

## Press release

10 November 2017

### ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2017/18: NHK Trophy Day One

[Evgenia Medvedeva](#) (RUS) in the Ladies competition and [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) (CHN) in the Pairs took the lead in the Short Program as the NHK Trophy in Osaka (JPN) opened on Friday. In a dramatic turn, [Sergei Voronov](#) won the Men's Short Program after Olympic Champion [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) (JPN) was forced to withdraw due to injury. The NHK Trophy is the fourth of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2017/18. A total of 59 skaters/couples from 16 ISU members are competing in Osaka.

#### **Sui/Han (CHN) skate to lead in Pairs Short Program at NHK Trophy**

World pairs champions [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) of China skated to the lead as the competition at the NHK Trophy kicked off on Friday with the Pairs Short Program. Russia's Olympic silver medallists [Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov](#) came second followed by teammates [Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov](#).

Sui/Han's performance to 'Hallelujah' was highlighted by a huge throw triple flip, a side by side triple toeloop and triple twist. The twist, footwork, death spiral and lift merited a level four and the reigning world champions earned 79.43 points. "We had some problems with the levels (of the pair combination spin) today, so this is something to improve for next time. The back-to-back competition is not a problem for us - we don't feel tired, there is not a big time difference between Japan and Beijing. In training we do back to back programs, so we are used to that," Han said.

Skating to 'Tango de Besame', Stolbova/Klimov produced a throw triple flip, side by side triple toeloop as well as a level-four list and death spiral. The Russian champions posted a new season's best with 75.05 points. "We are pleased with the performance overall, but we lost some levels, which is unexpected. As for the free skating, we want to skate without any surprises," Klimov told the post-event press conference. At the Finlandia Trophy earlier this season, the laces of his skating boot had become undone, which led to a fall and aborted lifts.

Astakhova/Rogonov completed a side by side triple Salchow, throw triple flip and triple twist to score a personal best of 70.47 points. "This is the third competition for us with a clean short program and the scores are rising accordingly," Rogonov said. "Tomorrow in the free skating again we'll put the focus on the elements, but we also want to perform our program (to 'La La Land') the best way possible."

[Alexa Scimeca Knierim/Chris Knierim](#) (USA) placed fourth on 65.86 points and [Julianne Séguin/Charlie Bilodeau](#) (CAN) fifth on 63.98 points.



# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **Medvedeva (RUS) leads after confident display in Ladies Short Program in Osaka**

World champion [Evgenia Medvedeva](#) of Russia took a 5.42-point lead over five-time European champion [Carolina Kostner](#) of Italy in the Ladies Short Program at the NHK Trophy on Friday. Russian newcomer [Polina Tsurskaya](#) came third in the first segment of the competition.

Medvedeva, who skated last out of the 12 ladies, hit a triple flip-triple toeloop combination, a triple loop, double Axel as well as level-four spins and footwork in her confident performance to ‘Nocturne’ by Chopin. She scored 79.99 points, just below her season’s best.

“After today’s performance I don’t have too many emotions because I still have to do the free skating tomorrow,” the two-time European champion said. “It was an OK performance, I could do some things better, the double Axel for example. In the free program I want to show elegance and I want to give joy to the people who are watching.”

Kostner’s emotional performance to ‘Ne Me Quitte Pas’ featured a triple toe-triple toe combination, a triple loop, double Axel, and she also collected a level four for her three spins and the footwork. The 2012 world champion picked up 74.57 points for her efforts.

“After I got off the ice, I wasn’t sure if I was satisfied or not,” she said. “Now, that some time has passed, I am very happy about how I skated. Today was more of a fight. You have days when it is not so easy and you need to get into that fighting mode. Today I was able to do that and I’m happy that I did it.”

She dedicated her performance to two young Italian skaters who recently died in a car accident on their way home from a competition.

Tsurskaya shone in her debut performance at international senior level. Her routine to the ‘Game of Thrones’ soundtrack included a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, a triple loop, double Axel, as well three level-four spins. The 2016 Youth Olympic Games champion posted a new personal best with 70.04 points.

“I am pleased with today’s short program, it went quite well,” the 16-year-old said. “The jumps were good but there is room for improvement in the spins and the footwork, and we’ll work on that but won’t forget the jumps. In the free skating I just want to show what we’ve worked on in the off-season and I just want to show clean and good skating.”

[Rika Hongo](#) (JPN) placed fourth with 65.83 points, followed by [Mirai Nagasu](#) (USA), who landed a triple Axel, but under-rotated two other jumps to finish on 65.17 points. The 2015 world silver medallist [Satoko Miyahara](#) (JPN), who returned to competition after missing the World Championships in March due to injury, ranked sixth on 65.05 points.

**Voronov (RUS) grabs Men's Short Program as injury sidelines Hanyu (JPN)**

Russian veteran [Sergei Voronov](#) grabbed the lead in the Men's Short Program but Olympic champion [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) (JPN) had to withdraw due to injury. Israel's [Alexei Bychenko](#) sits in second place, followed by [Jason Brown](#) (USA).

Performing to 'Adios Nonino' by Astor Piazzolla, Voronov pulled off a quad-triple toe, a triple Lutz and triple Axel to score a season's best of 90.06, just below his personal best of 90.33 points.

"I am happy with my performance because not only the jumps but the whole program came out at a high level," the two-time European medallist said.

Asked about being, at 30 years of age, a so-called veteran in the sport, he replied: "In my country, a veteran is a respected person, a veteran of the war for example. With 30 years, you just start to flourish in life. The most important thing is that you love what you are doing. If we didn't love it, we couldn't do it."

Bychenko's program to 'Hava Nagila' featured a triple Axel, quad toeloop and a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination, helping the 2016 European silver medallist to a season-best 85.52 points.

"Today's performance was nice," Bychenko said. "The technical side was really good but still a bit shaky. We know what we are supposed to work on to fix it. I think that result today is because of the focus on the competition."

He added: "I will turn 30 as well in two months and it's only a number. It's about what we do on the ice, not about age."

Brown completed a triple Lutz and excellent spins in his upbeat program to 'The Room Where It Happens' from the musical 'Hamilton'.

However, the Skate Canada silver medallist stepped out of the landing on his triple Axel and reduced his combination to a triple flip-double toeloop to finish with 85.36 points.

"I had the best time performing out there, except I had a few hiccups that I am not super proud of," Brown said. "I know I can do better. On the other hand, it is another opportunity early in the season to learn and to grow from, so I'm excited to take what I learned from the short program and apply it to the free skate tomorrow and try to be a lot cleaner."

[Adam Rippon](#) (USA) remains within striking distance of the podium. He stumbled out of his final spin but still managed a season-best 84.95 points. [Keegan Messing](#) (CAN) finished fifth with 80.13 points and [Kazuki Tomono](#) (JPN) completed the top six on 79.88 points.



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Hanyu sustained an injury to his right foot when he fell in practice on Thursday afternoon. “I am very sorry to have everyone worried about me,” Hanyu said in a statement released by the Japanese Skating Federation. “The doctors have worked hard on treating me since last night. Unfortunately, they have made their final decision that I should not take part (in the NHK Trophy). I will focus on my treatment and work hard towards the nationals.”

NHK Trophy continues Saturday with the Short Dance, Pairs, Ladies and Men Free Skating. The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series consists of six events and culminates in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Nagoya (JPN) in December. The top six skaters/couples in each discipline qualify for the Final. The global prize money for the Grand Prix is US \$ 272,000.

Full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2017/18 are available [here](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#GPFigure #FigureSkating**.

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