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Zagreb, CRO

## **Pulkinen (USA), Kostjukovich/Ialin (RUS) lead after first day of World Junior Championships**

[Camden Pulkinen](#) (USA) and [Polina Kostjukovich/Dmitrii Ialin](#) (RUS) lead in the Junior Men's and Junior Pairs events respectively after their Short Programs as the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships opened Wednesday in Zagreb, Croatia. A total of 180 skaters from 44 ISU members have been entered for the Championships: 38 Men, 46 Ladies, 17 Pair Skating couples and 31 Ice Dance couples.

### **Pulkinen (USA) wins competitive Junior Men's Short Program**

Camden Pulkinen (USA) took the lead in a very competitive Junior Men's Short Program as the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships opened in Zagreb (CRO) on Wednesday. [Tomoki Hiwatashi](#) (USA) placed second followed by Italy's [Daniel Grassl](#).

The top 10 skaters are separated by just over five points and a lot can happen in the Free Skating on Thursday.

Skating to "Oblivion" by Astor Piazzolla, Pulkinen produced a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and triple flip as well as two level-four spins and footwork to set a new season's best of 82.41 points.

"I'm very happy about the result and how I skated," the 18-year-old said. "I know there was a little mistake with the [flying camel] spin on levels, so I could have been even better than I was today. The competition was fantastic. A lot of people skated clean programs and I am very happy that I was able to end up on top today and I'm looking forward to the free skating."

Hiwatashi's performance to "Cry Me a River" by Arthur Hamilton featured a triple Axel, triple flip and triple Lutz-triple toe. The 2016 World Junior bronze medalist picked up a level four for his three spins and achieved a season's best with 81.50 points.

"I was able to give my best today," the 19-year-old said. "I got a personal best. There were some places I can fix, the step sequence I can fix."

Grassl landed a somewhat shaky triple Axel in his routine to "Rain, In Your Black Eyes" by Ezio Bosso, but then went on to complete a triple flip and triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination. The Italian Champion earned 81.19 points.

"It's my first Junior Worlds and I was very excited and nervous. I did a little mistake on the triple Axel, but I hope the free program will be good," the 16-year-old commented.

ISU Junior Grand Prix Final silver medalist [Petr Gumennik](#) (RUS) remains within striking distance of the podium after a strong performance and a score of 80.33 points. [Alexei Krasnozhan](#) (USA) follows in fifth with 79.98 points and [Roman Savosin](#) (RUS) came sixth on 78.33 points.

2018 World Junior silver medalist [Artur Danielian](#) (RUS) is currently sitting in ninth (77.71 points) and ISU Junior Grand Prix Final Champion [Stephen Gogolev](#) (CAN) placed 10th (77.00 points).

### **Kostiukovich/Ialin lead Russian trio in Junior Pairs Short Program**

World Junior silver medalists Polina Kostiukovich/Dmitrii Ialin topped the Junior Pairs Short Program ahead of teammates [Apollinariia Panfilova/Dmitry Rylov](#) and [Anastasia Mishina/Aleksandr Galliamov](#) as the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships continued Wednesday in Zagreb (CRO).

Skating last out of the 17 pairs, Kostiukovich/Ialin put out a confident performance to “Survivor”, completing a triple twist, side by side double Axel, throw triple Salchow and a spectacular lift.

The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final silver medalists posted a new season’s best with 68.31 points to edge their teammates for a narrow lead. “It was a decent performance, but by far not the best that we can do,” Ialin said. “If it is not our best, it means there is room to grow. We want to fix our mistakes in the future and we’ll focus on the free skating like we did today.”

Panfilova/Rylov’s performance to “I Put A Spell On You” included a high triple twist, double Axel, throw triple Salchow as well as three level-four elements. However, the death spiral was rated a level two. The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final bronze medalists scored 67.91 points, which was a season’s best.

“It was a good performance, one of the best of the season and we got a season’s best. We skated well, but the death spiral and the twist could have been better,” Panfilova said.

Performing to “Party Like A Russian”, Mishina/Galliamov produced a triple twist, throw triple Salchow and picked up a level four for the lift, footwork, side by side spin and death spiral. However, Galliamov wobbled on the double Axel and on the spin. The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final Champions nevertheless managed a season’s best score with 67.02 points.

“Our short program was normal but it wasn’t good. We had a small mistake, I think because we were nervous,” Mishina said. Galliamov added: “The short program is over and there will be a new day and a new performance tomorrow.”

[Feiyao Tang/Yongchao Yang](#) (CHN) came in fourth on 60.77 points with a solid performance. [Laiken Lockley/Keenan Prochnow](#) (USA) finished fifth (59.96 points) while ISU Junior Grand Prix Finalists [Sarah Feng/TJ Nyman](#) (USA) are currently ranked sixth on 58.43 points.

The ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships continue Thursday with the Junior Rhythm Dance and Junior Pairs Free Skating. The ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships will be available to watch at <https://www.isu.org/figure-skating> in certain countries.

Click on the highlighted text for [results](#), [entry lists](#) and the [official website](#). Follow the event on social media using the hashtags [#WorldJFigure](#) and [#FigureSkating](#).

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