

March 20, 2019

Saitama, Japan

## **Alina Zagitova (RUS) leads in exciting Ladies Short Program in Saitama**

Olympic Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) of Russia skated to the lead in an exciting Ladies Short Program as the [ISU World Figure Skating Championships](#) continued on Wednesday in Saitama (JPN). [Kaori Sakamoto](#) of Japan came second and Kazakhstan's [Elizabet Tursynbaeva](#) is currently ranked third.

Skating last out of the 40 Ladies, Zagitova put out a confident performance to "The Phantom of the Opera", nailing a triple Lutz-triple loop, a triple flip, double Axel as well as level-four spins and footwork. The European silver medalist scored 82.08 points, setting a new seasons best. "The audience really helped me today. It was a good performance, I got a seasons best and I'll try even harder in the free skating," the Olympic Champion said. "I didn't always skate so well in the short program this season, there were some underrotations or other little errors. Here, I skated with joy, I didn't have to hold back. The audience was great, I love to skate here. After my score I was happy for a moment, but now I'm focusing on the free skating," the 16-year-old continued.

Sakamoto's program to "Until the Last Moment" included a triple flip-triple toe, a double Axel and triple loop as well as excellent spins and steps. The Japanese Champion posted a seasons best of 76.86 points. "I was pretty upset at the Four Continents, so I trained very hard afterwards. Because of my hard training, which was harder than my training prior to Olympics last year, I gained a lot of confidence in my program, and that helped a lot. I wanted to make sure to skate at my best as a result of my training," Sakamoto commented. "I felt some nervousness but it was at a good level. So I was pretty satisfied with my program. The triple-triple in today's short program was exactly like how I jump during the practice."

Tursynbaeva opened her performance to "Moonlight Sonata" with a triple Lutz and followed up with a double Axel and triple Salchow-triple toeloop combination. The Four Continents silver medalist earned 75.96 points, which was another seasons best. "I felt really good while skating. I was doing pretty well at practices and I'm glad I could show at the competition what I have been practicing. I am planning to try the quadruple Salchow in my free program. It was going pretty well in practice this year and landing them in every practice," the 2019 Universiade silver medalist shared.

Two-time World Champion [Evgenia Medvedeva](#) put down another strong performance with the only glitch being an underrotated triple toeloop in her combination with a triple flip. She remains close to the podium in fourth place at 74.23 points. [Eunsoo Lim](#) (KOR) shone in her Short Program as well to come fifth (72.91 points) followed by [Mariah Bell](#) (USA) in sixth on 71.26 points. Four Continents Champion [Rika Kihira](#) (JPN) placed seventh after singling her planned triple Axel (70.90 points), edging 2018 World bronze medalist [Satoko Miyahara](#) (JPN/70.60 points).

The Ladies will compete again on Friday. The [ISU World Figure Skating Championships](#) continue Thursday with the Pairs Free Skating and the Men's Short Program.

For more information, full entry lists and results please see the [ISU event website](#) and [official event website](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using the hashtag [#WorldFigure](#).

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