

November 11, 2018

Lausanne, SUI

NHK Trophy, Day Three

Ice Dancers [Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker](#) (USA) danced off with the gold medal as the NHK Trophy concluded Sunday in Hiroshima (JPN). NHK Trophy was the fourth of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2018/19.

Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker (USA) clinch NHK Trophy Ice Dance gold

[Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker](#) (USA) overtook overnight leaders [Tiffani Zagorski/Jonathan Guerreiro](#) of Russia to clinch the Ice Dance gold as competition wrapped up at NHK Trophy in Hiroshima on Sunday. The bronze went to [Rachel Parsons/Michael Parsons](#) (USA).

Dancing to “Trampoline Theme” and “In This Shirt” by The Irrepressibles, Hawayek/Baker produced smooth footwork and interesting lifts, picking up a level four for the twizzles and their combination spin as well as a level three for the other elements.

The 2018 Four Continents Champions won the Free Dance portion with 113.92 points and totaled 184.63 to move up to first place and take the first Grand Prix medal of their career after a handful of near misses.

“Our main goal was really to try to put out two solid performances, but also to understand our programs,” Baker said. “It is our first event. We really just wanted to get our feet wet. We’re very happy that we’re walking away with the gold medal.”

The team will compete again in two weeks in Grenoble, France at the last event of the Grand Prix series and has a shot at making the Final.

Zagorski/Guerreiro’s performance to “Blues for Klook” featured difficult lifts and level-three footwork. However, Guerreiro wobbled on the twizzles and their rotational lift got a one-point deduction for being too long. Having finished first in Friday’s Rhythm Dance, the Skate America bronze medalists ranked fourth in the Free Dance on 107.56 points and slipped to second place with a total of 183.05.

“Today our performance wasn’t one of our best, but we’re still happy with what we put out on the ice. We still think we’ve improved and we keep on improving. Hopefully next time we’ll do even better and secure our place,” Zagorski said.

With a silver and a bronze from their two Grand Prix events this season, Zagorski/Guerreiro face a wait to see whether they qualify for the Grand Prix Final.

Parsons/Parsons turned in a solid performance to “To Build a Home”, completing four level-four elements. The midline and the one-foot step sequence garnered a level two. The siblings earned 109.57 points for the Free Dance, meaning a total of 178.64.

“Overall we’re pretty happy with the performance that we put out there, but there is always something that we could have done better,” Rachel Parsons said. “There are some levels that didn’t go quite as planned, but I think we’re going in the right direction.”

[Lilah Fear/Lewis Gibson](#) (GBR) ranked second in the Free Dance with an upbeat Disco program and moved up from seventh to fourth place overall with 177.20 points. [Carolane Soucisse/Shane Firus](#) finished fifth with 169.84, while [Shiyue Wang/Xinyu Liu](#) (CHN) dropped from fourth to sixth on 167.96.

Overall, 58 skaters/couples representing 13 ISU members competed in NHK Trophy, the fourth event in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series. The top 6 qualifiers in each discipline will proceed to the Final in Vancouver (CAN), December 6 to 9, 2018. The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series continues next week with Rostelecom Cup in Moscow (RUS), the fifth event. For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series please visit [here](#).

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