

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

March 29, 2014

ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 **Free Dance and Ladies Free Skating**

The ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 continued in Saitama, Japan, on Saturday with the Free Dance and the Ladies Free Skating in front of a capacity crowd of 18, 000 spectators at Saitama Super Arena.

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte (ITA) dance to the gold

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte of Italy danced to the gold medal, edging out Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje by just 0.02 points. France's Nathalie Pechalat/Fabian Bourzat earned the bronze medal and were just 0.06 points behind the champions. Cappellini/Lanotte and Weaver/Poje claimed their first World medal while Pechalat/Bourzat had won a bronze once before in 2012.

Cappellini/Lanotte delivered a strong Free Dance to "Barber of Seville", completing difficult lifts and intricate steps. The European Champions collected a level four for the twizzles, the lifts and the spin to post a personal best of 105.73 points. They were ranked fourth in the Free Dance portion but overall held on to first place with 175.41 points. "We have no words, we are shocked. We had to work so much to block out the pressure of being first in the short dance", Cappellini commented. "It was such a long season. We were at the end of our energy and we turned to each other for strength. We were already happy with the way we performed, the rest doesn't matter as we always say", she noted.

Weaver/Poje's passionate performance to "Maria de Buenos Aires" featured interesting lifts and level-three footwork. The Canadians got a personal best as well with 106.21 points and totaled 175.41 points. It hasn't sunken in yet. I can't even believe that we skated that way let alone achieve a podium finish at this year's worlds. It's so emotional and I think it's just opening a new door for our future", Weaver said. "We've learned that it doesn't pay off to hold back. Skating last was difficult but we were prepared for it. We took one step at a time one moment at a time and that was how we were able to make it to the end the way we did. We are up against such strong teams that I knew if I got too attached to a position it could be gone in a second", she added.

Performing to "Le Petit Prince", Pechalat/Bourzat, produced technically most difficult program with six level-four elements. The French were second in the Free Dance with a personal best of 107.17 points, but overall remained in third place with 175.37 points. "It was the last time we are skating in a competition. Before we went on the ice, our coach told us to skate from our heart. I think that that was what we did tonight; we finally managed to get emotional, we didn't think about anything else but what we have to do. It was a good place to do it here in Japan and in front of this audience", Bourzat told the press.

Olympic bronze medalists Elena Ilinykh/Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) won the Free Dance segment and moved up from fifth to fourth place with 174.38 points. Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) came fifth (167.59 points) and Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) finished sixth (158.57 points).

Mao Asada (JPN) earns third World title

Mao Asada of Japan earned her third World title in front of an enthusiastic home crowd. Russia's Julia Lipnitskaia moved up one spot to take the silver medal in her debut at the World Championships and Carolina Kostner of Italy claimed the bronze.

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Skating to Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2, Asada landed five clean triples, but the triple Axel and the triple flip in combination with the triple loop were underrotated. The 23-year-old collected level fours for her spins and the footwork and scored 138.03 points which added up to 216.69 points overall. "It hasn't sunk in yet that I won the championship. I wanted to put out everything I had on the ice for the short and free program and I feel I did that", the 2010 Olympic silver medalist commented. "The Olympics and Worlds brought me happiness and also made me regret, I went through so many emotions but after all it made me realize again how wonderful skating is", she noted. Asada won her fifth World medal since 2007.

Lipnitskaia reeled off a triple Lutz-triple toe, double Axel-triple toe combination as well as three other triples in her routine to "Schindler's List". She scored highly for her spins, but she fell on a triple Salchow attempt. The European Champion earned 132.96 points and totaled 207.50 points. "That is not the best performance of the season, but I am still glad, because even with the mistake I got a lot of points and high levels. Everything was performed very well except for the fall. For me each competition (this season) has had its happy moments. Each competition brought new emotions and feelings and I will remember this for the rest of my life", the 15-year-old said.

Kostner opened her "Bolero" Free Skating with a triple Lutz and hit a triple flip and triple Salchow, but she fell on the back end of her triple flip-triple toe combo and singled two jumps. The Olympic bronze medalist was ranked sixth in the Free Skating with 126.59 points and slipped from second to third at 203.83 points overall. "I wish I could skate again and do better. It was really hard. The jumps did not work how I wished but this is the sport. I have to say that the Japanese crowd helped me so much to keep going. They cheered me until the end. I love skating and 18,000 people love it too, so I'm not the only one. I will take home so many great moments other than this long program", the 27-year-old shared. For Kostner, it was her sixth medal at World Championships since 2005.

Anna Pogorilaya (RUS) pulled up from sixth to fourth in her first World Championship (197.50 points) while Gracie Gold (USA) dropped one spot to fifth (194.58 points). Akiko Suzuki (JPN) came sixth (193.72 points).

The twelve medals at the ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 went to seven ISU members. Japan got two gold medals and one silver. Italy had one gold and one bronze. One gold went to Germany. Russia claimed two silver medals, Canada takes home a silver and a bronze and France and Spain leave with a bronze medal each.

The ISU World Figure Skating Championships 2014 conclude Sunday with the Exhibition Gala. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and www.wfc2014.jp

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