

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2015 Day One

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2015 opened Thursday at Mokdong Arena in Seoul, Korea.

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) dance to lead

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) dances to the lead in the Short Dance followed by teammates Maia and Alex Shibutani. Canada's Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje finished third.

Chock/Bates' Paso Doble to "Don Quixote" featured a level-four straight line lift and level-four twizzles while the Paso Doble pattern and the side by side footwork merited a level three. With 70.38 points, the U.S. Champions set a new personal best score for themselves. „This was definitely our best short dance so far in competition and we're very happy that we could do it here at Four Continents. We just want to skate our best, even better than every competition we had before. We've made some changes to each program and we're excited to put them out here", Chock told the press.

Performing to "Asturias Variations" and "The Last Corrida", Shibutani/Shibutani earned a level four for the twizzles, the rotational lift and the first Paso Doble sequence. The 2011 World bronze medalists scored 69.65 points, a new personal best as well. „It was a much stronger skate for us than even at the Grand Prix Final or our nationals. It was a little challenging for us today since we had such a quick turnaround from nationals. We've been working so hard and the programs have grown so much", commented Maia Shibutani.

Weaver/Poje's collected a level four for the lift and level three for the side by side footwork and the first Paso Doble sequence in their dance to "La Virgen de la Macarena". However, the twizzles and the Partial Step Sequence were graded a level two. The ISU Grand Prix Final Champions earned 68.31 points. The hard part about the short dance especially this year is that even the smallest details can make a world of a difference. We're already looking into making this better so that we can get all the kinks out here in time for the World Championships", Weaver said.

Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier (CAN) are currently ranked fourth with 63.45 points. Alexandra Paul/Mitchell Islam (CAN) placed fifth (61.34 points) ahead of World Junior Champions Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) with 58.31 points.

Yiyi Zhang/Nan Wu (CHN) withdrew following the Short Dance citing injury (Zhang). They stood in 11th place.

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford (CAN) take Pairs Short Program

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford of Canada won the Pairs Short Program. China's Cheng Peng/Hao Zhang and Wenjing Sui/Cong Han came second and third.

Skating to "Un peu plus haut" by Ginette Reno, Duhamel/Radford produced a side by side triple Lutz, triple twist, throw triple Lutz as well as four level-four elements. The ISU Grand Prix Final Champions posted a new seasons best of 75.67 points. "We were more nervous than usual before we went to skate. I think it

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might be because Four Continents in the past for has been a bit of a struggle. It's never been one of our best competitions. Coming in here we didn't really have any solid expectation of ourselves. Of course we wanted to do our best. It's a nice relief to have that type of skate", Radford said.

Peng/Zhang landed a triple toe, triple twist and throw triple loop in their program to "Arabian Dance" by Peter Tchaikovski. The ISU Grand Prix Finalists earned a seasons best of 69.81 points. "Our score is almost the same as at Cup of China. Our program has evolved a lot since the beginning of the season and we have trained very hard", Zhang noted.

Sui/Han's routine to "Stray Cat Strut" was highlighted by a set of triple toes, a triple twist and throw triple flip. The defending Four Continents Champions picked up 69.19 points, another seasons best. "We showed our best level today. But there are still things that we can improve from our practice. We can improve the transitions. In the free skating we hope again to show our very best", Sui told the press.

Five-time Four Continents Champions Qing Pang/Jian Tong (CHN) came fourth at 66.87 points followed by Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA, 63.54 points) and Lubov Iliushechkina/Dylan Moscovitch (CAN) with 60.13 points.

Denis Ten (KAZ) wins Men's Short Program

Denis Ten of Kazakhstan won the Men's Short Program. Japan's Shoma Uno finished second and Han Yan of China is currently ranked third.

Ten, who had drawn to skate last out of 26 competitors, nailed a quadruple toeloop, triple Axel, triple Lutz-triple toeloop in his program to "Caruso" by Lucio Dalla. The Olympic bronze medalist collected a level four for the three spins and the step sequence and achieved a new personal best score with 97.61 points. "I am relieved that I was able to show high quality skating. The progress is quite obvious and I think that's what is important for me and for my coach. It is a great start, but the competition isn't over yet. I'll try to keep going for the next few days", the 2013 World silver medalist commented.

Uno's program to "Violin Sonata No. 9" by Kreutzer included a quadruple toeloop, a triple Axel, a triple flip-triple toe combination and excellent spins as well to post a new personal best of 88.90 points. "I am quite surprised with the high score and also skating this well despite of my shaky warm up. I didn't feel pressure to compete the senior debut competition, however I was feeling uncertain and became nervous", the ISU Junior Grand Prix Final explained.

Skating to "If I Were A Rich Man", Yan pulled off a triple Axel and triple Lutz-triple toe as well as two level-four spins and level-four footwork to score 87.34 points, a seasons best score. "This was not a bad performance considering that I had many accidents this season. It was the best performance of the season so far. This competition is a practice for Worlds for me. I didn't want to set any goal for it, but I just wanted to show my best to the audience", the 18-year-old said.

Defending Four Continents Champion Takahito Mura (JPN) is not far behind in fourth at 84.29 points ahead of Joshua Farris (USA, 84.29 points) and Daisuke Murakami (JPN, 82.86 points).

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The ISU Four Continents Championships continued Friday with the Free Dance and the Ladies Short Program. For more information, full entry lists and results please see: www.isu.org and <http://www.4conti2015.com/eng/html/index.php>.

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