1 (of 6)

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ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating: Trophée Bompard Day One

The 2009/2010 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating kicked off Friday with the Trophée Bompard in Paris, France. The Trophée Bompard is the first of six events in the 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.

Ice Dance, Compulsory & Original Dance

The Compulsory Dance at the Trophée Bompard was the Golden Waltz. The Golden Waltz is a complex dance incorporating many position not previously used in Compulsory Dances. It was developed by Marina Klimova/Sergei Ponomarenko (RUS) and their coach Natalia Dubova. It was first performed in 1987. The Original Dance of the 2009/10 season is the Folk/Country Dance. The couples chose country dances from North America as well as Ukrainian, Russian and even Brazilian dances.

Tessa Virtue/Scott Moir of Canada danced to the lead with France's Nathalie Pechalat/Fabian Bourzat and Sinead Kerr/John Kerr (GBR) coming in second and third.

Virtue/Moir already won the Compulsory Dance with a strong performance that earned them 38.41 points (19.44 element score/18.97 program component score). The current World bronze medalists have chosen a Flamenco for their Original Dance and put out a stylish routine that included precise footwork and a difficult curve lift with an unusual entry. The side by side footwork and the circular footwork were graded a level three while the lift and the sequential twizzles got a level four. The Canadians scored 61.91 points (30.90/31.01) for this dance and accumulated 100.32 points overall so far. "Tessa and I are pretty pleased with our day. It's interesting to have the compulsory and the OD on the same day. It's a little bit of a challenge, but we are always up to that and we felt like we came out strong and did what we set out to do", Moir said. "We were asked a few times why we decided not to do Canadian folk especially given the Olympic Games in our home country. It's something we actually really wanted to do. We did a lot of research and listened to a lot of music, but we just didn't find a piece of music that we felt attached to. As soon as we heard the Farrucas (Flamenco) we loved it. I think it is really powerful, it is passionate and very mature, and it's definitely what we wanted for this year", Virtue explained.

Pechalat/Bourzat stood in third place after the Golden Waltz with 35.53 points (17.96/17.57) and moved up one spot with their lively American country dance. Their routine included level-three step sequences and a straight line lift with changes of positions that was awarded a level four. The French Champions picked up 56.34 points (29.00/27.34) and now have 91.87 points. "It was difficult to skate two events in one day, especially with the Golden Waltz being a difficult dance. But I think we managed to do well in both programs today", Bourzat told the press.

Kerr/Kerr were ranked second in the Compulsory Dance at 36.13 points (18.40/17.73). They produced a funny American Country Dance portraying a truck driver and a hitch hiker. The brother and sister team received a level two for the footwork, but a level four for the twizzles and the lift. They earned 54.73 points (26.60/28.13) and slipped to third with 90.86 points. "This competition is always quite packed into two days, but actually I quite liked it. We felt we could keep the energy quite nice today", Sinead Kerr said. "We are pleased to feel like we skated better than at the event we did last week in Finland", she continued.

Emily Samuelson/Evan Bates (USA) were the third team in the competition with an American Country theme. Bates two-footed a twizzle, but overall the couple held on to fourth place with 77.86 points. Kimberly Navarro/Brent Bommentre (USA) moved up from sixth to fifth with an original routine to Brazilian music.

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Men, Short Program

Tomas Verner of the Czech Republic took the lead in the Men's Short Program ahead of Japan's Nobunari Oda and Adam Rippon (USA).

Performing to the Sirtaki from "Zorba the Greek", Verner nailed a quadruple-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel and triple Lutz. He just lost speed in two spins that were graded a level one by the Technical Panel, but earned a level three for both footwork sequences. Verner collected 81.00 points (43.90 element score/37.10 program component score). "This is my first competition of the season, and I never started my season with the Grand Prix. I was a kind of nervous to start the competition with all the stars on the list, but I focused on my own", the 2008 European Champion admitted. "My choreography wasn't so confident today, but I didn't make any big mistakes for the audience, but the technical specialists saw some mistakes in my spins. I'm still satisfied for today", he added.

Oda opened his dynamic routine to "Totentanz" with a soaring triple Axel followed by a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and a triple flip. His flying sit and change foot sit spin were graded a level four, but the combination spin was a level one. The Japanese scored 79.20 points (44.40/34.80). "This was a very good performance", Oda commented. "I wasn't as nervous as usual, because I felt that this ice was very good for me. So I wasn't nervous about my jumps."

Rippon's program to "Jonathan Livingstone Seagull" featured a triple flip-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel and two level-four spins. Rippon also did a triple Lutz with both arms held over his head. The two-time and reigning World Junior Champion earned 75.82 points (41.42/34.40). "It was a little bit shaky, but I'm very happy with how it came across with the jumps, the footwork and the interpretation. As for the Lutz, it was just something that I had come up with my coach Brian Orser. I think it started out as a joke - if I could do a triple Lutz with one arm up, why couldn't I do with two arms. I tried it with two arms and it was a disaster. I tried it one more time and it was a little bit better, and then I worked on it. It's something I'm very proud of", Rippon said.

Sergei Voronov (RUS) pulled off a quadruple-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel and triple flip to come in fourth at 72.80 points. Yannick Ponsero (FRA) put his hand down on the quadruple toeloop (in combination with double toeloop), but hit the triple Axel and a triple Salchow. He also had a level four for all three spins and finished fifth (72.50 points). European Champion Brian Joubert (FRA) made errors on all three jumping elements and is currently ranked sixth (72.15 points).

Pairs, Short Program

Alena Savchenko/Robin Szolkowy of Germany took the Pairs Short Program ahead of Russia's Maria Mukhortova and Canadians Jessica Dubé/Bryce Davison.

Savchenko/Szolkowy performed to "Send in the Clowns" wearing clown costumes and white make up. The two-time and reigning World Champions completed a throw triple flip, an excellent side by side triple toeloop, a triple twist as well as level four spins and spirals. They were awarded 72.98 points (40.66 element score/32.32 program component score). "This is our second competition of the season and it was better than at the Nebelhorn Trophy", said Szolkowy. "It wasn't a 100 percent as we do it sometimes in practice, but it was still good."

Mukhortova/Trankov put out a lyrical program to "Appassionata" by Secret Garden that was highlighted by a triple twist, side by side triple toeloop, a beautiful throw triple loop and a difficult lift. The current European bronze medalists picked up 66.88 points (38.00/28.88). "This was our first competition (of the season) today and it was important for us to skate a clean short program as this is a good start of the season. Last season we skated good short programs, but the less good free programs. So tomorrow we hope to break this tradition and start to skate clean free programs", Trankov told the post-event press conference.

Skating to "Requiem for a Dream", Dubé/Davison landed a side by side triple Salchow, a throw triple loop and showed good spins and footwork, but their triple twist was messy. The Canadians scored 64.54 points (36.34/28.20). "Bryce and I are very happy with our performance. It was very important to us to have a good

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skate for the first competition of the season. There was a little of a stumble here and there, but overall this is our first Grand Prix event and we are very pleased with it", Dubé commented.

Adeline Canac/Maximin Coia (FRA) came in fourth at 55.96 points. They delivered a solid program that contained a double twist, side by side triple Salchow and a throw triple Salchow. Rena Inoue/John Baldwin (USA) are sitting in fifth. They produced a double Axel and throw triple loop, but their triple twist was not clean and downgraded (55.06 points).

Ladies, Short Program

Yu-Na Kim of Korea won the Ladies Short Program with Japan's Yukari Nakano and Mao Asada following in second and third.

Kim really sparkled in her dynamic routine to music from James Bond movies. The current World Champion hit a huge triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination followed by a triple flip and double Axel. The spiral sequence and the three spins all were graded a level four. Kim posted a score of 76.08 points (43.80 element score/32.28 program component score), almost reaching her personal best and record score of 76.12 points. "This is my first competition of the season and I was able to show the audience what I have been doing in practice over the summer. This was great", a smiling Kim said. "Now I'm looking forward to the free skating, but I'm also a little bit nervous", she added.

Nakano gave a solid performance to "Phantom of the Opera" that included a triple Lutz-double toeloop combination, a triple flip and double Axel. She also got a level four for the flying camel and the layback spin, but only a level one for the combination spin. Nakano earned 59.64 points (32.80/26.84). "I skated first in the group and I was able to keep my focus after the warm up. So the starting order was good for me", the athlete explained.

Asada planned to do a triple Axel-double toeloop, a combination so far only she, Midori Ito (JPN) and Tonya Harding (USA) have landed in international competition. However, Asada singled the Axel. The 2008 World Champion went on to complete a triple flip, a double Axel and strong spins, two of which were graded a level four. She received 58.96 points (29.80/29.16) for her routine to "Waltz Masquerade". "I know that there is no room for error in the short program, but I made a mistake. I want to concentrate more on the triple Axel tomorrow", the 19-year-old said.

Alexe Gilles (USA), who debuted on the senior Grand Prix circuit, finished fourth at 58.22 points. She landed a triple Lutz-double toeloop, a triple flip and a double Axel. 2009 World Junior silver medalist Caroline Zhang (USA) is currently ranked fifth. She hit a triple flip-double toe and a triple loop, but her double Axel was shaky (57.26 points).

For full results please refer to www.isu.org. The Trophée Bompard continues Saturday with the Free Dance, the Men's, Ladies and Pairs Free Skating.

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