

## **Press Conference**

Junior Ice Dance, after Free Dance

### **Marjorie Lajoie/Zachary Lagha (CAN), 2019 World Junior Champions**

Lagha: It feels really good [winning this title]. In the past two years we had a lot of disappointing results – sixth in the [ISU Junior Grand Prix of Figure Skating] Final last year in Nagoya [2017/18 season], from second to fourth place at Junior Worlds last year, fourth at the Final by 0.03 points in our own country. After each of those competitions we still stood up and we analyzed our program. We're really happy that the work finally paid off. (on skaters who inspire them) Basically, all the top 10 seniors. They all have incredible qualities and I try to take lesson from all of them. (on improving for moving up to senior level) There are a lot of differences between junior level and senior level in ice dance. From all of the seniors, only a few were good junior teams, and from good junior teams - only a few won Junior Worlds. Even though it is an important competition, it is not even the half of the battle. You have to work on those qualities like the softness of the skating, more connection between the pair. Those are the things to work on to move to senior field.

Lajoie: For sure, skating last after such a great skaters like Sofia [Shevchenko] and Igor [Eremenko], it is always very stressful so like in the Rhythm Dance we managed to deliver a really good performance. (on skaters who inspire them) For me it is everyone on the rink we train. Especially when we train with Tessa [Virtue] and Scott [Moir]. It was amazing to see how the hard work, the connection they have together, it was really inspiring for me. [on winning the first Junior World title for Canadian Ice Dance since Virtue/Moir won in 2006] We feel amazing because of this. They have been an amazing inspiration for us and we hope to follow in their footsteps.

### **Elizaveta Khudaiberdieva/Nikita Nazarov (RUS), 2019 World Junior silver medalists**

Khudaiberdieva (on first and last time competing at Junior Worlds): We couldn't even think about that result. We were the number three Russian team, a confident number three though. For us it was more about overcoming ourselves than anyone else. We haven't realized yet that we are second at our first Junior Worlds. This will push us next season and will give us motivation and confidence. This season has been very tough and our career there were many moments when we were lacking just a little bit, just a few points, just a tenth of a point and we are just so happy now and would like to thank our coaches. (on skaters who inspire them) We have already discussed this with Marjorie and Zachary and we are a little bit jealous because they can share the ice rink with the very top world teams and they can watch them work every day. We get our inspiration from Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir, but also from Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron, also from the Russian teams like Victoria Sinitsina and Nikita Katsalapov, but we also get inspired by good ice dance in general, by great programs regardless of who performs them. (on improving for moving up to senior level) Now we have to work very hard and not lose the motivation. We need to keep our individuality and develop our own style, improve technically, also not to do the same thing over and over again.

Nazarov: We are just so happy to be here and to be with these strong competitors. Hopefully we can continue that way. (on skaters who inspire them) I look up to Meryl Davis and Charlie White. But every season you can discover new teams and new programs just to watch and get inspiration. (on improving for moving up to senior level) There are many teams in Russia, but if you look at the results at major events, they are not that great. But all these teams also once came up from juniors. We just have to work very hard in order to achieve something.

### **Sofia Shevchenko/Igor Eremenko (RUS), 2019 World Junior bronze medalists**

Shevchenko: I cannot really describe the emotions for this free dance. I think we have worked hard every day so now we are able to sit here with these guys. This was an amazing season for us, so emotional and it was the best season of our career. I am so happy and I also want to thank Igor and my coaches, my family and friends, everybody who supports us. They are all important. (on skaters who inspire them) We work with very creative and talented people, but from top couples I really look up to Tessa and Scott and of course I support Sasha [Aleandra Stepanova] and Vania [Ivan Bukin]. (on improving for moving up to

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senior level) At this moment, I cannot think about this. We have only finished our last junior competition. We want to share these important emotions and memories with close people and celebrate. Only after this we will deal with this.

Eremenko: We are so happy to perform here. Our last junior program, especially the free dance that makes us very happy. This was a big experience, all these junior years and next year we move to senior. (on skaters who inspire them) I get inspiration from dance in general, not only on the ice and from creative people from all around the world.

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