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Hiwatashi (USA) surprises himself with Junior Men's gold as Shcherbakova (RUS) stakes her claim in Short Program

[Tomoki Hiwatashi](#) (USA) skated off with the Junior Men's gold medal as the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships 2019 continued in Zagreb, Croatia, on Friday. Earlier, [Anna Shcherbakova](#) (RUS) took a narrow lead in the Junior Ladies Short Program.

Anna Shcherbakova (RUS) edges ahead

Russian champion [Anna Shcherbakova](#) skated to the lead in the Junior Ladies Short Program at the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships in Zagreb, outscoring teammate and defending World Junior champion [Alexandra Trusova](#) by less than half a point. [Ting Cui](#) (USA) finished the day in third place.

Performing to "A Comme Amour" by Richard Clayderman, Shcherbakova hit a double Axel, triple flip, triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and picked up a level four for her spins and a level three for the step sequence. "I'm pleased with my performance," said the 14-year-old, who earned 72.86 points. "I did all my jumps as planned, but there is still room for improvement and enough left to work on.

"It's my first Junior Worlds and therefore I was a bit more nervous. After all, this is the biggest competition of the season for me. For the free skating, I plan a quad. I've trained a lot and now the time has come to show it."

Trusova's dynamic performance to "Kill Bill" featured a double Axel, triple flip, triple Lutz-triple toeloop as well as a layback spin from an unusual cantilever entry. The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final silver medalist scored 72.49 points.

"I changed the combination to Lutz-toe, because I fell on Lutz-loop at the Russian Junior Nationals and the difference in points is not that big between the two," the 14-year-old Russian Junior champion explained. "On the one hand, it is harder to compete in my second Junior Worlds, because I've won before and I do feel some pressure, but on the other hand it is easier, because I've been here before and I know what is going on. In the free, I want to skate clean and do quads."

Cui produced a double Axel, triple Lutz-triple toeloop and triple flip as well in her routine to "Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" to collect 67.69 points.

"I am happy with what I did today because even though things were not perfect I am happy I fought on each jump and tried really hard to land it," the 16-year-old said. "I am really excited about my placement going into the Long. It is the first time for me that I am in the top three, so the goal is to stay focused and to try my best."

[Kseniia Sinitsyna](#) (RUS) is currently ranked fourth on 66.52 points followed by [Hanna Harrell](#) (USA) on 62.68 points, with [Yuna Shiraiwa](#) (JPN) in sixth on 62.08 points.

Two-times-two equals gold for Tomoko Hiwatashi (USA)

Tomoki Hiwatashi (USA) battled his way to the gold medal in an unpredictable Men's Final. Russia's Roman Savosin rose from sixth to claim the silver medal and the bronze went to Daniel Grassl of Italy.

Starting the day in second place, Hiwatashi opened his program to "Fate of the Gods" by Steven Reineke with a quad toe-triple toe combination and followed up with a triple Axel-double toe. He popped the second planned quad toe into a double but went on to complete five more triple jumps including another Axel.

The 2016 World Junior bronze medalist collected a level four for his spins and scored 148.82 points and was ranked second in the Free Skating, but overall pulled up to first place at 230.32 points, edging out Savosin by just 1.04 points.

Hiwatashi, 19, said: "When I saw the Free program score of 148 points and second place in Free and since I was second in the Short Program too, it all added up as two and I thought I was second. But when I saw 230 points in total I could not believe it, because I did not think I could win. I am very excited to go back home with my gold medal.

"But at the same time, (on) the second toe loop I wanted to do a quad toeloop and get ready for the next season, to be in the state where I can prove myself as a good senior competitor. I was not able to do that tonight. I will work on that. I need to get ready for next season."

Savosin's performance to "Piano Concerto No.2" by Sergei Rachmaninov was highlighted by a quad toe, quad Salchow and four more clean triple jumps.

However, the 19-year-old Muscovite underrotated his two triple Axels and a loop. He nevertheless managed a season's best 150.95 points to win the Free Skating segment. He totaled 230.32 points to win his first medal in his third appearance at the ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships.

"I was counting on moving up in the standings and I hoped could do it and I'm very happy that it worked out," he said. "I only thought about skating clean and I skated well. Throughout the whole season I wasn't able to skate as well as I did today.

"The difference was that this competition was very important. I had drawn conclusions from the other events that didn't go too well and I prepared mentally in a different way."

Skating to "Dance Pieces" by Philipp Glass, Grassl produced a triple Axel and five other triple jumps as well as original spins. However, he fell on his opening quad Lutz (underrotated) and also underrotated the quad loop and two triple jumps.

With 143.48 points, the Italian champion was fourth in the Free Skating but overall held on to third place at 224.67 points.

"I made a lot of mistakes, but overall it was not so bad," the 16-year-old said. "My idea was to be in the top five and now I get third and I'm happy. I couldn't imagine that I can do it (make the podium) this year. I thought maybe I can do it next year."

Artur Danielian (RUS), the 2018 World Junior silver medalist, pulled up from ninth to fourth at 220.68 points with a solid performance. ISU Junior Grand Prix Final Champion Stephen Gogolev (CAN) came third in the Free Skating and moved up from tenth to fifth place (220.66 points). Camden Pulkinen (USA), who had won the Short Program, dropped to eighth after a few errors (216.68 points).

The ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships 2019 continue Saturday with the Junior Free Dance and Junior Ladies Free Skating. They can be watched at <https://www.isu.org/figure-skating> in certain countries.

For more information, full entry lists and results please see the [event website](#) and the [official website](#). Follow the event on social media using the hashtags #WorldJFigure and #FigureSkating.

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