

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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November 15, 2014

For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2014/2015 Rostelecom Cup, Day Two

Rostelecom Cup continued in Moscow, Russia, on Saturday with the Ladies, Pairs and Men's Free Skating and the Free Dance. Rostelecom Cup is the fourth of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating. The world's top figure skaters are competing for a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix and for points towards the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Barcelona (ESP) in December.

Rika Hongo (JPN) skates to Ladies' gold medal

Rika Hongo of Japan skated to the Ladies gold medal, her first medal in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating. Russia's Anna Pogorilaya claimed the silver medal while overnight leader Alaine Chartrand of Canada settled for the bronze.

Skating to "Carmen", Hongo completed five triples and two level-four spins as well as level-four footwork. However, two other triple jumps were underrotated. The 18-year-old posted a new personal best with 118.15 points and totaled 178.00 points to win the title. "I was able to skate very well, so I am very happy. This is my first senior season. I have done a lot of research and analyzed with my coaches what I need to do more. This was one of the reasons why I was able to progress", the Japanese Junior Champion noted.

Pogorilaya's performance to "Firebird" was highlighted by a triple loop-single loop-triple Salchow as well as excellent spins, but some jumps were not clean. The Skate Canada Champion earned 114.11 points and with 173.43 points overall moved up one spot. With a gold and a silver from the circuit, the Muscovite is qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. "It was not the best skate, but I got a colossal experience from this event", the 16-year-old said. "I already fulfilled one of my goals for the season, to qualify for the Grand Prix Final. My task will be to calm down after this competition", she added.

Chartrand produced difficult spins in her routine to "Doctor Zhivago", but several jumps were underrotated or two-footed. The Canadian still got a seasons best of 110.82 points and slipped to third at 172.00 overall. "After being first in the short I really wanted to stay on the podium. This is my first medal internationally. It (the performance) wasn't exactly what I wanted but better than at Skate Canada. An improvement is always good", the 18-year-old told the press.

Mirai Nagasu (USA) remained in fourth place with 165.88 points followed by So Youn Park (KOR) with 163.24 points and Miyabi Oba (JPN) with 154.57 points.

Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov (RUS) skate off with the gold

Ksenia Stolbova/Fedor Klimov skated off with the gold medal and led a Russian sweep in the Pairs event. Evgenia Tarasova/ Vladimir Morozov took the silver medal and the bronze went to newcomers Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov.

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Stolbova/Klimov opened their program to “Notre Dame de Paris” with a triple twist and followed up with a beautiful throw triple flip. The World silver medalists also completed a triple toe combination, a double Axel, difficult lifts and ended with a big throw triple Salchow. The Olympic silver medalists scored 142.88 points and racked up 211.97 points overall to win the first Grand Prix gold medal of their career. “We are overall satisfied, almost everything worked out. There is always something to improve, but most elements worked. We are happy to have skated well and to have finished first for the first time”, Klimov explained.

Tarasova/Morozov impressed with their huge triple twist and their lifts in their program to “Hello” by Lionel Ritchie, but he missed the solo jumps and she fell on the throw triple loop. The World Junior silver medalists were ranked fifth in the Free Skating with 106.50 points, but overall held on to second place with 173.78 points. “We are not pleased with our performance, because we missed many elements, even some where we didn’t expect mistakes. We need to continue to work on our free program”, Tarasova said.

Astakhova/Rogonov’s routine to “The Master and Margarita” included a side by side triple Salchow, throw triple flip and loop, but he struggled with an Axel Lasso lift that received no value. The team from Moscow earned 106.52 points and clinched the bronze with 164.86 points. “First of all we are happy that Kristina and I had a debut (at the Grand Prix). We dealt with our program and we did many elements, but for some of them we had to fight”, Rogonov noted.

Haven Denney/Brandon Frazier (USA) were edged out of the podium by 0.01 points and finished fourth. Jessica Calalang/Zack Sidhu (USA) came in fifth (157.45 points).

Javier Fernandez (ESP) strikes gold

Javier Fernandez of Spain struck gold in the Men’s event. Russia’s Sergei Voronov earned the silver medal and Michal Brezina of the Czech Republic took the bronze.

Performing to “The Barber of Seville”, Fernandez nailed a quadruple toeloop and four triple jumps, but his two quad Salchow were not clean. The European Champion picked up a level four for two spins and a level three for the footwork to score a seasons best of 171.09 points. He accumulated 265.01 points overall. With a first and second place in his Grand Prix events, Fernandez has booked his ticket to the Grand Prix Final in his home country. “I tried my best. It was an important competition for me for the Grand Prix Final. Some landings and the loop didn’t happen perfectly, but I fought in the program from the beginning to the end”, the Spaniard said.

Voronov’s program to “It’s a Men’s World” and “Come Together” featured a quadruple-triple toeloop combination, two triple Axels, three more triples as well as strong spins and footwork. The European silver medalist scored 161.67 points, which added up to 252.00 points. “Compared to yesterday there was some anxiety today. I could not avoid hearing what was going on on the TV and I was tight. Therefore I didn’t go for the second quad toe, but I will try it in my second Grand Prix in Japan”, the 27-year-old Muscovite commented.

Brezina pulled off a quad Salchow-double toe and five triples including two triple Axels in his program to “The Marriage of Figaro” to score a seasons best of 160.34 points. He moved up from

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fourth to third at 241.23 points. "I'm really happy that I finally did what I did the whole summer in practice", the 2013 European bronze medalist pointed out. "It's kind of funny every time in Moscow I end up third and I was happy to be invited . Every time I come here I skate well and I have to tank the audience, they pushed me at the end of the program a lot. I hope I can build on that and perform better and better in the season", he continued.

Misha Ge (UZB) finished fourth at 238.05 points and Jason Brown (USA) placed fifth with 235.56 points. Takahiko Kozuka (JPN) dropped from third to sixth (216.80 points).

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) dance to gold

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) danced to the gold medal. Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin of Russia earned the silver and Great Britain's Penny Coomes/Nicholas Buckland secured the bronze.

Chock/Bates collected a level four for the lifts, twizzles and spins and a level three for the step sequences in their dance to "An American in Paris". The Skate America Champions set a new personal best score of 105.42 points for themselves and accumulated 174.28 points overall. With two victories in their two events, the Americans qualified for the Grand Prix Final for the first time. "We just evaluate our performance based on our last performance and so looking back at Skate America this was definitely a step up. It felt like a stronger performance. We gained higher levels, so technically it was better, but also emotionally it felt stronger", Bates shared. "We are so thrilled to be going to the Final. This is our first Grand Prix Final together. I think this is good way going into the Final. We've been building some momentum", Chock added.

Ilinykh/Zhiganshin's dance to "Appassionata" and "Anthony and Cleopatra" included level-four twizzles and level-three footwork, but their combination spin merited only a level one. The Muscovites were ranked third in the Free Dance with a personal best of 96.31 points but remained in second at 160.43 points overall. „It was a bit hard today in the free dance, because it did not go without some minor errors. We tried to correct as much as possible the mistakes that we did in our previous competition and pay more attention to this. Overall I think we coped with the program", Zhiganshin told the post-event press conference.

Coomes/Buckland delivered a strong Free Dance to "Butterflies and Hurricanes" as well that was highlighted by innovative lifts. The European bronze medalists produced five level-four elements and earned 98.47 points, a new personal best. They had 158.02 points overall. "We were very pleased with the result and the score. We really love our free dance this year and so it was important to us to do the program justice. We wanted to show the audience and the judges that we have done something new for this season", Buckland said.

Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) placed fourth at 147.55 points and Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin (RUS) were fifth with 143.51 points.

Rostelecom Cup concludes Sunday with the Exhibition Gala. 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 Trophée Eric Bompard in Bordeaux (FRA).

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