

PRESS CONFERENCE

Ice Dance, after Free Dance

Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov (FSR), 2021 World Champions

Sinitsina: (on coming back from a hard time with illness and injuries) Indeed it was a tough time but it's behind us, we feel great, I feel great, we had a great work done, I missed the work, the ice, the competition and I enjoyed practicing so much, I was going on the ice every day looking into Nikita's eyes, trusting him and our coaches and am so happy being here and so happy with the outcome of this competition.

Katsalapov: This medal means so much for us, it's so precious for us. We went there through so many hardships, not just us, but the others as well. This medal means we can be better, we can work more. As for the plans for the Olympics, we have some ideas about the music and the program since we know partially what the rules are for next year, but there is no exact plan. Think we will start thinking about it right after the Worlds, during the short break we'll have. (on how they feel the event was run under the current circumstances) We were preparing for much worse, but we got an amazing competition, all the rules were followed, we felt a bit of freedom even though we could not go outside. But we were ok with that - there was a place to get some fresh air, there were no problems with the food and there were tests and the only thing that really was missing was the audience. But otherwise it was on the highest level. (on improvements and plans for the Olympic season) The Olympics are a competition that you dream of since you are a kid. Back then and now you dream of being on the top of the podium. I don't believe in black magic but I never talk about it, but dreams they are goals and they are the highest and you have to work hard and to have a bit of luck to make it work.

Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA), 2021 World silver medalists

Hubbell: (on their second-place finish) This is another Worlds silver medal for us. At the last three World Championships we've been on the podium. We know that takes a lot of work so we're proud of ourselves for being able to be consistently at the peak of our performance. We're trying to stave off that hunger for a few days at least. There is no work to be done till we are back home and training. We're very goal-oriented as athletes, I'm sure everyone at this event is, but I have no ice to practice on, so the only option is to sit back and enjoy our own win, which was not what we came here for but is still incredibly dear to us, and we're going to celebrate that together.

(On taking part in Worlds during a pandemic) I have to acknowledge our federation, US Figure Skating, which really leads the way for being an amazing federation that supports the health of its athletes. This season I really feel they forged the way for what could be an event inside of a bubble and how they could do that safely. I know other federations had events, but they struggled with a lot of outbreaks of the virus. Leading up to this World Championships I believe it was US Figure Skating and the way they demonstrated how this was possible that really made this championship feasible and made everyone feel safe coming. I know for myself when I saw the protocol and it mimicked what we went through at the US Figure Skating Championships, I was put at ease and I felt safe to come. Beyond that, we knew the risks, we knew that adding people from other nations and cultures would add to that risk and we did our part. We stayed out of the warm-up area where others had their masks off, we made sure we always wore gloves in the dining room, things like that. We are very happy it was able to take place and it's been a successful event so we're just happy we were all able to come together.

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Donohue: (On preparation for the Olympic season) We train in the way of quads, we all think in quads, the Olympics is always the goal at the end. For Maddie and me especially, depending on the situation at World Team Trophy, we will either breathe a little bit more extra life into these programs or we go home, take the necessary time to recover and plan and then we go full pelt ahead. We're very motivated, we're very hungry, we have an amazing team around us willing to push us towards whichever goal we set, and we also have the highest goals, so we'll be driving very hard.

Piper Gilles/Paul Poirier (CAN), 2021 World bronze medalists

Gilles (on using music by Joni Mitchell a Canadian and keeping the same program for two seasons) We kept it because of time. We didn't get back on the ice until June and then we heard the Grand Prix season would start in the fall and we didn't want to get back on the ice and start pushing ourselves with a new program and risk getting hurt. We felt we had so much more to give with Joni and not being able to compete it at Worlds last year meant we felt we had a piece missing. So for us I think every day training it we learned so much more about ourselves and the program and what we could give. So to come here and give a performance even more elevated than last season I think we're extremely proud and we're just very happy that we could do Joni proud even if it wasn't in Canada. It was still our best performance and we're very lucky to skate to a beautiful piece like that.

(on preparing for the Olympic Games) For Paul and I what we have to do is work on consistency and our levels. We know we're capable of hitting those levels at home and sometimes when you get into competitions and the nerves come up you get out of your knees a little bit. So we need to make sure all our levels are in place and they're easy to get and we know that when we compete nothing can stop us. But we need to stick to who we are and enjoy the process. The two of us love to train and it's probably one of our most favourite things is to train hard.

Poirier (on how this performance will set them up for the Olympic Games) This is our first time on the Worlds podium and it's a milestone in our careers. We're so proud of what we've been able to accomplish this season. We have been pretty open and unapologetic about wanting to be on the podium at the Olympics next season so for us being on the podium at Worlds this season is very encouraging and lets us know we're on the right track. We've really tried this Olympic quad to be the best team we can be and not try to mould ourselves after some ideal that is not us and to embrace who we are as skaters. Every year we've done that more and more and so the goal for us for the Olympic season is to be more ourselves, to be a better version of ourselves, to be more Piper and Paul. We have two new programs that are already underway and we're really looking forward to sharing them with you.

(On keeping the same program for two seasons) We were very mindful of the challenge, keeping the same program for two seasons. It's very easy for the program to get stale and robotic because you're just going through the motions because you've done it so many times. So we had to constantly find ways to challenge ourselves and sometimes we stepped away from the program so we could look at it with a fresh set of eyes so I think we took the time to make sure that every time we did the program it was really coming from the heart and that's what allowed us to keep enjoying this program through the season.

(on what the restrictions of the Covid year have taught them) I think for the two of us what this year of Covid has taught us is how much we love to compete. Sometimes when you're going through the constant competition cycle you don't realise it quite as much. We didn't have the opportunity to compete at all this season so to have the opportunity to do a World championships was extremely exciting. We so missed out throughout the season and that made it hard to know how to train properly and stay motivated because we didn't have those goalposts to motivate us. In Canada the response to Covid has been fairly strict so we were both nervous to leave Canada and go to a place where we didn't know how it was going to be. We've just been living between our homes and the rink for the last year with the same 10 skaters, so for us there was a little bit of apprehension. But we knew there would be a lot of testing and a lot of things that were different. So we had to focus on what we could control and not get distracted by everything else. All in all it's been a very successful event and we've felt very safe and taken care of and we're so glad it could happen.