

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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For immediate release

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2015/16 NHK Trophy, Day Two

NHK Trophy continued Saturday with the Short Dance, the Pairs, Men's and Ladies Free Skating in Nagano (JPN). NHK Trophy is the sixth and last event in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/2016 series and thus provides the last opportunity for skaters to qualify for the Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final.

Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) dance to lead

Maia Shibutani/Alex Shibutani (USA) danced to the lead in the Short Dance. Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) edged Russia's Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev for second place by just 0.38 points. All three teams posted a new seasons best score.

Dancing to "Coppelia", Shibutani/Shibutani completed difficult footwork and a whirling rotational lift, picking up a level four for the first Ravensburger Waltz pattern, the twizzles and the lift. The second part of the Waltz and the partial step sequence garnered a level three. The brother-and-sister-team earned 68.08 points. "At Skate Canada we had a really great start to our season. So the past few weeks we've been really working hard on improving every aspect of the programs. It was a great way to start the competition and we're looking forward to tomorrow", Maia Shibutani told the post-event press conference.

Hubbell/Donhue's Waltz and March to "Hallelujah" featured four level-four elements including the two Waltz patterns and a curve lift. The 2014 Four Continents Champions scored 66.57 points, a personal best score. "We were able to finally get a (level) four and four on our Ravens (Ravensburger Waltz) and we were very happy about that. It is our first time here in Japan and the crowd is extremely enthusiastic and they really helped us today. We're looking forward to skating tomorrow and finally to be able to compete our free dance", Hubbell shared.

Bobrova/Soloviev put out a strong performance to "Waltz Masquerade" and "Dance of the Knights" from "Romeo and Juliet" as well and had a level four for three elements. The 2013 European Champions received 66.19 points. "We really did a lot of work in the past two weeks, and it was reflected in our scores. Tomorrow our free dance will be lighter and fresher than at Skate Canada, because we've really worked well", Soloviev noted.

Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin (RUS) finished fourth at 61.96 points and Penny Coomes/Nicholas Buckland (GBR) follow in fifth place (61.00 points).

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford (CAN) skate to Pairs gold

Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford of Canada skated to the Pairs gold medal. China's Xiaoyu Yu/Yang Jin moved up from third to take the silver medal while Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim (USA) settled for the bronze.

Duhamel/Radford produced a triple twist, side by side triple Lutz and difficult lifts and spins that merited a level four, but she fell on the throw quadruple Salchow and stumbled on the triple toe. The reigning World Champion collected 131.68 points and accumulated 202.72 points overall to win their second gold medal on the Grand Prix circuit this season. "In today's free program I think we had a bit of a combination between not getting quite as comfortable as we would have liked on some of the elements, but then a lot of the pair elements like the lifts, the twist and the spins we had

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very strong grades of execution on them. So we'll take those with us as we had to the Grand Prix Final and we may rearrange a couple of things in our program so that we can have a cleaner skate in Barcelona", Radford said.

Yu/Jin's program to "Humility and Love" featured a side by side triple toe, triple twist, throw triple loop and level-four lifts, but she fell on the throw quadruple Salchow and singled an Axel. The 2014 World Junior Champions scored 124.02 and pulled up one spot with 191.02 points overall. "We couldn't give our best performance in the free skating. I made a mistake on the double Axel and we also missed the quad throw. But I think we did better in the latter part of the program. Other than the quad throw we changed a some steps for transitions in our program (compared to last year). We think it is important to have more beautiful transitions and moves", Yu commented.

Skating to "Elizabeth the Golden Age", Scimeca/Knierim completed a side by side triple Salchow, throw triple Salchow and throw triple flip, but they stumbled on the exit of their quadruple twist. The U.S. Champions earned 122.23 points and slipped to third at 190.66 points. "Compared to our Grand Prix at Skate America this program had some improvements in the jumping passes and the throw Salchow, but we lost a lot points on the twist and the spins. Our goal for the next event would be to combine the strengths from our first and second Grand Prix to make a solid program", Scimeca explained.

Vera Bazarova/Andrei Deputat (RUS) finished fourth (181.70 points) and Lubov Iliushechkina/Dylan Moscovitch (CAN) placed fifth (180.63 points).

The top three pairs all qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final: Duhamel/Radford with two victories, Yu/Jin and Scimeca/Knierim with each a silver and a bronze medal from their events.

Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) storms to Men's gold

Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan stormed to the Men's gold and became the first skater in history to crack the 300 points barrier. China's Boyang Jin claimed the silver medal and the bronze went to Takahito Mura of Japan.

Performing to "Seimei", a Japanese movie soundtrack, Hanyu reeled off a quad Salchow, quad toe, quad toe-double toe as well as six triples including two Axels as well as level four spins and footwork. The Olympic Champion earned 216.07 points and racked up 322.40 points, both personal bests and well above his previous personal best and the previous highest score of 295.27 points (set by Patrick Chan, CAN, in 2013). "This is not the 2018 Olympic Games, so I won't retire now", Hanyu joked. "I'll try to do better performance to impress the audience. What I think was important was to carry out each element carefully and with quality. I believed in my practice and in my physical ability. I heard the cheers from the audience after each jump and I felt the excitement of the audience. I could feel that everybody in Japan and the world encouraged me", the 2014 World Champion continued.

Jin's program to "Dragon Racing" included a quadruple Lutz, quadruple toe-double toe and six triples, but he popped a toeloop and stepped out of the quad Salchow. The 2015 World Junior silver medalist scored 170.79 points and totaled 266.43 points. "Today I made some smaller errors on my jumps, so it wasn't such a good performance. Hopefully I can give a better performance in my next competition, the senior Grand Prix Final", Jin noted.

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Mura landed a quad toe, quad toe-double toe and three clean triples in his routine to “O” from “Cirque du Soleil” to pick up 153.92 points. The 2014 Four Continents Champion was ranked fifth in the Free Skating, but overall held on to third place at 242.21 points. “Compared to Skate America I think this was a better performance, but I didn’t reach my best yet. I’m happy to share the podium with Yuzuru und Boyang”, Mura commented.

Grant Hochstein (USA) moved up from eighth to fourth with the third-best Free Skating (235.63 points) and Keiji Tanaka (JPN) pulled up from ninth place after the Short Program to finish fifth (234.90 points).

Hanyu advances to the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final with a gold and a silver medal from the circuit. Jin qualified for the Final in his first senior year with two silver medals.

Satoko Miyahara (JPN) takes Ladies gold

Satoko Miyahara of Japan took the Ladies gold, her first Grand Prix title. Courtney Hicks (USA) earned the silver, her first (senior) Grand Prix medal and Japan’s Mao Asada captured the bronze.

Miyahara’s program to “Un sospiro” by Franz Liszt featured seven clean triple jumps and two level-four spins. She only underrotated one double Axel. The World silver medalist achieved a new personal best score of 133.58 and for the first time cracked the 200-points in her career with an overall score of 203.11 points. “For this competition I was able to get on a really good momentum from the short program for both programs. I’ll go to the Grand Prix Final for the first time at the senior scene. When I get to the Grand Prix Final I want to make sure I do what I did this time, to stay calm and give the best performance I possibly can give”, the 17-year-old from Kyoto commented.

Skating to “Elizabeth the Golden Age”, Hicks produced a shaky triple flip-triple toe combination and three more triples, but she fell on a triple Lutz. The Californian scored 117.57 points and was ranked third in the Free Skating but overall remained in second place at 183.12 points. “It was the most complete skate I’ve done on the Grand Prix and it’s the best long I’ve done in the past couple of years. It just felt good to skate the way I have practiced and I knew I was capable of”, the 19-year-old said.

Asada landed four clean triples in her performance to “Madame Butterfly”, but underrotated two jumps and popped her planned triple Axel into a double. The three-time World Champion earned 120.49 points and finished second in the Free Skating portion. Overall she pulled up from fourth to third with 182.99 points. “I wasn’t able to do what I needed to do in either short program or free skating. I found a lot of things to work on, a lot of issues that came to light. So I’d like to take the time to review my performance both from a psychological point as well as from a skating point of view and then get ready for my next competition”, Asada explained.

Ashley Wagner (USA) slipped from third to fourth place (179.33 points) and Mirai Nagasu (USA) placed fifth (175.64 points).

Miyahara and Asada booked their ticket to the Grand Prix Final with a gold and a bronze medal from their events while Wagner advances with a gold and a fourth place finish.

NHK Trophy concludes Sunday with the Free Dance and the Exhibition Gala. For full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2015/16 please refer to www.isu.org under Single& Pair Skating/Ice Dance then select Grand Prix.

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