

November 5, 2018

Lausanne, SUI

## **Grand Prix Helsinki**

### **Day Two**

Russia celebrated a triple triumph on Saturday at the Helsinki Grand Prix with Olympic Champion [Alina Zagitova](#), Pair skaters [Natalia Zabiiako/Alexander Enbert](#) and Ice Dancers [Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin](#) all claiming gold as the event continued Saturday in the Finnish capital. Olympic Champion [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) (JPN) took the lead in the Men's Short Program. The Helsinki Grand Prix is the third of six in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2018/19.

#### **Yuzuru Hanyu (JPN) dominates Men's Short Program**

Japan's two-time Olympic Champion [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) dominated the Men's Short Program and leads with 13 points to spare over Czech Republic's [Michal Brezina](#). [Boyang Jin](#) of China is currently ranked third.

Performing to "Otonal" by Raul di Blasio, Hanyu put down an excellent performance, reeling off a quadruple Salchow, effortless triple Axel, quad toe-triple toe combination as well as level-four spins. The crowd rose as one to celebrate the two-time Olympic Champion with a standing ovation.

Yet despite scoring 106.69 points, the two-time World Champion was not especially pleased with himself.

"I need to train more and more. I can improve the jump landings and on the entry, I was not confident to do the jumps. Today's performance in the short program was a bit challenging. I landed (the jumps), but I can't say that it was perfect," Hanyu said.

Brezina's program to Queen's "Who Wants To Live Forever" featured a quadruple Salchow-triple toeloop combination, a triple flip, triple Axel and earned him a level four for his spins and footwork. The Skate America silver medalist picked up 93.31 points.

"Some people are saying that I'm like wine – the older, the better. But I don't feel like wine," the 28-year-old joked. "I just want to go out in the free skating and do my job."

Jin fell on the back end of his opening quadruple Lutz-triple toeloop combination in his routine to "While My Guitar Gently Weeps", but he recovered to land a quadruple toeloop and triple Axel. The two-time World bronze medalist earned 85.97 points.

"I have some regrets about my short program. I missed my first jump (combination), but I am quite happy about my second jump (the quadruple toeloop)," the 21-year-old said.

[Junhwan Cha](#) (KOR) remains close to the podium in fourth place on 82.82 points. [Andrei Lazukin](#) (RUS) follows in fifth with 82.54 points and 2018 World bronze medalist [Mikhail Kolyada](#) (RUS), who singled the Lutz and had no combination, came sixth (81.76 points).

## Pair skaters Zabiiko/Enbert win their first Grand Prix gold

Russians [Natalia Zabiiko/Alexander Enbert](#) skated to the first Grand Prix gold medal of their career in Helsinki on Saturday. [Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#) of Italy took the silver, edging newcomers [Daria Pavliuchenko/Denis Khodykin](#) of Russia by less than one point. The young Russian pair earned the bronze medal in their debut on the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating.

Skating to “Toi et Moi”, Zabiiko/Enbert produced a high triple twist, triple toe-double toe-double loop combination as well as an excellent throw triple loop and difficult lifts. Enbert fell on the triple Salchow and the throw triple flip was somewhat shaky, but the European silver medalists scored 130.92 points for the Free Skating and totaled 198.51 points to move up from second to first place.

“It means a lot to us to have won our first Grand Prix gold medal. It was a good experience for us,” Zabiiko said.

“For the first time we went into a Grand Prix as the top-seeded pair and there was a little pressure and it was harder. We usually skate much better in the short program and today it was hard,” Enbert added.

Overnight leaders Della Monica/Guarise completed a triple twist as well as a level-four lift and level-four pair spin in their program to “Tristan and Isolde” by Maxime Rodriguez. However, she doubled the side by side jumps Salchow and toeloop and also touched down on the throw triple loop.

The Italian Champions were ranked third in the Free Skating on 117.59 points and slipped from first to second at 185.77 points overall.

“This is our first silver medal on the Grand Prix. Last year we won our first medal, a bronze, so we are happy that we improved,” Della Monica said.

“Next time it maybe will be gold, who knows. It shows that we are on the right track. Our next Grand Prix is in Moscow, so we have one week to work a little bit more on our mistakes.”

Pavliuchenko/Khodykin gave a strong performance to “The Great Gatsby”, landing a rarely seen side by side triple flip as well as a triple toe-double toe-double toe combination, throw triple flip and loop.

The World Junior Champions picked up a level four for their triple twist, but their last lift was wobbly. The Moscow pair came second in the Free Skating with 121.81 points and remained in third place overall on 185.61 points.

“We really enjoyed this competition. We skated well, but we had some mistakes and we hope we’ll skate better next time,” Pavliuchenko said.

“We are happy about our first medal in the Grand Prix, but this is only the first step in our skating. We will work more and more,” Khodykin added.

[Miriam Ziegler/Severin Kiefer](#) (AUT) placed fourth on 174.81 points, their best result in the Grand Prix Series to date, followed by Four Continents bronze medalists [Tae Ok Ryom/Ju Sik Kim](#) (PRK) on 174.24 points

### **Alina Zagitova (RUS) secures gold in Helsinki**

Russia's Olympic Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) skated to a confident victory at the Grand Prix Helsinki on Saturday. Teammate [Stanislava Konstantinova](#) moved up from fourth to earn the silver in her Grand Prix debut while Japan's [Kaori Sakamoto](#) rose from seventh to take the bronze.

Performing to "Carmen", Zagitova nailed a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination, triple Salchow, triple flip-double toe and another triple flip. The only glitch came when she underrotated her triple Lutz-triple loop combination.

The European Champion collected a level four for her spins and footwork and scored 146.39 points to rack up 215.29 points overall. However, the 16-year-old was critical of her own performance.

"I am not pleased about my short program. The free skating was better, but still not ideal," Zagitova said.

"I did not quite have the focus I usually have and I took a long time to put the short program behind me. I analyzed it for a long time, almost all night long. When I got up, I told myself that I have to skate well in the free to please the spectators."

Konstantinova delivered a flawless performance to "Anna Karenina" that featured seven triple jumps including a triple Lutz-triple toeloop and a double Axel-Euler-triple Salchow combination.

With 135.01 points, the skater from St Petersburg ranked third in the Free Skating and moved up two spots to second on 197.57 points.

"I am very happy to have won the silver medal in my first ever Grand Prix. I was absolutely unhappy with my short program where I made a costly mistake, but I am glad I was able to pull myself together and skate well today," Konstantinova said.

Sakamoto, who had fallen on two jumps in the Short Program on Friday, rallied in her Free Skating to "The Piano" by Michael Nyman, hitting seven triple jumps.

She scored 140.16 points and totaled 197.42 points, edged out of silver by just 0.15 points.

"In the free skating I gave it all I had, because this was my only chance to make the podium. I forgot about yesterday's short program," the 18-year-old said.

With silver and bronze from her two events, Sakamoto has a chance to qualify for the Grand Prix Final.

"Now it depends on the other girls whether I go to the Final or not. I will practice very hard," she added.

[Yuna Shiraiwa](#) (JPN) dropped from second to fourth after underrotating three jumps (191.46 points). [Loena Hendrickx](#) (BEL) slipped from third to fifth (191.22 points). [Daria Panenkova](#) (RUS) rounded up the top six (161.48 points).

### **Stepanova/Bukin (RUS) strike Ice Dance gold**

[Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin](#) of Russia triumphed in the Ice Dance event at the Helsinki Grand Prix, taking home their first Grand Prix gold. Italy's [Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri](#) claimed the silver, their second Grand Prix medal, while [Lorraine McNamara/Quinn Carpenter](#) (USA) stepped onto the podium at a Grand Prix for the first time, taking bronze.

Stepanova/Bukin put out a sultry blues performance to Beth Hart's "Am I the One", executing intricate footwork and interesting lifts. The two-time European bronze medalists earned a level four for their lifts, the twizzles and the combination spin and a level three for the step sequences to set a new season's best of 121.91 points. The Muscovites accumulated 200.09 points overall.

"This is the first time we have taken first place in the Grand Prix so this is a step forward for us. We hope to skate even better in our next competition," Stepanova said.

"We're really proud of this result and we hope it will push us further. Our coaches were extremely pleased that all the work we've put in paid off."

Dancing to "La La Land", Guignard/Fabbri produced a fast-paced and entertaining program highlighted by innovative lifts and smooth step sequences. However, Guignard fell on an in-between step.

The Skate America silver medalists managed a season's best of 118.93 points and totaled 196.29 points. This second silver medal on the circuit should be enough to get the Italian couple into their first Grand Prix Final.

"Even though we didn't have a lot of time since Skate America we still made some improvements as the segment score proved. Unfortunately, there was a really stupid mistake that we weren't expecting. But it was not in an element and we are still very happy," Fabbri said.

"It is a great feeling (to qualify for the Grand Prix Final for the first time). We got our first medal at Skate America, now this second medal and the ticket to the Final. This really motivates us."

McNamara/Carpenter's dance to a selection of music by Yann Tiersen featured four level-four elements, but the team lost two points for two extended lifts. The 2016 World Junior Champions came fourth in the Free Dance with 105.26 points, but remained in third place on 176.66 points.

"This is our first Grand Prix medal and something to be proud of," McNamara said.

"Having two Grand Prix this season was a great opportunity for us and we're really proud to take home the bronze from this one," Carpenter added.

[Sara Hurtado/Kirill Khaliavin](#) (ESP) were ranked third in the Free Dance with their program to "Great Gig in the Sky" and "Sign of the Times" to move up one spot to fourth place (172.09 points). The 2018 World Junior silver medalists [Christina Carreira/Anthony Ponomarenko](#) (USA) finished

fifth in their Grand Prix debut on 167.28 points. [Juulia Turkkila/Matthias Versluis](#) (FIN) placed sixth (160.62 points).

The Helsinki Grand Prix concludes Sunday with the Men's Free Skating and the Exhibition Gala. The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2018/19 continues next week in Hiroshima (JPN) with the NHK Trophy. For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series please visit [here](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using **#FigureSkating** **#GPFigure**.