

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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January 29, 2015

ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2015 **Ice Dance Free Dance**

Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron (FRA) crowned European Ice Dance Champions

Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron of France took the European Ice Dance crown. Italians Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte claimed the silver medal and Russia's Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin captured the bronze in their debut at the event.

Papadakis/Cizeron turned in a smooth dance to the Adagio from Concerto No. 23 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, executing intricate footwork and difficult lifts. The ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalists picked up a level four for the lifts, the spin and the twizzles, while the two step sequences merited a level three. The French Champions set a new personal best of 108.91 points which added up to 179.97 points overall. "I think the end of the program, the last second when the public started to applaud, that feeling was incredible so that was the high point. We really like to make and get surprises, I don't know, this whole season has been a big surprise for us. Our goals were a lot less high than what we did, and I think we just keep being surprised by ourselves", Cizeron commented.

Cappellini/Lanotte produced a strong performance to "Danse Macabre" as well, collecting level fours for five elements and a level three for the footwork. The 2014 European Champions scored 101.89 points, a seasons best and accumulated 171.52 points overall to move up one spot. "We are more happy with silver than anyone can believe. It is worth gold to us. After such a rocky start to the season and a period of self-doubt and frustration we were not sure if we could keep competing at the level we had especially last year. We are still here, we love it, we can compete at a high level. There was no better end to this competition for us than this performance and this medal today", Cappellini told the post-event press conference.

Performing to "Eleanor Rigby", Stepanova/Bukin earned level fours for the spin, lifts and twizzles to achieve a personal best score with 96.00 points. Overall they had 160.95 points and pulled up from fourth to third. „I am in shock about the result. It is like our biggest dream came true. When we saw our score, it was like an explosion of emotions", Stepanova said.

Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin (RUS) slipped from second to fourth when they aborted a lift (159.83 points). Sara Hurtado/Adria Diaz (ESP) moved up from sixth to fifth (155.81 points) and Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri (ITA) placed sixth (154.61 points).

2014 European bronze medalists Penny Coomes/Nicholas Buckland (GBR) withdrew before the Free Dance as Buckland fell ill like his brother on Wednesday.

The ISU European Figure Skating Championships 2015 continue Friday with the Pairs Short Program and the Men's Free Skating. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and the official event website <http://skatesweden.se/en/ec2015/>

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