

INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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Rostelecom Cup 2016 Day One #GPFigure

The Rostelecom Cup in Moscow (RUS) opened Friday with the Short Dance and Men's, Pairs and Ladies Short Programs. Rostelecom Cup is the third of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 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.

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) dance to lead

Madison Chock/Evan Bates (USA) danced to a narrow lead in the Short Dance, edging out Russia's Ekaterina Bobrova/Dmitri Soloviev by 0.12 points. Canadians Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje came third.

Chock/Bates' dance to the Blues "Bad to the Bone" and Hip Hop "Uptown Funk" was highlighted by a level four curve lift, level-four twizzles and level-four Blues pattern. The 2016 World bronze medalists earned a level three for the partial step sequence and side by side footwork to skate 75.04 points. "I just have to say how happy we are to be back at Cup of Russia. This is our third time here and we really love this competition. It was a great performance for us. Every time we perform this program we get more comfortable, especially when the audience gets involved", Chock told the post-event press conference.

Performing to "Mercy on Me" and "Sing Sing Sing", Bobrova/Soloviev earned a level four as well for their lift, twizzles and Blues pattern. The Russian Champions set a new seasons best of 74.92 points. "The audience was really supportive and it is great that they understand to be quiet during the element and to applaud after the element. There were a few glitches in our performance, but overall we are improving and we feel more confident each time out there", Soloviev said.

Weaver/Poje completed a level-four lift and level-three footwork in their dance to "The Way You Make Me Feel" and Hip Hop "Dangerous" and "Jam". However, the twizzles garnered a level two and the two-time World medalists scored 69.81 points. "This is our first competition of the season and we're so excited to be back in the circuit. This is the first time that our Michael Jackson program has seen the light of the day and it is so fun to perform", Weaver commented.

Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri (ITA) are currently ranked fourth at 67.72 points followed by Tiffany Zahorski/Jonathan Guerreiro (RUS) with 64.28 points.

Shoma Uno (JPN) takes lead in Men's Short Program

Shoma Uno of Japan took the lead in the Men's Short Program. Javier Fernandez of Spain sits in second followed by Russia's Mikhail Kolyada.

Uno landed a wobbly quad flip and quad toe-triple toe combination in his routine to "Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra" by Nigel Hess. The Skate America Champion continued with level-four sins and footwork and a strong triple Axel to pick up a personal best of 98.59 points. "My performance today wasn't exactly perfect, there are things to work on for me, but overall I think it was a good performance", the ISU Grand Prix Final bronze medalist commented.

Fernandez' program to "Malaguena" featured a quad toe-triple toe combination, but he stepped out of the triple toe, a good triple Axel and a level-four step sequence, but he tripled his planned quad

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Salchow. The two-time and reigning World Champion picked up 91.55 points. “I popped the quad, and I lost levels on my spins, but this is my first competition of the season. It is just the beginning and I can’t be at a 100 percent from the beginning. I made two mistakes, but this is good for my training, so I know what I need to work on,” the four-time European Champion explained.

Performing to “Nightingale Tango” and the Foxtrot “John Grey”, Kolyada hit a quad-triple toe combination, triple Lutz and picked up a level four for his three spins, but he stumbled on the exit of his triple Axel. The Russian posted a new personal best with 90.28 points. “It wasn’t perfect either, there were some errors and there is room to grow for me”, Kolyada said.

European silver medalist Alexei Bychenko (ISR) placed fourth (86.81 points), while Chafik Besseghier (FRA) was fifth (80.68 points) and Elladj Balde (CAN) came sixth (76.36 points).

Natalia Zabiako/Alexander Enbert (RUS) grab lead in Pairs Short Program

Natalia Zabiako/Alexander Enbert of Russia grabbed a narrow lead in the Pairs Short Program over Germany’s Aliona Savchenko/Bruno Massot. Valentina Marchei/Ondrej Hotarek of Italy placed third.

Skating to “The Snowstorm”, Zabiako/Enbert executed a triple twist, side by side triple toe, throw triple loop and picked up a level four for the spin, lift and step sequence. The Russians set a new personal best with 69.76 points. “We are glad that everything worked out in our program today. This is just a preliminary result, but it is a surprise to us to be in first right now”, Enbert told the press.

Savchenko/Massot opened their routine to “That Man” by Caro Emerald with a huge triple twist, but then they both fell on the triple Salchow and she stumbled on the throw triple Axel. Their lift received only the base value. The European silver medalists received 69.51 points. “I don’t know what happened, it was the first time that we fell on the jump. As for the lift, my skirt got in the way and I couldn’t execute it properly”, Savchenko said.

Marchei/Hotarek’s program to “Seven Nation Army” included a triple Salchow, triple twist and somewhat shaky throw triple Lutz. The Italians picked up 66.82 points, a new personal best. “We came here a few days earlier and trained in Moscow. That gave us a big push. We’re happy that we were able to do what we can do in practice”, Hotarek noted.

Kristina Astakhova/Alexei Rogonov (RUS) are not far behind in fourth at 65.51 points and Julianne Seguin/Charlie Bilodeau (CAN) are ranked fifth after missing their loop solo jump (61.72 points).

Anna Pogorilaya (RUS) wins Ladies Short Program

Russia’s Anna Pogorilaya won the Ladies Short Program, followed by teammates Elena Radionova and Julia Lipnitskaia.

Performing to “Scent of a Woman”, Pogorilaya hit a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, triple loop, double Axel and two level-four spins. The 2016 World bronze medalist achieved a seasons best with 73.93 points, just short of her personal best. “Overall, I did what I can do. I was just little jumpy on the footwork, because I got overwhelmed by happy emotions. I tried to hold them back, but I couldn’t and it was a bit reflected in the steps”, Pogorilaya shared.

Radionova’s program to “Porgy and Bess” was highlighted by a triple Lutz-triple toe combination, triple loop and three level-four elements, but she two-footed the double Axel. The European silver

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medalist slightly surpassed her previous personal best with 71.93 points. “This is only my first competition of the season and it was quite good, but I like to say it again, there is no limit to perfection. I’m pleased that I turned in a decent performance. I fell sick before the test skates (in September) and after my coach and I decided to prepare for the Grand Prix right away. Now I’m fine, but we’re not pushing too hard”, Radionova said.

Lipnitskaia landed a triple toe-triple toe combination, double Axel and triple flip in her routine to “Les Feuilles Mortes”. Two spins merited a level four, but the flying camel spin and the step sequence were rated a level three. The 2014 European Champion earned a seasons best of 69.25 points. “I performed quite cleanly and easily, but nevertheless it wasn’t without some glitches in the levels that were a bit lower than necessary. So there is something to work on”, the 2014 World silver medalist explained.

Elizabet Tursynbaeva (KAZ) is currently ranked fourth at 64.31 points. Zijun Li (CHN) placed fifth (63.89 points) while Courtney Hicks (USA) was sixth (63.68 points).

The competition continues Saturday with the Free Dance, the Men’s, Pairs and Ladies Free Skating. For full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2016/17 please refer to <http://www.isu.org/en/single-and-pair-skating-and-ice-dance/series/isu-grand-prix-of-figure-skating>

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