

February 6, 2020

Seoul, Korea

## **ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2020**

### **Day One**

[Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA), [Rika Kihira](#) (JPN) and [Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) (CAN) took the lead as the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships opened in Seoul (KOR) Thursday with the Rhythm Dance, Pairs and Ladies Short Programs.

100 skaters from 12 ISU members have been entered for this 21th edition of the Four Continents Championships: 25 Men, 21 Ladies, 11 Pair Skating couples and 16 Ice Dance couples. Seoul has hosted the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championship once before in 2015.

#### **Hubbell/Donohue (USA) edge Chock/Bates (USA) in Rhythm Dance in Seoul**

[Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA) edged teammates [Madison Chock/Evan Bates](#) by just 0.19 points in the Rhythm Dance. Canada's [Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier](#) are not far behind in third place.

Skating to "My Heart Belongs to Daddy", Hubbell/Donohue picked up a level four for the twizzles, the straight line lift and the Finnstep Pattern Dance sequence while the Pattern Dance type step sequence and the midline step sequence were rated a level three. The 2019 World bronze medalists achieved a season's best with 85.95 points.

"It's been a quick turnaround between Nationals and Four Continents. We really wanted to focus on being precise and confident and we feel like we did that today," Hubbell said. "So our main focus was the mental aspect, staying focused and really putting out a performance that would be competitive here in this field and we accomplished that goal today."

Donohue commented on how close the competition is: "Honestly, when it comes down to these top few spots, especially when they get close and you get all these amazing skaters it's not about the competition anymore, it's about how in focus you can be and where you put your energy because we're not going to go faster than them and win by a second, it's about our performance and what we put on the ice."

Chock/Bates' performance to "Too Darn Hot" was highlighted by a straight line lift, a precise pattern dance and fast twizzles. The defending Four Continents Champions earned the same levels as Hubbell/Donohue to set a seasons best of 85.76 points.

"Our performance felt great, felt really good actually. I feel like this is the best we've performed our short dance so far this season and that's what we've been working towards: keep building our performance, speed and fun program," Chock said.

Bates added: "Our preparation coming into this after US Nationals was challenging to recover from. So we had just a week-and-a-half of rest and a few days of training and then got on the flight to Korea."

Gilles/Poirier completed level-four twizzles and a level-four rotational lift in their upbeat program to “Mack and Mabel”. However, the Finnstep Pattern merited only a level two. Nevertheless, the Canadian Champions managed a personal best score with 83.92 points.

“Piper and I are really happy to have gotten a seasons best at the competition today. This is our first short dance small medal in a very long time, so I think that is a very big accomplishment for us. We’re just very pleased that this program has been constantly improving over the course of the season.”

[Shiyue Wang/Xinyu Liu](#) (CHN) came fourth with an entertaining Charlie Chaplin program (77.45 points) followed by 2019 World Junior Champions [Marjorie Lajoie/Zachary Lagha](#) (CAN) on 76.43 points. 2018 Four Continents silver medalists [Carolane Soucisse/Shane Firus](#) (CAN) finished sixth at 73.32 points.

### **Moore-Towers/Marinaro (CAN) capture Pairs Short Program in Seoul**

[Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) of Canada surprisingly captured the lead in the Pairs Short Program. China’s [Cheng Peng/Yang Jin](#) placed second while two-time and reigning World Champions [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) also from China, had to settle for third place on the first day of the Pairs competition.

Skating last, Moore-Towers/Marinaro put out a confident performance to “Love on the Brain”, hitting a triple twist, throw triple loop and side by side triple toe. The ISU Grand Prix Finalists collected a level four for the lift and the side by side spin and posted a new personal best of 76.36 points.

We’re definitely happy with the overall performance,” Marinaro said. “We left a few levels out there today so we’re going to have to clean up those levels for Montreal (World Championships, in March) and get those extra one, two points that we can get to try to push that score as close to 80 as we can.”

Moore-Towers said: “There are a lot of great teams at Four Continents but of course the reigning World Champions are here and they always push us.

“We’re really two of their biggest fans so any time we get the opportunity to skate with them, we’re really thrilled to watch them and to learn from them but of course we’re always hoping to win. We’re never aiming for second. It’s always the goal for us to skate our best and if that lands that on top, so be it.”

Peng/Jin’s performance to “Alegria” featured a triple toe, throw triple loop and triple twist as well as two level-four elements. The ISU Grand Prix Final silver medalists notched 75.96 points, a personal best.

“We are quite satisfied with our performance today. We feel the program is improving every time,” Jin commented.

Peng added: “We had a hard time after the Grand Prix Final, I had an injury.”

Sui/Han opened their performance to “Blues Deluxe” with a solid side by side triple toe, but then made an uncharacteristic error when Sui doubled the throw triple flip. The five-time Four Continents Champions recovered to land a triple twist, a level-four death spiral and reverse lasso lift. They scored 73.17 points.

“Today we skated a bit tight. We had a problem with my costume, it is so stressful for me, so we just did a double throw. I’m happy it happened early so we can change that before the (World) Championships,” Sui said.

[Jessica Calalang/Brian Johnson](#) (USA) placed fourth on 67.76 points. U.S. Champions [Alexa Scimeca/Chris Knierim](#) (USA) follow in fifth (63.14 points) while [Evelyn Walsh/Trennt Michaud](#) (CAN) are currently ranked sixth (62.97 points).

[Feiyao Tang/Yongchao Yang](#) (CHN) withdrew before the Pairs Short Program citing injury.

### **Kihira (JPN) lands triple Axel en route to lead in Ladies Short Program**

Reigning Four Continents Champion [Rika Kihira](#) of Japan put herself in a good position by winning the Ladies Short Program at the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Seoul (KOR) on Thursday.

[Bradie Tennell](#) (USA) came second and Korea’s [Young You](#) (KOR) is ranked third.

Kihira opened her performance to “Breakfast in Baghdad” with her trademark triple Axel and followed up with a triple flip-triple toe combination and a triple Lutz, as well as difficult spins and footwork. The Japanese Champion earned 81.18 points.

“I’m very happy with my jumps but they were not 100 percent yet and I’ll keep working to make them better for the free skating,” the 17-year-old told the press.

“I still have practice in the next days and I will determine the program content then. For now, the quad Salchow is looking good. I’ll keep practicing it and depending on my condition I’ll determine my final content for the free skating,” she added.

Skating to “Mechanisms” and “Chronos” by Kirill Richter, Tennell produced a triple Lutz-triple toe, a double Axel, triple flip and two level-four spins to set a personal best of 75.93 points.

“Overall I am pretty happy,” the ISU Grand Prix Finalist said. “I was very relaxed out there, having fun. There were a couple of little things that could have been better but I’m going to the free skating feeling confident.”

Fifteen-year-old You stepped out of her opening triple Axel but pulled off a triple Lutz-triple toe combination and a triple flip in her routine to music from “Romeo and Juliet”. The 2020 Youth Olympic Games Champion scored 73.55 points.

“I had a little mistake on my Axel but I did well on the other jumps,” You said. “But I did not get the full levels for my spins and steps so I’ll think about that more in the free skating.”

2018 Four Continents Champion [Kaori Sakamoto](#) (JPN) remained close to the podium with a solid performance and 73.07 points. 2018 World silver medalist [Wakaba Higuchi](#) (JPN) completed a strong showing by the Japanese Ladies to finish fifth (72.95 points). [Eunsoo Lim](#) (KOR) completes the top six (68.40 points).

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2020 continue Friday with the Free Dance and the Men's Short Program.

### **Where to watch and follow the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2020?**

Viewers will be able to watch either via their national broadcaster / channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#). You will find the full list in the [Where to Watch news here](#).

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