FIGURE SKATING:

WHAT IS THE GRAND PRIX DE FRANCE? WHO SHOULD YOU LOOK OUT FOR?

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The first International Skating Union Grand Prix is taking place this weekend between Friday, Oct. 23 and Sunday, Oct. 25, and for many new fans who started watching during the Winter Olympics, the Grand Prix Series is a foreign concept.

The Grand Prix Series, originally known as the ISU Champions Series, was founded in 1995 and consists of six qualifying competitions before the Grand Prix Final, according to their website.

The Grand Prix Series was made to allow skaters to perfect their programs earlier in the season and compete against the same skaters who they will encounter at the World Championships.

The six qualifying competitions are the Skate Canada International in Kelowna, Canada, Cup of China in Shenzhen, China, Finlandia Trophy in Helsinki, Finland, Grand Prix de France in Angers, France, NKH Trophy in Tokyo, Japan and Skate America in Everett, Wash. This season, the Grand Prix Final takes place in Chongqing, China.

For the 2026-27 season, the Grand Prix Series starts with the Grand Prix de France between Oct. 23-25 before moving on to the Skate Canada International between Oct. 30 and Nov. 1. The series then moves to the Cup of China between Nov. 6-8 before making its way to Skate America between Nov. 13-15. The final two Grand Prix qualifiers are the Finlandia Trophy between Nov. 20-21 and the NKH Trophy from Nov. 27-29 while the Grand Prix Final takes place from Dec. 10-12.

Each Grand Prix qualifying event features 12 women, 12 men, eight pairs and 10 ice dance couples while the Grand Prix Final features six women, men, pairs and ice dance couples.

This week is the Grand Prix de France, which has been on the ISU calendar since 1987 when it was originally named the Grand Prix International de Paris, according to a 1988 Skating magazine. When the ISU launched the Grand Prix Series in 1995, the Grand Prix de France was immediately added as a qualifying event and has been a part of the Grand Prix Series every year except 2020, when all competitions were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The women's singles category is stacked; the top women at the Grand Prix de France are four-time Belgian National Champion Nina Pinzarrone, 2023 European and 2024 Georgian National Champion Anastasiia Gubanova, two-time Italian National Champion Lara Naki Gutmann and 2026 Olympic Bronze Medalist Ami Nakai.

Also competing are two-time Canadian National Champion Gabrielle Daleman and 2024 Italian National Champion Sarina Joos, as well as Eve Dubecq, Yuna Aoki, Rion Sumiyoshi, Yuseong Kim, Seojin Youn and Sarah Everhardt.



Graphic of figure skater and title of the Grand Prix. The event is set for this weekend between Oct. 23 and Oct. 25.

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Winners of Grand Prix France 2025 pose with their medals. The first international competition is set for this weekend between Oct. 23 and Oct. 25.

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At the Grand Prix de France, the top men's skaters are four-time Estonia national champion Aleksandr Selevko, two-time French National and European Champion Adam Siao Him Fa, 2026 Olympic Champion Mikhail Shaidorov and five-time Slovakian National Champion, Adam Hagara.

Also competing are 2025 Junior Grand Prix Final Champion Minkyu Seo and 2024 Junior Grand Prix Final Champion Jacob Sanchez, as well as Samy Hammi, Francois Pitot, Nikolaj Memola, Kao Miura, Sota Yamamoto and Jimmy Ma.

For the pairs category at the Grand Prix de France, the top skaters are four-time Russian National Champions and 2020 European Champions Aleksandra Boikova and Dmitrii Kozlovskii, five-time French National Champions Camille Kovalev and Pavel Kovalev and 2026 European Champions Anastasiia Metelkina and Luka Berulava.

There are also the 2025 Chinese National Champions Jiaxuan Zhang and Yihang Huang and 2023 German National Champions Annika Hocke and Robert Kunkel, as well as Aurelie Faula and Theo Belle, Megan Wessenberg and Denys Strekalin and Hannah Herrera and Ivan Khobta.

Out of the 10 Ice Dance couples, the biggest names are 2026 World, Olympic, European and French National Champions Laurence Fournier Beaudry and Guillaume Cizeron, three-time Swedish National Champions Milla Ruud Reitan and Nikolaj Majorov and two-time Australia National Champions, Holly Harris and Jason Chan.

There are also the 2024 Junior World, Junior Grand Prix Final and United States Junior National Champions Leah Neset and Artem Markelov, as well as Christina Carreira and Anthony Ponomarenko, Eva Pate and Logan Bye, Sofia Val and Asaf Kazimov, Louise Bordet and Martin Chardain, Celina Fradji and Jean-Hans Fourneaux and Diana Davis and Gleb Smolkin competing as well.

The weekend starts light with Ice Dance's Rhythm Dance at 12 p.m. followed by the Women's Short Program at 1:50 p.m.

Saturday is stacked, though, starting out with the Men's Short Program at 6:30 a.m. followed by the Ice Dance's Free Dance at 8:20 a.m. Then there is a decent break before the Pairs Short Program at 12 p.m. before the Women's Free Skate rounds out the day's events at 1:30 p.m.

Finally, on Sunday, the Pairs Free Skate takes place at 6:30 a.m. before the weekend ends with the Men's Free Skate at 8:10 a.m.

In the United States, you can watch all the Grand Prix de France events and highlights afterwards on Peacock. There is also a gala where skaters will perform even more programs at 12:30 p.m. EST, which you can also watch on Peacock.