

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2013/2014 Hilton HHonors Skate America, Day Two

Hilton HHonors Skate America continued in Detroit (USA) Saturday with the Pairs and Ladies Short Programs, the Men's Free Skating and the Free Dance. Skate America is the first of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2013/2014. The athletes are competing for a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov (RUS) grab Pairs Short Program

Reigning World Champions Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov of Russia skated to the lead in the Pairs Short Program, setting a new record score on the way. Canadians Kirsten Moore-Towers/Dylan Moscovitch and Russia's Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov came second and third.

Volosozhar/Trankov produced a triple twist, side by side triple toe, throw triple loop in their program to "Masquerade Waltz" by Aram Khatchaturian. The European Champions earned a level four for all five possible elements and set a new record and personal best score of 83.05 points. "We beat our personal best and we are happy with this start of the competition. It is great", Trankov noted. "We don't care about the world record, we care about our skating, in figure skating the record is not like in athletes or other sports, there are different judges, different score. The short program is a big pleasure for us and the audience loves it. When the people stand up from their seats and clap, this is more important to us than the scores", he continued.

Moore-Towers/Moscovitch put out a solid performance of their playful "Motley Crew – Mic Macs" program that featured a throw triple loop, side by side triple toes and three level-four elements. The reigning Four Continents silver medalists earned 71.51 points, getting over 70 points for the first time. "We're very happy with that short program. We've been training very well, we're very excited for this event and we skated the way we've been training. It wasn't 100 percent perfect, but it's a great start to the Grand Prix season and we're looking forward to the long tomorrow", Moscovitch commented.

Stolbova/Klimov's Flamenco routine to "Surrender" by Jesse Cook was highlighted by triple toes and a throw triple flip. The 2012 European bronze medalists picked up 64.80 points, improving their personal best by 4.14 points. "We are pleased with our performance. We did everything as we had planned. This is our first international competition this season and a good start for us", Klimov said.

Reigning European bronze medalists Stefania Bertone/Ondrej Hotarek (ITA) placed fourth at 63.85 points ahead of U.S. Champions Marissa Castelli/Simon Shnapir (62.56 points) and Caydee Denney/John Coughlin (USA, 62.06 points).

Asada leads Ladies after Short Program

Two-time World Champion Mao Asada of Japan leads the Ladies following a confident Short Program. U.S. Champion Ashley Wagner sits in second and World Junior Champion Elena Radionova of Russia is currently ranked third.

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Asada opened her program to “Nocturne in E flat minor” by Frederic Chopin with a triple Axel and followed up with a triple flip and a triple loop-double loop combination. The Four Continents Champion earned a level four for the spins and footwork to score 73.18 points. “In the past seasons, I wasn’t able to perform well in my first Grand Prix events, so I am happy to have a good performance. This is great start of the season”, the 23-year-old told the post-event press conference. Skating to “Shine On You Crazy Diamond”, Wagner landed a triple flip-triple toe combination, a triple loop, double Axel and had a level three on her spins. The American posted a new personal best with 69.26 points. “I was very, very pleased with how the day went. It’s been a while since I got my (triple) flip- (triple) toe out there and I never got it out there in the short program to get that out there clean is a huge accomplishment for me. That short program is something that is so much fun for me to perform and I hope that comes across and I hope that as the season goes along it gets stronger”, the 2012 Four Continents Champion said.

Radionova produced a triple Lutz-triple toe loop combination, triple loop and excellent spins in her program to “Anna Karenina”. The 14-year-old got a new personal best as well at 67.01 points. “This competition is a new level for me and I didn’t expect this result. I was not nervous, I went into it calmly. This competition means a lot to me”, the World Junior Champion commented.

Valentina Marchei (ITA) came fourth (59.25 points) followed by Viktoria Helgesson (SWE) at 58.80 points and Elene Gedevanishvili (GEO) with 56.68 points.

Tatsuki Machida skates to Men’s gold

Tatsuki Machida of Japan skated to the Men’s gold. USA’s Adam Rippon and Max Aaron claimed silver and bronze respectively.

Overnight leader Machida put out a strong performance to “Firebird”, reeling off a quad toe and seven triples including two triple Axels. Only his second quadruple toe was shaky (and not in combination). Two spins garnered a level four. The Japanese skater earned 174.20 points and totaled 265.38 points, surpassing his previous personal best by almost 30 points. “I’m so glad that I was able to make a much better personal score here today but this winning doesn’t necessarily mean that it gives me an advantage to make the Olympic team. I want to aim for Japanese nationals and also to go to the Final. And I want to focus to go to (Cup of) Russia”, the 23-year-old said.

Performing to “Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun” by Claude Debussy, Rippon crashed on his opening quad Lutz (underrotated), but recovered to produce seven triple jumps and two level-four spins. The 23-year-old scored 160.98 points and with 241.24 points overall pulled up to second place. Both were new personal best scores. “The Lutz I felt like I had it but like I checked out early. Coming in second at Skate America and being the highest ranked American man in this field of former world champions and world medalists is a big accomplishment and I’m very proud of what I did but I have a lot of things to work on when I get home”, Rippon commented.

Aaron, who stood in sixth place following the Short Program, missed his first jump, a quad toe, and touched down on the first quad Salchow, but nailed a quad Salchow-double toe and six triple jumps. The U.S. Champion collected 162.45 points for his effort and jumped on to the podium at 238.36 points. “Tonight was definitely a fight for me. Starting off with the fall it was definitely difficult but it was something that I trained through and I know how to accomplish the rest of the program. This is my first Grand Prix event and it’s an honor to get third place, it’s an honor to be up here sitting with these two terrific men, they both fought for it and it is well deserved”, Aaron told the press.

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2010 World Champion Daisuke Takahashi moved up from fifth to fourth place (236.21 points). Jason Brown (USA) dropped from second to fifth at 231.03 points. Takahiko Kozuka (JPN) finished sixth with 230.95 points.

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) dance off with gold medal

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) danced off with the gold medal, their fourth consecutive Skate America title (and their ninth Grand Prix gold medal). Italy's Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte took the silver medal and the bronze went to Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA).

Davis/White performed to "Sheherazade" by Nikolai Rimski-Korsakov and picked up a level four for five elements and a level three for three elements to score 112.53 points. Overall the two-time and reigning World Champions racked up 188.23 points. "In terms of the free dance, it's a piece of music, we are incredibly passionate about. It's a piece we have been dying to skate to for years. We have had multiple discussions with Marina (Zueva) over the years about wanting to skate to this piece. We sort of came up with several lifts a season ago to use for this particular program. It's a program that's been in the works for more than a season already. We are pleased with the direction it's going in. We are confident with the material and feel we have a lot of room to grow with it still", Davis explained.

Cappellini/Lanotte put out a cheerful dance to "The Barber of Seville" that was highlighted by their lifts and fast twizzles. The Italian Champions earned 98.61 points for this performance and had 168.49 points overall. "We were really pleased with the way we skated. It was harder than yesterday, having lost some training time because of Luca's neck problem. We had to pull out of Nepela Trophy, so we weren't completely ready, but we were glad we could skate a clean program. We are happy with the response from the judges. It was a great week for us and we'll use it to build on rest of the season", Cappellini said.

The Shibutanis had to overcome a shaky start when he slipped and fell in the first seconds of their upbeat Michael-Jackson routine, but got back into it right away. The brother-and-sister team scored a level four for the lifts, the spin and the twizzles to collect 93.21 points. Overall the 2011 World bronze medalists had 154.47 points. "We had so much energy from the audience and the excitement we had going into this performance tonight was an all-time high for our career. We were so excited to share what we have been working on this entire summer and for the last year and a half", Alex Shibutani commented. "Obviously you don't plan on that stuff happening that enabled us to get back up and keep pushing through the program. We got a great learning experience out of it. We can build on and nail it for the next performance", he added.

Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) came fourth at 152.98 points followed by Cathy Reed/Chris Reed (JPN) at 136.13 points and Pernelle Carron/Lloyd Jones (FRA) at 135.70 points.

For full entry lists and results please refer to www.isu.org. Hilton HHonors Skate America concludes Sunday with the Pairs and Ladies Free Skating and the Exhibition Gala.

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