

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

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

NHK Trophy continued in Tokyo, Japan, Saturday with the Short Dance, Pairs, Men's and Ladies Free Skating. NHK Trophy is the fourth of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2013/2014 series.

Meryl Davis/Charlie White win Short Dance

Meryl Davis/Charlie White (USA) won the Short Dance. Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte of Italy and Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) follow in second and third.

Davis/White turned in a confident dance to Foxtrot, Quickstep and Foxtrot from "My Fair Lady", completing fast steps and a rotational lift. They picked up a level four for the second part of the Finnstep and their rotational lift while the side by side step sequence, the twizzles and the first Finnstep sequence garnered a level three. The two-time and reigning World Champions scored 73.70 points. "Charlie and I feel really excited about the direction our short dance is taking. We have a lot of things we want to improve before the Grand Prix Final. But I think since Skate America we've really grown into the presentation of this program, which is really what we were aiming for", Davis said.

Cappellini/Lanotte's dance to "42nd Street" and "Broadway Lullaby" featured excellent twizzles (level four) and a level-four first Finnstep sequence as well as a rotational lift. The European bronze medalists earned 64.58 points. "It was kind of tough start in the warm up when I fell unexpectedly in the Finnstep. I guess that made us a little more nervous. There were a couple of mistakes and we left a few points on the ice, but in general we are proud of our short dance. We were able to bring a lot of fun and dance out there. It was not a perfect skate, but something we can build on", Cappellini shared.

Performing to songs by Michael Buble, Shibutani/Shibutani completed level-four twizzles and a level-three Finnstep to earn a seasons best with 63.09 points. "Going into this week our goal was to show improvement from Skate America. The performance felt really good and our Finnstep levels got better", Maia Shibutani told the post-event press conference.

Elena Ilinykh/Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) sit in fourth with 61.35 points. Piper Gilles/Paul Poirer (CAN) came fifth at 55.20 points.

Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov (RUS) claim NHK Trophy

Tatiana Volosozhar/Maxim Trankov of Russia claimed NHK Trophy. China's Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang moved up one spot to take the silver medal while their teammates Wenjing Sui/Cong Han settled for the bronze.

Volosozhar/Trankov put out a strong performance to "Jesus Christ Superstar", landing side by side triple jumps, a triple twist, throw triple loop and Salchow. Five elements merited a level four. The reigning World Champions scored 154.46 points and racked up 236.49 points overall. "We feel very comfortable and happy about our free skating. We skated very well today and got good points.

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We are very happy as this is the first time at NHK Trophy for us and we did our job very well”, Volosozhar told the press. “I really wanted to skate well for the third time (this season) in order to feel confident. Therefore this was an important step. It was important for us to get good scores and to skate well”, added Trankov.

Peng/Zhang produced a quadruple twist, a big throw triple Salchow and difficult lifts in their program to “Yellow River Concerto”, but struggled with their solo jumps. The couple collected 117.09 points and pulled up to second at 182.18 points. “We are happy with today’s result, but not a 100 percent happy with the performance itself”, Zhang said.

Sui/Han’s program to “Kalinka” included a quadruple twist, a throw triple Salchow and two level-four lifts, but they made several errors including her falling from a lift. The three-time World Junior Champions received 101.19 points and slipped to third at 171.32 points. “It was not a good competition for us. Yesterday I started having a headache and a fever. I ended up getting up at 2 am and couldn’t go back to bed until 5 am. I had to be on the 6 am bus. I’m feeling very bad”, Han explained.

Marissa Castelli/Simon Shnapir (USA) moved up from fifth to fourth place at 168.89 points. They went for the throw quadruple Salchow, but she stepped out of the landing. World Junior Champions Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) dropped one spot to fifth (167.85 points).

Volosozhar/Trankov are now qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final with the maximum of 30 points. Peng/Zhang and Sui/Han with 24 points each will have to wait and see if they make it to the Final.

Daisuke Takahashi (JPN) skates off with gold

Daisuke Takahashi of Japan skated off with the gold medal. Teammate Nobunari Oda claimed the silver medal and Jeremy Abbott (USA) surged from seventh to take the bronze.

Skating to a Beatles Medley, Takahashi nailed his opening quadruple toeloop as well as a triple Axel and four more triple jumps and two level-four spins, but he stumbled on his second triple Axel and on a triple toe. The reigning ISU Grand Prix Final Champion picked up 172.76 points, a seasons best, which added up to 268.31 points overall. “I wasn’t able to perform as well as yesterday. In the free skating at Japan Open and Skate America I wasn’t able to perform very well, so I was little bit anxious. I made progress. It was not 100 percent yet, but I think it was okay”, the 27-year-old commented. “It was my second Grand Prix and my third competition and I’m thinking that I’m finally prepared going to the Olympic Games. I think I’m right at the starting line”, he continued.

Oda’s performance to “Wilhelm Tell” by Rossini featured a quadruple toeloop, a triple Axel-triple toeloop as well as six more triple jumps and well centered spins. The Japanese skater earned 170.46 points and pulled up one spot at 253.16 overall. “Yesterday in the short program I had a lot of cheers and applause and I didn’t want to forget that. I was hoping to perform well today. I missed my first quad, but I’m happy with how I went on with my performance. I still have margin to improve for the next competition”, the 26-year-old noted.

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Abbott landed seven triple jumps in his routine to “Exogenesis Symphony” by Muse and collected a level four for all three spins and the step sequence, but had tripled his planned quad toe. The three-time U.S. Champion scored 158.63 points and jumped on to the podium at 237.41 points. “I was very happy with my performance in the short, just the missing piece of the quad toe, but the rest of the elements were very strong and very good quality. Even though I was in seventh, I was very close in points to second and third place and I knew that I could make up those points by doing a good free skate. Again, today the quad was missing, but everything else was there. I wanted to skate a solid program which I did. I’m happy I was able to make up the points to go from seventh to the podium”, the skater from Detroit said.

Adam Rippon (USA) finished fourth at 233.71 points. Javier Fernandez (ESP) dropped from second to fifth with 230.45 points. Takahito Mura (JPN) rounds up the top six (227.22 points).

Takashi got 24 points from his two events and most likely will go to the Grand Prix Final. Oda has 24 points as well but needs to wait what happens in the last two events. Abbott collected 16 points from his events, which will not be enough to qualify.

Mao Asada (JPN) skates to victory

Mao Asada of Japan skated to victory in the Ladies event. Russia’s Elena Radionova earned the silver medal and the bronze went to Akiko Suzuki of Japan.

Asada’s program to Piano Concerto No. 2 by Sergei Rachmaninov was highlighted by five triple jumps and a level-four step sequence, but she two-footed and underrotated her triple Axel. Asada earned a seasons best with 136.33 points and totaled 207.59 points to take the title. “Ever since the Japan Open I’ve been doing well, but I am not satisfied yet. Since Skate America I am climbing up step by step and I want to be at a higher level at my next event”, the two-time World Champion commented.

Performing to “Frida”, Radionova hit seven triples including a triple Lutz-triple toe and a triple loop-single loop-triple Salchow combination. She also showed excellent spins and scored 128.98 points, a new personal best. Overall she racked up 191.81 points. “I am very, very happy with today’s performance, because I skated clean and I really wanted to do that. I would like to go to the Grand Prix Final, this is a goal I set for myself this season”, the 14-year-old from Moscow noted. Suzuki’s program to “The Phantom of the Opera” included four triples, but she fell on an underrotated Lutz and singled another Lutz. The 2012 World bronze medalist collected 113.29 points for her Free Skating and overall slipped to second place at 179.32 points. “There were a lot of mistakes. I was quite anxious before I skated and I wasn’t able to recover. I have lots of regrets now”, the 28-year-old told the press.

Gracie Gold (USA) remained in fourth place at 177.81 points. Satoko Miyahara (JPN) moved up one spot to fifth (170.21 points) while Valentina Marchei (ITA) came sixth (168.95 points). Asada qualified for the Grand Prix Final with two victories and 30 points. Radionova and Suzuki got 24 points each and have to see what happens in Paris and Moscow.

For full results please refer to www.isu.org. NHK Trophy concludes Sunday with the Free Dance and Exhibition Gala.

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