

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
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Event 3 (of 6)

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ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating: Samsung Anycall Cup of China Day One

The 2009/2010 ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating continued Friday with the Samsung Anycall Cup of China in Beijing. The Samsung Anycall Cup of China is the third 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. 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 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 dances from Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, China, Cuba, Greece and Italy.

Tanith Belbin/Benjamin Agosto (USA) danced to the lead ahead of Russia's Jana Khokhlova/Sergei Novitski and Federica Faiella/Massimo Scali of Italy

Belbin/Agosto grabbed an early lead with a flowing Golden Waltz that earned them 38.33 points (19.16 element score/19.17 program component score). Khokhlova/Novitski were second in the Compulsory Dance with 36.30 points (18.04/18.26). Faiella/Scali came in third at 35.37 (17.96/17.41) points.

The Americans then strengthened their lead with a playful Moldovian dance that was highlighted by a straight line lift with changes of position for her and intricate footwork. The side by side step sequence and the lift received a level four while the circular steps and the twizzles were a level three. Belbin/Agosto got 60.33 points (29.70/30.63) for their OD and now have 98.66 points overall. "We felt very comfortable here. This is our fifth Cup of China and our seventh time in Beijing at this arena, so we are very, very familiar with our surroundings", Belbin told the press. "It's really nice to have this familiarity built with the audience because we feel like we have very loyal fans here in China. It's a pleasure to perform for them and it's good to get the nerves out of the way. It's a little bit shaky, because it's the first competition of the season, but of course we will improve upon our performances. Tonight we felt we did an okay job for where we at in the season. It can be better; it was a little bit rough."

Khokhlova/Novitski picked a Russian dance to "Vdol po PETERSKOJ" and were dressed in colourful purple costumes. The European Champions produced a straight line lift and difficult steps that earned a level four to score 56.48 points (28.70/28.78). They accumulated 92.78 points overall on the first day. "We didn't pick a Russian dance by chance", Khokhlova explained. "Two years ago we had a Gypsy dance, I'd like to point out. Both dances are emotional and colourful and this being a special season, an Olympic season, we really wanted to show the Russian character. So we chose the Russian song "Vdol po PETERSKOJ" (Alongside the street to Petersburg)."

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Faiella/Scali put out a characteristic Italian dance to “Tamurriata Napoletana” and a Calabrian Tarantella using castanets. They completed a straight line lift in which he held his partner up high and level-four twizzles. The side by side and circular footwork were a level three. The European silver medalists were awarded 54.59 points (27.20/27.39) and remained in third place at 89.96 points so far. “We feel a little tired, it was a long day for us skaters”, Scali said. “This is our very first competition of the season and it was a good start. We were looking for a program with a mature attitude.”

The standings below the top three couples shuffled quite a bit. Anna Zadarozhniuk/Sergei Verbillo (UKR) were ranked sixth in the Golden Waltz but moved up to fourth with their Ukrainian Original Dance (79.65 points). Alexandra Zaretski/Roman Zaretski (ISR) placed fourth in the Compulsory Dance and were ranked seventh with their Original Dance to “Hava Nagila”, but overall are sitting in fifth at 77.83 points.

Ladies, Short Program

Mirai Nagasu (USA) captured the Ladies Short Program ahead of Finland’s Kiira Korpi and Italian Carolina Kostner.

Nagasu, who skated last in the first warm up group, delivered a strong performance to “Pirates of the Caribbean”, hitting a triple Lutz-double toe combination, a triple flip and a double Axel out of an Ina Bauer move. The 16-year-old completed impressive spins with difficult positions that were graded a level four. The two-time World Junior medalist received 62.20 points (37.40 element score/24.80 program component score). “Coming out of a disappointing season it’s a surprise for me to be in first place at the Grand Prix. It is a little overwhelming. Hopefully I forget about it and just go into the long strong”, Nagasu commented.

Performing to “Caravan” by Ikuko Kawai, Korpi produced a triple loop, a double Axel and two level-four spins, but put her hand down on the triple Lutz. She still added a double toe to it for her combination and scored 61.20 points (34.80/26.40). “It wasn’t perfect, but I’m satisfied”, Korpi told the post-event news conference. “I made one bigger mistake on the landing of the triple Lutz, but I am happy with my levels. Finally I got them there where they should be.”

Kostner was much improved over her performance in Paris two weeks ago at the Trophée Bompard. The two-time European Champion landed a triple flip-double toeloop, a triple toeloop, a double Axel and earned two level four for her spins and a level three for the layback spin and the footwork. However, the spiral sequence received no levels and no points at Kostner failed to hold a position for the minimum of three seconds. The Italian picked up a seasons best of 61.12 points (37.40/24.80). “I think you should start the season and get better and better”, Kostner said. “I love skating so much and today I had fun on the ice, and this is the most important thing.”

Akiko Suzuki came in fourth with a solid performance that included a triple flip and level-four spins, but she cheated the second jump in her triple Lutz-double toeloop combination (59.52 points). Rachael Flatt (USA) is currently ranked fifth at 58.80 points.

World silver medalist Joannie Rochette (CAN) had a disappointing performance that left her in seventh place. She doubled the Lutz and singled the Axel (52.12 points).

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Men, Short Program

Nobunari Oda of Japan won the Men's Short Program ahead of Russia's Sergei Voronov and reigning World Champion Evan Lysacek (USA).

All three men gave strong performances. Skating to "Totentanz", Oda hit a triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination as well as a triple flip and produced fast, well centered spins two of which were graded a level four. The Japanese posted a new seasons best of 83.35 points (46.70 element score/36.65 program component score) for his energetic performance. "I am very satisfied with my performance. I wasn't tired from France (Trophée Bompard), but I was tired today and I had to push myself", Oda admitted. "I still made a few mistakes. I believe that I can improve on my short program."

Voronov's powerful program to "Revolution Etude" by Alexander Skriabin featured an excellent quadruple-triple toeloop combination, a triple Axel, triple flip as well as two level-four spins. The Russian Champion scored 81.40 (46.30/35.10), surpassing his previous seasons best of 72.80 by almost ten points. "I am a little tired after the Trophée Bompard, and this is my third competition, but I skated better here than in Paris, technically and overall", Voronov offered.

Lysacek skated last. Dressed all in black, the World Champion opened his elegant routine to "Firebird" with a triple Axel followed by a solid triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and a triple flip, but received some deductions on the flip for the take-off from the wrong edge. Lysacek's three spins were graded a level four by the Technical Panel and both step sequences were a level three. The American earned 80.80 points (43.30/37.50). "I am really pleased. This is a pretty new program for me. I've had it for a couple of months now and I really like the music and I like the costume. Vera Wang designed it for me", Lysacek noted. "It's a little departure for me from the Spanish theme that I've done for so many years. Tonight I was really focused on the elements and I think I was taking one element at a time like we do in our short program. I was just a little disappointed with that edge call, because this is out of character for me."

Samuel Contesti (ITA) landed a triple Lutz-triple toeloop and a triple loop but stumbled out of the triple Axel to finish fourth at 72.08 points. Jinlin Guan (CHN) is sitting in fifth with 66.70 points. He hit a triple Lutz-triple toe, a triple flip and a double Axel.

Pairs, Short Program

China's Xue Shen/Hongbo Zhao started their comeback into the Olympic season with a win in the Short Program at Samsung Anycall Cup of China. Tatiana Volosozhar/Stanislav Morozov of the Ukraine and Russia's Lubov Ilushechkina/Nodari Maisuradze followed in second and third.

Shen/Zhao had to skate first as they had no World ranking anymore after retiring from competition in 2007. The three-time World Champions nailed a beautiful side by side triple toeloop, a big triple twist and throw triple loop and got extra applause for their difficult one-armed lift. The lift, the two spins and the death spiral were graded a level four. The couple collected 72.28 points (40.76 element score/31.52 program component score) for their routine to "Who Wants to Live Forever". "We are quite pleased with today's performance. We were able to show a high technical level", Zhao said. "We are a little surprised with our score, because we did make a few little errors and we want to skate better next time", he added.

Volosozhar/Morozov had to overcome a shaky start when he stepped out of the side by side triple Salchow but they recovered to produce a high triple twist, throw triple loop and level-four spins and

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spirals. The Ukrainians earned 62.98 points (37.22/25.76) to edge out World Junior Champions Iliushechkina/Maisuradze by less than one point. "I'm not so positive about today's performance, because I missed a jump and I don't know why, because it was working well in practice", Morozov commented. His partner didn't quite agree. "We felt good on the ice and we did the elements like we can do them in practice, and I don't think the mistake on the jump is a major problem. So I'm quite positive about our program today", she explained.

The Russians landed a solid side by side triple toeloop and triple twist, and Iliushechkina just slightly touched down with her free blade on the throw triple loop. The couple was awarded a level four for the side by side spin and the pair combination spin to score 62.54 points (37.42/25.12). "We skated quite well, but I had some trouble with the different ice (from home) and it was obvious during the footwork", Iliushechkina said.

World silver medalists Dan Zhang/Hao Zhang (CHN) came in fourth. Dan Zhang had popped the side by side Salchow, but their other elements were of high quality (61.92 points). Meagan Duhamel/Craig Buntin finished fifth. She fell on the side by side triple toeloop (55.08 points).

For full results please refer to www.isu.org. The Samsung Anycall Cup of China continues Saturday with the Men's, Ladies and Pairs Free Skating and the Free Dance.

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