

PRESS CONFERENCE

Pairs, after Short Program

Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres (FRA), 1st after the Short Program

James: We've had a few errors in our short program in the middle of the season so we had to go back and rethink what was missing and what to make better. We needed speed going from the twist to the toeloop and from the flip, and today was the first time we found it. We weren't sure how it was going to be seeing as we hadn't performed it in competition but we are very proud and happy to have made these changes.

Cipres: (On matching each other in speed and energy) It's called practice and work, that's it. We work hard every day; we know what we want, we know our goals, and today for us was a reflection of our practice at home. It was not like this in the short program at the beginning of the season, obviously, but we didn't want to lose our minds over it so we made some adjustments with Guillaume (Cizeron) over Christmas and that's it. We are happy today but we have to keep going.

Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov (RUS), 2nd after the Short Program

Tarasova: Returning to last year's short program was a shared choice and the reason for it was we felt the program was more powerful to skate – we really liked it more compared to the one from the start of this season, so that's why we made the choice.

Morozov: (On whether they felt any rivalry with Natalia Zabiako/Alexander Enbert) Not today! (Zabiako/Enbert withdrew from the European Championships) But we saw them recently and they are getting better with their medical problems, not fully, but we think all will be OK. It's a bit boring without them but in skating it's the same.

Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise (ITA), 3rd after the Short Program

Della Monica: We are very happy about our performance today. We were ready - we *are* ready for this competition, and we did what we were ready to from our practice at home - nothing special and nothing more. Tomorrow will be the same, we feel very confident because we have been practising a lot.

Guarise: (On achieving control in their skating) I think it took a lot of time because we push every day at our maximum, every movement, with our choreographer screaming at us, 'stronger, faster, stronger, faster, push, push', and you keep falling and falling, then one day comes when you stay on your feet and skate a good program, when you can show not only good skating but good emotions, and I think that is the only way.