

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2014/2015 Hilton HHonors Skate America, Day Three

Hilton HHonors Skate America conclude Sunday in Hoffman Estates (Chicago), USA, with the Pairs and Ladies Free Skating and the Exhibition Gala. Hilton HHonors Skate America was the first of six events in the the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2014/2015. Skaters compete for points towards the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov (RUS) take Pairs title

Yuko Kavaguti/Alexander Smirnov of Russia claimed the Skate America Pairs title. Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) earned the silver medal and Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang of China settled for the bronze.

Kavaguti/Smirnov's program to the "Manfred" Symphony by Peter Tchaikovski featured a triple toe-triple toe sequence, a throw quadruple Salchow, triple twist and level four lifts and spins. The couple from St. Petersburg posted a new personal best with 140.00 points and racked up 209.16 points overall to win the title in their first appearance at Skate America. "I just want to repeat that we are so happy to skate here in the competition. And we are satisfied with how we skated today", Kavaguti said. "This was a better performance than in Germany and at the test skate in Moscow and so we are improving with each competition", added Smirnov.

Skating to "The Lion King", Denney/Frazier produced a triple twist, throw triple loop and Salchow as well as a side by side triple Salchow. The 2013 World Junior Champions improved their personal best significantly with 122.76 points and accumulated 183.84 points overall to move up one spot. "We came here to put out two really solid performances and that's exactly what we did. I would say these programs took a lot of work in the offseason and it feels like it's been a long, long offseason. It's good to come out here and see all that hard work pay off", Frazier commented.

Peng/Zhang completed a quadruple twist, throw triple loop and Salchow as well as two level-four lifts, but she missed both solo jumps. With 120.05 points, the Chinese team was ranked third in the Free Skating and slipped from second to third at 182.43 points. "I think we performed well. We performed a nice program, really focusing on the performance aspect this time", Zhang noted.

Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) remained in fourth place with 168.62 points ahead of teammates Madeline Aaron/Max Settlage (160.04 points).

Elena Radionova (RUS) skates off with gold

Russia's Elena Radionova skated off with the gold medal. Overnight leader Elizaveta Tuktamysheva, also from Russia, claimed the silver medal and Gracie Gold (USA) earned the bronze.

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Radionova opened her program to Piano Concerto No. 3 and Trio Elegiaque No. 2 by Sergei Rachmaninov with triple Lutz-triple toe and followed up with five more triples. Her spins and footwork all garnered a level four. The two-time World Junior Champion set a new personal best with 129.90 points and totaled 195.47 points. "I am very happy because this is the first Grand Prix that I was able to win. It's a completely different emotion than being in second or third place. It's even hard to speak now because I'm overwhelmed by all of my emotions. I'm just excited that I was able to do everything I can do", the 15-year-old told the press.

Tuktamysheva's program to "Batwannis Beek" by The REG Project and "Sandstorm" by La Bionda included five triples and three level-four spins. The 17-year-old scored 122.21 points and dropped to second at 189.62 points. "First of all, I am pleased that I was able to finish this marathon of competition. This is my fourth competition in a row. Today I was not in the same shape as I was in Finland or Germany, and I'm a little upset that I made some silly errors for me in this performance today. Overall it wasn't bad. There's room to grow and improve, and I hope to do that in Shanghai", the 2013 European bronze medalist said.

Gold nailed a triple Lutz-triple toe and three more triple jumps to pick up 118.57 points. She remained in third place with 179.38 points. "I was able to get the bronze medal at this Grand Prix, which I'm happy with. There were some mistakes in this program that of course, I need to improve on for NHK and the competitions to come. But I think it was a good start to my season. In previous seasons I've also started with a silver or bronze medal on the Grand Prix circuit, so I'm looking forward to another medal at NHK before I take on 2015", the U.S. Champion noted.

Samantha Cesario (USA) came fourth (174.58 points) and So Youn Park (KOR) finished fifth (170.43 points). Mirai Nagasu (USA) moved up from tenth to sixth place (158.21 points).

For full results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2014/15 please refer to www.isu.org/en/single-and-pair-skating-and-ice-dance/series/isu-grand-prix-of-figure-skating. The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating continues next week with Skate Canada International in Kewlona, BC, Canada.

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