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Chen takes men's title behind 'only' three quads

McNamara, Carpenter claim dance gold; Parsons siblings secure bronze

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Nathan Chen did not attempt four quads in his "Symphony No. 3" free skate, as had been rumored prior to the event, but he did more than enough throughout the program to secure the gold medal. With the victory, he becomes the first U.S. man to win the Junior Grand Prix Final since Jason Brown did it in 2011. -Getty Images

The men's and ice dance competitions wrapped up at the [2015 Junior Grand Prix Final](#), with Team USA winning titles in each event.

Ice dance

American duos took two podium spots in ice dance, with [Lorraine McNamara and Quinn Carpenter](#) winning the gold with a strong *Carmen* free dance, and Rachel Parsons and Michael Parsons earning bronze. Russia's Alla Loboda and Pavel Drozd claimed silver.

McNamara and Carpenter won the free dance, and the title, in convincing fashion, finishing 7.40 points ahead of Loboda and Drozd (92.36 points for the Americans and 86.85 points for the Russians). They came away with a Level 4 for their two lifts, twizzles and spin, and a Level 3 for their two step sequences.

"We're happy. It may not be the best we've ever skated, but we did what we needed to do," McNamara said.

McNamara and Carpenter delivered a powerful *Carmen*, full of energy and character.

"Our music is really powerful. We had this idea in the back of our minds," McNamara said. "*Carmen* is a very strong piece of music that requires very strong characters and, for us, a lot of the things we focus on each year are the characters we express. Showing our maturation this season I think was a choice for us. So many great teams have skated to this music, and we of course watched their performances. We tried to incorporate what the music makes us feel rather than do a copy of what others did. We tried to put our personal twist on it."

Their components were also the best of the field, including 7.75 for skating skills and 8.04 for choreography.

Loboda and Drozd delivered a fast and lively routine to "Io Ti Penso Amore" performed by David Garrett and "Paganini 5" by Edvin Marton. They amassed 86.85 points for their free dance and 150.86 points overall.

"We're very happy with our performance," a smiling Drozd said. "The most important thing for us is that we enjoyed our skate."

Their program included Level 4's on their twizzles, spin and two lifts. Their step sequences were rated Level 2 and 3, respectively.

The Parsons siblings had "what one calls an off-night," as Rachel put it.

"To start with, I caught my dress in my toe pick," she explained, showing where a part of her dress tore. "We rallied, but we had several wobbles here and there. We know that we can skate this program much better. We'll have to learn how to deal with mistakes and manage them better. We did it here somehow, but everything kept adding up."

"It's an honor for us to be here. We had a strong short dance but, unfortunately, we didn't put out our best skate today," Michael added.

The sister-and-brother team skated to an ambitious assemblage of music from the Medialuna Tango Project, coming away with 79.50 points for the segment and 144.41 points overall.

"We really wanted to show that, as a brother-sister team, we can still have that kind of connection and strength, and engage the audience without having a romantic aspect to it," Michael said. "A lot of people say that brother-sister teams can't pull off a tango. I think this program has really pushed us. It's been good for us to grow in our expression and our connection."

Men

At the very least, [Nathan Chen](#) was up to the task. Over the past few days, rumors began to spread that he was going to include four quads in his free skate. Indeed, his morning practice and the ISU planned program content were clear: He planned two quad salchows, followed by two quad toes. Chen did not quite achieve his plan, but he held on to his program and won the free skate and the men's title, finishing 13.76 points ahead of Russia's Dmitri Aliev and 19.73 points ahead of Japan's Sota Yamamoto, who won the bronze medal.

"I'm very excited by the event," Chen said. "I was able to do exactly what I wanted to do coming into this event."

The technical content of Chen's program was like a puzzle. He landed his first quad salchow, but the landing was too shaky for him to launch his double toe-double loop combination. He then went for a quad toe but fell. He regrouped for another quad toe-double toe combination, which added 12.74 to his tally. Finally, he turned his intended fourth quad into a triple lutz-double toe-double loop combination. He fell on his triple axel but regrouped to land his final four triple jumps. His technical element score was 6.61 points higher than that of his nearest competitor teammate Vincent Zhou (76.97 points compared to 70.38 points for Zhou).

"After practice this morning, I thought it would be smart to back up and go only for three quads," he said. (Yes, you read that correctly: He said "only" three quads!) "Four quads will come in the future: I just don't know when."

Chen elected to skate to a monument of classical music, Camille Saint-Saëns "Symphony No. 3." Chen was not only up to his standard technically, but he was also up to the monumental symphony, with rhythm and energy that he maintained from start to finish. He received the best component scores, from 6.96 (for transitions) to 7.43 (for skating skills).

"This was really the main goal for me this season: bring something more strong and more powerful," Chen said. "I worked on it with my choreographer, Nikolii Morozov. Initially, it lacked character, and we

tried to build it up from there. By the end of the season, I hope it will be where it should be."

Chen garnered 146.45 points for his free skate to finish with 225.04 points overall.

Aliev, the only Russian competitor in the field, did not have the performance he hoped for, especially after his flawless short program. He fell on his opening quad toe but managed to regroup to land his quad toe-double toe and triple axel-triple salchow combinations. (Those two elements brought him 23.90 points.)

"Man has tried to reach the sky," as the lyrics of *Notre-Dame de Paris* go, but he could not stay there. Looking completely exhausted at the end of his routine, Aliev popped each of his planned triple axel, triple loop and double axel.

"I really love *Notre-Dame de Paris*; its character and music are close to my soul," Aliev said. "I was quite tired, but mostly because I had to wait for so long. I still have to learn to be one of the best of my group."

Aliev came away with 134.44 points for his free to finish with 211.22 points overall.

Zhou ended third in the segment following his free to *The Godfather*, 0.36 points behind Aliev with a score of 134.08 points. He, too, experienced some difficulties throughout his program. His opening triple axel-triple toe combination was perfect, but he fell on both of his quad salchow attempts, one of which was downgraded and the other under-rotated. Still, Zhou found enough energy to land his subsequent four triples and skate the rest of his program cleanly. He scored 204.56 points overall, a mere 0.75 point short of the podium.

"I really thought I had the second quad," Zhou said. "I've only had the triple axel and the quad for a few months, so they are new jumps for me."

Yamamoto had also hoped for a better showing. He endured mishaps on his two major elements, his two axels and his two quad toes. He managed to land two strong combinations in the second half of his program (triple lutz-triple toe and triple flip-triple salchow). He finished fourth in the segment with 132.46 points.

"Last year, I was second here, and many people expected me to do better this year," he said. "I changed my program to include two quads, but I could not land them. Yesterday, we noticed that the margin between fourth and third place was very narrow, so we opted to change the double axel we had planned into a triple flip. It was a good idea, as this allowed me to stay on the podium."



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