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Chen (USA), Tarasova/Morozov (RUS) take first Skate America gold medals

2018 World Champion [Nathan Chen](#) (USA) and World silver medalists [Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov](#) (RUS) took the first gold medals at Skate America in Everett, Washington (USA) on Saturday. Skate America is the first of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series.

Tarasova/Morozov (RUS) start their Grand Prix season with gold

World silver medalists [Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov](#) of Russia started their Grand Prix season with a gold medal as Skate America continued in Everett on Saturday. Teammates [Alisa Efimova/Alexander Korovin](#) gave Russia also the silver medal. [Ashley Cain/Timothy Leduc](#) (USA) claimed the bronze. Efimova/Korovin and Cain/Leduc won their first Grand Prix medals.

Performing to “Winter” by Balmorhea, Tarasova/Morozov landed a triple twist, triple toe-double toe-double toe combination, throw triple loop and difficult lifts. However, Tarasova popped the Salchow and stepped out of the throw triple flip. The European Champions scored a season’s best of 133.61 points in the Free Skating and totaled 204.85 points for a clear victory. “Today we skated a little bit better than yesterday (in the Short Program) and at Finlandia Trophy,” Tarasova commented. “We started enjoying the program today. We happy that we’re halfway in the Final,” added Morozov.

Efimova/Korovin’s program to “La Strada” included a triple twist, throw triple loop and Salchow as well as level-four lifts, but she struggled with the solo jumps. The team from St. Petersburg was ranked third in the Free Skating with 116.60 points but overall held on to second place at 178.98 points. “In today’s skate many elements were good, but we made two big mistakes. It was our first competition on another continent. It was interesting and we were nervous and we found many details that we need to practice and improve for the future and for the next Grand Prix,” Efimova explained.

Cain/Leduc put out a solid performance, completing a triple twist, throw triple Lutz and Salchow. However, the solo jumps triple loop and Salchow were underrotated. With 117.34 points, the 2018 Four Continents silver medalists were second in the Free Skating and pulled up from fourth to third on 175.06 points. “We were a little bit disappointed with our program yesterday, there were some silly errors. It kind of awakened the fighting spirit in us and we definitely fought for everything today. There were some mistakes and some scary moments, but I’m really proud of Ashley and of the effort that we made,” Leduc told the press.

[Alexa Scimeca Knierim/Chris Knierim](#) (USA) moved up from fifth to fourth on 171.56 points while Grand Prix debutants [Minerva-Fabienne Hase/Nolan Seegert](#) (GER) slipped from third to fifth as she fell on the throw triple loop and doubled the Salchow (162.10 points). [Nika Digerness/Danny Neudecker](#) (USA) moved up from seventh to sixth at 151.21 points.

Nathan Chen (USA) cruises to Men's gold

World Champion [Nathan Chen](#) (USA) cruised to the Men's gold, taking the title with 40 points to spare. Czech Republic's [Michal Brezina](#) claimed the silver, his first Grand Prix medal in four years and [Sergei Voronov](#) of Russia moved up one spot to earn the bronze.

Chen delivered in his Free Skating to "Land of All", reeling off a quadruple Lutz, quad toe-triple toe, quad toe-double toe-double loop as well as a triple Axel and four more triple jumps. The World Champion scored 189.99 points for his routine and racked up 280.57 points overall. "I'm happy with today's skate, definitely a lot of improvement from my last competition and that's really my goal throughout the seasons, just keep on improving from competition to competition," the 19-year-old said. "In terms of the number of quads, the program was definitely watered down, but I think that in terms of where I am at in the season right now, it's definitely perfect. I'm looking to add more in, but at the same time build on everything else."

Brezina's program to "I'm a Man" and "Thunderstruck" featured a quadruple Salchow-double toeloop combination as well as a triple Axel-double toe and three more clean triple jumps, but he doubled his second Salchow and stepped out of the second triple Axel. The 2013 European bronze medalist picked up 157.42 points for his effort which added up to 239.51 points. "For me, it was a pretty good step up from my last competition in Salt Lake City and even from the last season it's a better start than in my first Grand Prix. There are still some things that need work, but for the first Grand Prix it is good. I could have skated a little better, but it's the beginning of the season and there is still time to build," the 28-year-old noted.

Performing to "Way Down We Go" by Kaleo, Voronov hit a quad-triple toeloop and four solid triples, but he fell on a triple Axel and his quad loop attempt was downgraded. The 31-year-old was ranked fourth in the Free Skating with 148.26 points but moved up to third on 226.44 points total. "I can't say that I'm satisfied as there were mistakes in the short and in the free program, but compared to previous, domestic competitions, it is a step forward. It's hard work, but there is room to grow for me to not fall behind my friends and competitors," Voronov said.

2018 World Junior bronze medalist [Matteo Rizzo](#) (ITA) placed fourth in his Grand Prix debut followed by 2017 World Junior Champion [Vincent Zhou](#) (USA). [Nam Nguyen](#) (CAN) came sixth (212.99 points). [Julian Zhi Jie Yee](#) (MAS) who surprisingly finished third in the Short Program, dropped to seventh after some errors.

Satoko Miyahara (JPN) leads Ladies after Short Program

World bronze medalist [Satoko Miyahara](#) of Japan leads the Ladies following the Short Program on Saturday at Skate America in Everett. 2018 Four Continents Champion [Kaori Sakamoto](#), also of Japan, follows in second and Russian newcomer [Sofia Samodurova](#) sits third.

Miyahara opened her program to "Song for the Little Sparrow" with a triple Lutz-triple toe combination and followed up with a double Axel and triple flip as well as level-four spins and footwork. The audience in the Angel of the Winds arena in Washington state gave her a standing ovation for a beautiful performance that earned her 73.86 points. "Until I finished my three jumps, I was very nervous, because I could not show my best performance at the Japan Open and U.S. International (competition). But after I landed the triple flip, I was really relieved and skated for myself," the Japanese champion told the post-event press conference.

Skating to “From My First Moment”, Sakamoto produced a triple flip-triple toe combination, triple loop and two level-four spins to earn a season’s-best 71.29 points. “I am very pleased with my performance today and I got my best score,” the 18-year-old said. “The beginning of the season was difficult, but with the help of my coach I was able to practice really hard.”

Samodurova gave a solid performance to “Nyah” that was highlighted by a triple flip-triple toeloop combination, a triple loop and double Axel. The 16-year-old picked up a season’s-best 64.41 points. Not expecting to be in the top three, she had returned to the hotel and rushed back just in time for the press conference. “I am very surprised, it is very unexpected. I am very happy with my performance, I did a good job with all my elements and I got a good score,” she said.

The 2016 World Junior Champion [Marin Honda](#) (JPN) is not far behind in fourth place on 62.74 points. U.S. champion [Bradie Tennell](#) ranks fifth after reducing her combination to a triple Lutz-single loop (61.72 points). [Megan Wessenberg](#) (USA) came sixth on 60.20 points.

Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue (USA) tango into the lead

World silver medalists [Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA) danced to the lead in the Rhythm Dance as Day 2 of Skate America concluded in Everett on Saturday. Italians [Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri](#) finished second, followed by [Tiffani Zagorski/Jonathan Guerreiro](#) of Russia.

Hubbell/Donohue turned in a characteristic Tango to “Alevara” and “Tangata del Alba” by Astor Piazzolla, picking up a level four for the twizzles and the curve lift. Their Tango Romantica Pattern Dance merited a level three and two. The U.S. champions collected 78.43 points. However, they lost two points for a costume failure and for Donohue losing his balance in the closing pose, which counted as a fall. “Overall, we were happy with the day and I got a little overly passionate and fell on top of Zach at the end,” Hubbell said. “Everything is a learning experience. Obviously, it’s not an ideal short dance, but we take a lot of knowledge and learning moving forward. I learned how flexible I am, not as much as I thought,” Donohue joked.

Guignard/Fabbri’s dance to the three Tango pieces “Miedo a la Libertad”, “La Chanson des Vieux Amants” and “Tanos” was highlighted by a unique stationary lift and strong twizzles. The couple from Milan scored 75.01 points and seem poised for their first Grand Prix medal. “We were feeling very good when we stepped on the ice, then unfortunately we had a couple of really small mistakes, so we are not a 100 per cent happy with our performance. We can perform better. But it’s the first major event of the season and it was a good starting point,” Fabbri said.

Performing to “Besame Mucho”, Zagorski/Guerreiro earned a level four for their twizzles, their straight line lift and the second Tango Romantica Pattern to score 73.30 points. “Today was our first competition of the season, so of course it was our first time presenting our program. We are more or less happy with how we performed today. Of course, there are a lot of things to work on and to improve, but overall, we’re pretty happy with what we put out on the ice today,” Zagorski said.

The 2016 World Junior Champions [Lorraine McNamara/Quinn Carpenter](#) (USA) were edged out of the top three by less than one point and remain within striking distance of the podium on 72.44 points. [Lilah Fear/Lewis Gibson](#) (GBR) ranked fifth (64.71 points).

Skate America concludes Sunday with the Ladies Free Skating and the Free Dance. Overall, 59 skaters/couples representing 15 ISU members compete at Skate America, the first event of six in the series. The top 6 qualifiers in each discipline will proceed to the Final in Vancouver (CAN), December 6 to 9, 2018.

For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series please visit: <https://isu.org/GrandPrix>. Follow the discussion on social media by using **#FigureSkating #GPFigure**.