

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS: CHEMIN DE PRIMEROSE 2 - CH 1007 LAUSANNE - SWITZERLAND
TELEPHONE (+41) 21 612 66 66 TELEFAX (+41) 21 612 66 7 E-MAIL: info@isu.ch

November 8, 2013

For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2013/2014 NHK Trophy, Day One

NHK Trophy kicked off in Tokyo, Japan, Friday with the Pairs, Men's and Ladies Short Programs. NHK Trophy is the fourth of six events in the The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2013/2014 series.

Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov (RUS) lead Pairs after Short Program

Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov of Russia skated to the lead in the Pairs Short Program. Two Chinese couples, Wenjing Sui/Cong Han and Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang follow in second and third.

Volosozhar/Trankov put out a confident performance of their "Masquerade Waltz" routine that was highlighted by a triple twist, side by side triple toe and a throw triple loop. The World Champions earned a level four for the death spiral, pair spin and footwork to score 82.03 points. "Today we did a good short program, although the feeling maybe wasn't so comfortable in the last three elements. But we got a high score and we are happy with it", Volosozhar said.

Skating to "La Strada", Sui/Han completed a throw triple flip, triple toes and triple twist. The three-time World Junior Champions posted a new personal best with 70.13 points. "It was a good short program for us and we did our best", Han commented.

Peng/Zhang's routine to "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon" included a triple toe, triple twist and to level-four elements, but she touched down with her hand on the throw triple loop. The Cup of China bronze medalists collected 65.09 points, another personal best score. "We had an error today, but we are in third place and got our highest score, so we are happy with that", Zhang told the press.

Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) finished fourth at 58.67 points followed by teammates Marissa Castelli/Simon Shnafir with 58.60 points.

Daisuke Takahashi (JPN) claims Men's Short Program

Daisuke Takahashi of Japan claimed the Men's Short Program. Javier Fernandez of Spain sits in second place and Japan's Nobunari Oda finished third.

Takahashi reeled off a quad toe, triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toe combination as well as two level-four spins and level-four footwork in his program to "Sonatino for Violin" by Mamoru Samuragochi. He racked up 95.55 points, a new personal best and the second highest score ever achieved in the Men's Short Program. "Today I'm extremely happy with my performance and I haven't been that happy in a while. I never expected my score to be that high, I was surprised. But it wasn't about the score, I wanted to regain my confidence (with this performance)", the 2010 World Champion said.

Performing to "Satan Takes a Holiday", Fernandez stumbled on his opening quad Salchow but recovered to nail a triple Axel and triple Lutz-triple toe combination. All three spins garnered a level four and the reigning World bronze medalist scored 84.78 points. "I had a little mistake in my quad, but I think this is a great start for me. It is my first Grand Prix and my first big competition this season. It was a great competition today", the Spaniard commented.

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Oda's "Cotton Club" program included a triple Axel, triple Lutz and fast spins, but his quad toe (in combination with triple toe) was called underrotated. The 26-year-old earned 82.70 points. "I definitely wanted to avoid the same mistakes I did at Skate Canada. I know that the judges gave me an underrotation and an edge call (on the Lutz) and those are definitely things I want to correct", Oda noted.

Adam Rippon (USA) is within striking distance of the podium in fourth place at 82.25 points. Takahito Mura (JPN) came fifth (79.97 points) and Sergei Voronov (RUS) is currently ranked sixth (79.80 points).

Mao Asada (JPN) takes Ladies Short Program

Mao Asada led the Japanese Ladies to a one-two finish in the Ladies Short Program. Akiko Suzuki is in second place. Russia's Elena Radionova came third.

Asada produced a somewhat shaky triple Axel in her routine to a Nocturne by Frederic Chopin and went on to complete a triple flip, triple loop-double loop combination as well as level four spins and footwork. The two-time World Champion scored 71.26 points. "I really focused to skate like in practice and I think I improved from Skate America. After Skate America, I was able to work on my transitions and spins", the 23-year-old told the press.

Skating to "Hymne à l'amour", Suzuki landed a triple toe-double toe combination, a double Axel and picked up level fours for her spins and the step sequence. The 2012 World bronze medalist earned a seasons best with 66.03 points. "My toeloop (combination) and my flip were not so clean, but I am happy with my interpretation. This is my third competition and also I controlled my nervousness, I still worried about my jumps and I think that was reflected in the performance today", Suzuki said.

Radionova touched down on her opening triple Lutz, but rallied back to nail a triple loop-triple toe combination, a double Axel and excellent spins. The reigning World Junior Champion picked up 62.83 points. "Overall I'm pretty pleased with my performance although not everything worked out today as planned. In the second Grand Prix you have more responsibility, there is more tension as you have a chance to get to the Final", the 14-year-old explained.

Gracie Gold (USA) in fourth place has 62.83 points as well, but Radionova's higher technical score broke the tie. Valentina Marchei (ITA) finished fifth at 61.90 points followed by Satoko Miyahara (JPN) with 58.39 points.

For full results please refer to www.isu.org. NHK Trophy continues Saturday with the Short Dance, Pairs, Men's and Ladies Free Skating

For further information please contact

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating & Final
Selina Vanier, Media Coordinator
+41 21 612 66 66 (phone)
email: vanier@isu.ch

NHK Trophy
Tamio Suzuki, Press Officer
+81 (0) 3 57909092 (phone press room)