

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 Audi Cup of China, Day One

The Audi Cup of China opened Friday in Beijing (CHN) with the Short Dance and the Short Programs. Audi Cup of China is the third of six events of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series.

Cappellini/Lanotte (ITA) capture Short Dance

Anna Cappellini/Luca Lanotte of Italy captured a narrow lead in the Short Dance over Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA). Elena Ilinykh/Ruslan Zhiganshin of Russia follow in third place.

Dancing to Waltz and Polka from “The Merry Widow”, Cappellini/Lanotte produced level-four twizzles and a level-four rotational lift. The 2014 World Champions collected a level three for the Waltz pattern and the partial step sequence to score 66.39 points. “It was an unexpected, quite bad fall in the warm up, we both hit our heads. We feel it really affected our performance which was clean, but way below what we could have put out there. We relied on the training and were able to get through it”, Cappellini said.

Chock/Bates’ dance to “More” and “Unchained Melody” included a level-four curve lift and level three footwork, but the twizzles rated only a level one. The World silver medalists earned 65.36 points. “I had a little bit of a mishap on my twizzles, which was a really costly error, especially in the short dance. But this is a great program for us and I feel it has grown a lot over the past couple of weeks”, Chock told the press.

Ilinykh/Zhiganshin picked up a level four for their twizzles and rotational lift and a level three for the Waltz and the step sequence in their performance to “We Will Rock You” by Queen and received 63.54 points. “It is always exciting to be at the Grand Prix. We did a good job and had a good technical part”, Ilinykh commented.

Kaitlyn Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) are ranked fourth at 58.35 points followed by Federica Testa/Lukas Csolley (SVK) with 53.90 points.

Mao Asada (JPN) wins Ladies Short Program

Mao Asada of Japan won the Ladies Short Program ahead of her teammate Rika Hongo. Courtney Hicks (USA) came third.

Asada opened her performance to “Bei mir bist du schoen” with a triple Axel and also hit a triple Lutz and two-level four spins. Only the back end of the triple flip-triple loop combination was underrotated. The three-time World Champion scored 71.73 points in her first competitive Short Program since the 2014 World Championships. “This is my first Grand Prix competition after I came back. I’m trying to do more difficult elements. I want to be higher and I’ve trained hard for that. I think today’s performance will be a good motivation for tomorrow”, the 25-year-old said.

Hongo’s routine to “Incarnation” included a triple flip-triple toe combination, a triple Lutz and three level four spins. The 2015 Four Continents bronze medalist picked up 65.79 points, slightly surpassing her previous personal best. “I felt really nervous today, but I attacked everything in my performance today”, the 19-year-old told the press.

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Skating to “The Feeling Begins” by Peter Gabriel, Hicks produced a triple flip-double toe and triple Lutz to earn 62.38 points, a new personal best score. “I was very happy with my performance. It was definitely the best I’ve ever done in an International. A lot of times I have a kind of a bad short and really good long. So I’m looking forward to having a good short and then a good long together”, the Californian explained.

Anna Pogorilaya (RUS) placed fourth (61.47 points) and Zijun Li (CHN) is ranked fifth (58.62 points). 2015 World bronze medalist Elena Radionova (RUS) singled the Axel and came sixth (58.51 points).

Javier Fernandez (ESP) skates to the lead

Spain’s World Champion Javier Fernandez skated to the lead in the Men’s Short Program. Boyang Jin of China is sitting in second heading into the Free Skating and Sergei Voronov of Russia is third.

Fernandez nailed a quad Salchow (two-footed), triple Lutz-triple toe and triple Axel in his program to “Malaguena”. His spins merited a level four and the European Champion collected 93.19 points. “This is my first time I performed this short program in competition and it was a good start. I made a mistake on the quad Salchow, I two-footed it. There some things we have to work on. The step sequence got level three and not a level four”, the World Champion analyzed.

Jin’s routine to “Tango Amore” by Edvin Marton was highlighted by a huge quadruple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and a quadruple toeloop. The 2015 World Junior silver medalist improved his personal best significantly with 90.05 points. “I am competing in my first senior-level Grand Prix and I was nervous. But I showed my level today. My technical difficulty is quite high, but I want to improve my spins and skating skills”, the Chinese skater pointed out.

Voronov two-footed and underrotated his quad toe in combination with triple toe but landed a triple Axel and triple loop in his program to “Butterflies and Hurricanes” by Muse. The reigning European bronze medalist earned 80.99 points. “I think compared to Finlandia Trophy I made step forward. Not everything worked out, I made an error on the combination, but I fought for each element and I got some positive GOEs”, the ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist noted.

Nan Song (CHN) finished fourth with 76.46 points followed by Grant Hochstein (USA, 74.27 points).

Sui/Han (CHN) take Pairs Short Program

Wenjing Sui/Cong Han of China took the Pairs Short Program. Russia’s Yuko Kawaguti/Alexander Smirnov are currently ranked second, ahead of Xiaoyu Yu/Yang Jin of China.

Sui/Han’s Spanish themed routine featured a throw triple flip, triple twist and two level-four elements. The only glitch was her wobble on the side by side triple toeloop. The World silver medalists score posted a new seasons best of 74.40 points. “It was good, but there was a little error on the side by side jump. But we showed our level today and hopefully we’ll be able to do our best in the free skating tomorrow”, Sui commented.

Skating to “I Finally Found Someone”, Kavaguti/Smirnov produced a triple toe, throw triple loop and picked up a level four for four elements to earn 72.45 points. “We’re very happy with our performance and with the levels we got for our elements. Yuka’s skating today was beautiful and musical, but I feel that I could have interpreted the choreography better”, Smirnov shared.

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Yu/Jin turned in a strong performance to “Yulunga Spirit Dance” as well, landing side by side triple toes and a throw triple loop. The two-time World Junior Champions set a new personal best for themselves with 70.06 points. “We had some problems in training with some elements, but we were able to adjust before the competition and therefore we had a good performance”, Jin said.

Xuehan Wang/Li Wang (CHN) placed fourth (69.36 points) and Mari Vartmann/Ruben Blommaert (GER) were fifth (63.45 points).

The Audi Cup of China continues Saturday with the Free Dance, Ladies, Men’s and Pairs Free Skating. For full entries and results please refer to www.isu.org.

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