

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2013/2014 Lexus Cup of China, Day One

The Lexus Cup of China opened Friday in Beijing with the Short Dance, Ladies, Men and Pairs Short Program. Lexus Cup of China is the third of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2013/2014 series. The athletes are competing for a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev (RUS) in the lead

Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev of Russia took the lead in the Short Dance followed by France's Nathalie Pechalat/Fabian Bourzat and Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA).

Dancing Quickstep, Foxtrot and Quickstep to "Diamonds are a Girl's best Bobrova/Soloviev picked up a level four for the twizzles and their straight line lift, while the side by side footwork and the first part of the Finnstep pattern were rated a level three. The reigning European Champions scored 65.70 points. "This is our first serious competition of the season and after having not such a great start with injury and change of our program, we are very happy with how we skated today. We still want to improve with each competition and obviously for the Free Dance tomorrow", Bobrova commented.

Pechalat/Bourzat's Foxtrot, Quickstep and Charleston routine included level four twizzles and a level four lift, but they struggled with the end of the lift and their second Finnstep part merited only a level one. The two-time European Champions earned 63.60 points. "We think we did a pretty good job today. We had lots of energy until the end. This is a program we really love. It's not perfect yet. We have high expectations with it. We wanted to do something different, something more sexy", Bourzat said.

Chock/Bates earned a level four for the first part of the Finnstep and for the rotational lift, but she wobbled on the twizzles (level three) and the second Finnstep pattern was a level one. The current Four Continents bronze medalists received 56.77 points. "We are very happy with the way we skated. This is our first Grand Prix and I think it was a pretty good start for us. We love our Short Program and it's going to get better as the seasons goes on", Chock shared.

World Junior bronze medalists Alexandra Aldridge/Daniel Eaton (USA) are ranked fourth with 52.92 points followed by Pernelle Carron/Lloyd Jones (FRA) at 50.20 points. Xintong Huang/Xun Zheng (CHN) have withdrawn due to illness (Huang).

Adelina Sotnikova (RUS) takes Ladies Short Program

Russia's Adelina Sotnikova won the Ladies Short Program. Carolina Kostner of Italy finished in second place and Anna Pogorilaya of Russia came third.

Sotnikova went for a triple Lutz-triple loop combination in her "Carmen" program, but underrotated and stepped out of the second jump. The Muscovite then nailed a triple flip, double Axel, three

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level-four spins and level-four footwork to score 66.03 points.”I feel very good today, not everything was great in practice, but I went out, pulled myself together and performed well. I did all my difficult elements like the triple Lutz-triple loop, triple flip and the new (camel) spin (variation)”, the teenager noted.

Performing to “Humoresque” by Anton Dvorak, Kostner produced a triple loop, double Axel and fine spins and footwork, but fell on her triple toe-triple toe combination. She collected 62.75 points. “I was nervous today. I have been working a lot on my choreography and I didn’t know if I would be able to combine the choreography with the jumps. I still have to work on many things”, the European Champion said.

Pogorilaya pulled off a triple Lutz-triple toe, triple loop, double Axel and difficult spins to “El Choclo” to earn 60.24 points. “I am very happy to be able to compete at the senior level with Adelina Sotnikova and the other top skaters. I can’t relax now, I will try very hard in the Free Skating and I want to show myself from my best side tomorrow”, the 15-year-old told the press.

Kanako Murakami (JPN) finished fourth (57.33 points), followed by teammate Haruka Imai (54.79 points) and Nikol Gosviani (RUS) with 53.76 points.

Han Yan (CHN) skates to the lead in the Men’s Short Program

Han Yan of China skated to the lead in the Men’s Short Program. Russia’s Maxim Kovtun placed second ahead of Takahiko Kozuka of Japan.

Yan nailed a triple Axel, quadruple toeloop, triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and three level-four spins in his program to “Viper’s Drag” by Fats Waller. The 2012 World Junior Champion scored a new personal best with 90.14 points. “I just skated like I do in practice and I showed what I can do. It is amazing for me to be in first place right now”, the 17-year-old said.

Kovtun opened his Flamenco routine with a quadruple Salchow-triple toeloop combination and followed up with a quad toeloop and triple Axel but fell in the straight line step sequence. He picked up 81.84 points, a personal best as well. “I am very happy to have landed two different quads and the triple Axel today and I skated in a relaxed way. I don’t really know what happened when I fell, maybe I relaxed too much”, the skater from Moscow explained.

Kozuka’s program to “Unsquare Dance” by Dave Brubeck featured a somewhat shaky quadruple toeloop and a good triple Axel, but he reduced his combination to triple Lutz-double toe. The 2011 World silver medalist posted a seasons best with 81.61 points. “It was not perfect. As for the Lutz-toe, I remembered how I missed it at Skate America and I made a mistake. I should more practice. But I got 40 points in the component score, this gives me confidence”, the Japanese told the press.

Reigning World silver medalist Denis Ten (KAZ) came fourth at 77.05 points. 2011 European Champion Florent Amodio (FRA) is currently ranked fifth (76.75 points) ahead of Richard Dornbush (USA, 72.58 points).

Qing Pang/Jian Tong (CHN) capture Pairs Short Program

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China's Qing Pang/Jian Tong captured the Pairs Short Program. Aliona Savchenko/Robin Szolkowy of Germany are standing in second place and Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang of China skated to third place.

Pang/Tong's program to "Lady Caliph" by Ennio Morricone was highlighted by a triple twist, throw triple loop and a reverse Lasso lift, but the side by side triple toe was underrotated. The team earned 70.38 points. "This is our final season. We've competed in many competitions and we are now not skating for medals or for winning, but we are skating for our fans. For them, we want to skate perfect and clean", Tong told the press.

Performing to "When Winter Comes" in an arrangement by Andre Rieu, Savchenko/Szolkowy produced a triple twist, level four footwork and death spiral, but Szolkowy underrotated the triple toe and Savchenko landed the throw triple Axel on two feet. The four-time World Champions scored 69.07 points. "This is our first competition of the season and it wasn't perfect. But we know what elements we need to improve. Our plan is to do the throw triple Axel the whole season in both Short and long program", Szolkowy noted.

Peng/Zhang completed a high triple twist, throw triple loop and a level-four lift in their program to "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon", but she stepped out of the side by side triple toe. The Chinese duo earned 64.24 points, setting a new personal best for themselves. "We performed up to our practice level and we made progress. We are happy with our score and we hope to skate even better in the free program", Zhang said.

Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) finished fourth (57.99 points) followed by Xuehan Wang/Lei Wang (CHN) with 57.16 points.

Lexus Cup of China continues Saturday with the Free Dance, Ladies, Men's and Pairs Free Skating. For full and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2013/14 please refer to www.isu.org.

For further information please contact

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