

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 Skate Canada International, Day One**

Skate Canada International opened Friday in Lethbridge, AB with the Short Dance and the Short Programs. Skate Canada International is the second of six events of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/2016 series. Skaters compete for points to qualify for the Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final and a prize money of US \$ 180,000 per individual event of the Grand Prix.

### **Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje (CAN) dance to lead**

Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje of Canada danced to the lead in the Short Dance. Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) and Russia's Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev follow in second and third place.

Weaver/Poje debuted a brandnew Short Dance to "The Blue Danube" and "Annenpolka" by Johann Strauss. The 2015 World bronze medalists picked up a level four for the curve lift and a level three for the Ravensburg Waltz pattern, the twizzles and the partial step sequence to score a seasons best of 68.00 points. "It felt great. We went out there and just made sure that we remembered what we practiced. It was nervewrecking, because we didn't have as much preparation time as we usually do, but we knew as long as we kept together and with each other it would go how we wanted", Poje commented.

Shibutani/Shibutani put out a strong performance to Waltz and March from the ballet "Coppelia". The siblings earned a level four for the twizzles, the rotational lift and the first Waltz sequence and received 66.00 points, a seasons best. "We love this program so much. It is great for us to have characters, especially when it is a short dance. It really allows us to show our funny side, humorous, a little bit cheeky, but at the same time still show that elegance of the Waltz. We're really proud of the program and we're happy with the step that we made today", Maia Shibutani said.

Performing to "Masquerade Waltz" and "Dance of the Knights", Bobrova/Soloviev produced two level-four and three level-three elements. The 2013 European Champions, who compete in their first international event since the 2014 Olympic Winter Games, earned 64.38 points. "First of all we are so happy to be back and to perform in an international competition at this level. We are very pleased with what we showed today. I was very nervous, but when I took Katia's hand, the feeling for competition returned", Soloviev told the press.

Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri (ITA) placed fourth at 61.29 points followed by Alexandra Paul/Mitchell Islam (CAN) with 57.55 points.

### **Ashley Wagner (USA) wins Ladies Short Program**

Ashley Wagner (USA) won the Ladies Short Program with a comfortable lead. Japan's Yuka Nagai and Kanako Murakami came second and third.

Wagner's performance to "Hip Hip Chin Chin" included a triple flip-triple toe combination, a triple loop and double Axel as well as three level-four spins. The U.S. Champion set a new personal best score of 70.73 points for herself. "Today was an awesome day for me, a personal best. That is something I can be very proud of. I feel I came here very well trained and prepared. I was able to go out under pressure and deliver", Wagner offered.

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Nagai landed a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, triple loop, double Axel and two level-four spins in her routine to “Madame Butterfly”. The 16-year-old Japanese skater scored 63.35 points, a personal best as well. “I am so surprised to be in second place. This is my first senior Grand Prix season and I was nervous at first. I am glad to be here now”, Nagai commented.

Skating to “Tango de Roxanne”, Murakami hit a triple flip, but underrotated the triple toe-triple toe and singled the Axel. She collected 59.79 points. “I was very nervous today, but I was able to enjoy my performance. The only thing is the double Axel. I practiced it very hard and it is something I left a few points on the table”, the 2014 Four Continents Champion explained.

Kaetlyn Osmond (CAN) sits in fourth with 59.21 points and Polina Edmunds (USA) follows in fifth (56.85 points). World Champion Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS) made errors on the combination and the Lutz to finish seventh (55.37 points).

## **Daisuke Murakami (JPN) grabs Men’s Short Program**

Daisuke Murakami of Japan grabbed the men’s Short Program, edging out Canada’s Patrick Chan and Adam Rippon (USA) by less than one point.

Performing to “Les Misérables”, Murakami stumbled on his opening quadruple Salchow but recovered to hit a triple Axel and rare triple Lutz-triple loop combination. The 2014 NHK Trophy Champion picked up 80.88 points. “It was definitely not one of my best skates, but I’m glad that I fought through. It was actually the first time I tried the triple Lutz-triple loop in the second half. I’m really satisfied with how I didn’t give up after the quad that I made an error on”, Murakami shared.

Chan landed a quadruple-triple toeloop combination in his program to “Mack the Knife”, but then fell on his triple Axel and doubled the Lutz. The three-time World Champion earned 80.81 points. “I started off really strong,, a little bobble on the quad-triple, so I had a bit less speed going into the Axel. I had less momentum. And a big part of my triple Axel this year is having good flow into it. But the experience has been phenomenal, being able to be back with everyone”, the Olympic silver medalist, who sat out one season, said.

Adam Rippon produced a triple Axel and triple Lutz-triple toe combination, but missed his quad Lutz attempt to score 80.36 points. “I’m really glad that I was able to come back after the quad. I think you know you’ve done a really bad quad attempt when you land forward, you look at the judges, you say you’re sorry and then you fall backwards. I’ve been skating well at home and I’ve been doing some really nice quads. So I hope I can show that in the free skate”, the two-time Four Continents Champion commented.

Nam Nguyen (CAN) came fourth with 76.10 points followed by Michal Brezina (CZE) with 75.46 points. Olympic Champion Yuzuru Hanyu is currently ranked sixth with 73.25 points. He doubled his planned quad toe and received not credit for his triple Lutz-double toe combination as he had repeated the double toeloop.

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

Canadians Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford took the lead in the Pairs Short Program ahead of Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov of Russia and Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro of Canada.

Duhamel/Radford’s program to “Your Song” by Elton John featured a level-four triple twist, a throw triple Lutz and a level-four lift, but he touched down on the side by side triple Lutz. The

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reigning World Champions scored 72.46 points. “I think this was a great way to start the season. It wasn’t perfect, it was a little shaky, we had to fight for a few things, but it was a good performance. I think we showed improvement in the areas that we wanted to”, Radford told the post-event press conference.

Tarasova/Morozov impressed with a huge triple twist, but she doubled the toeloop. The Russian team earned 64.00 points. “This wasn’t our best skate, but I am glad that after the mistake we pulled ourselves together and skated with emotions”, Tarasova noted.

Moore-Towers/Marinaro put out an entertaining performance to “If I Can’t Have You” that was highlighted by a side by side triple toe and a throw triple loop. The Canadians were rewarded with 63.17 points. “Overall we’re very pleased with today’s performance. We felt very confident and sure about our skating. We were definitely trying to not only to complete the elements, but also to have better skating skills and more of a connection between each other and with the audience”, Moore-Towers said.

Marissa Castelli/Mervin Tran (USA) placed fourth at 61.85 points while Vera Bazarova/Andrei Deputat (RUS) finished fifth (57.02 points).

Skate Canada International continues Saturday with the Ladies Free Skating, Free Dance, Pairs and Men’s Free Skating . For full entry lists of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/16 please refer to [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org) under Single& Pair Skating/Ice Dance then select Grand Prix.

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