

April 12, 2019

Fukuoka, JPN

## **USA strengthens lead at World Team Trophy**

Team USA strengthened its overnight lead as the sixth edition of the ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating continued Friday in Fukuoka, Japan, with the Pairs Short Program, Free Dance and Men's Free Skating.

### **USA men repeat success to build team's lead in Fukuoka**

Team USA strengthened its lead over Japan and Russia as the ISU World Team Trophy continued Friday in Fukuoka. Team USA now has 91 points heading into the final day of competition, while Japan has 79 points and Russia remain in third place on 70 points.

As on Day One, two-time and reigning World Champion [Nathan Chen](#) and 2019 World bronze medalist [Vincent Zhou](#) were the top scorers for Team USA. Chen won the Men's Free Skating, nailing three quadruple jumps and a triple Axel-double toeloop plus three more clean triples in his routine to "Land of All" to earn 199.49 points and 12 team points. Zhou's martial arts-inspired program featured three quads and six triples, giving him a season's best of 198.50 points and 11 team points.

2019 World Ice Dance bronze medalists [Madison Hubbell/ Zachary Donohue](#) placed third in the Free Dance (10 team points) while [Ashley Cain/Timothy LeDuc](#) ranked fifth in the Pairs Short Program (8 team points).

"Team USA put out a lot of wonderful performances, some season's bests and we're all very happy and proud," team captain Hubbell said. "Freestyle and pairs are incredibly challenging to predict. While we are confident in the ladies and pair on our team that they're going out trying to do their best, we know that anything can happen. We'll be there supporting them and hopefully we'll stay in the first position. But there are difficult opponents to either side of me."

Team Japan remained solidly in second place. 2019 Four Continents Champion [Shoma Uno](#) finished third in the Men's Free Skating (189.46 points/10 team points). He landed two quadruple flips, but fell on a triple Axel-quadruple toeloop, a combination no other skater has yet attempted in competition. [Keiji Tanaka](#) came sixth (7 team points). [Misato Komatsubara/Tim Koleto](#) and [Riku Miura/Shoya Ichihashi](#) were sixth in the Free Dance and Pairs Short Program respectively, picking up 7 team points each.

"For Team Japan we got several season's best scores," team captain Komatsubara said. "Pairs and singles are difficult to predict, just as Madison said. Our ladies said, 'Leave the rest to us,' and I'm very proud of what they said. I hope everybody will finish with a smile tomorrow."

Russia started strongly into the day when [Natalia Zabiako/Alexander Enbert](#) won the Pairs Short Program. The 2019 World bronze medalists hit a triple toe, triple twist and throw triple loop to score a season's best of 75.80 points and 12 points for their team.

World Ice Dance silver medalists [Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov](#) then followed up with another season's best performance of their Free Dance (130.63 points), securing 11 team points. The Russian Champions picked up a level four for all elements except for Katsalapov's twizzles and his one-foot-step sequence.

[Andrei Lazukin](#) ranked eighth in the Men's Free Skating (5 team points), just ahead of 2019 European silver medalist [Alexander Samarin](#) (4 team points).

"Today our pair started off very well with a personal best score and won the short program." Katsalapov said. "I hope they'll continue the same way. Victoria and myself also set a personal best and skated very well. Our guys were trying very hard. We have very strong opponents and the gap to first place is very big. I put my hopes on our pair and Lisa Tuktamysheva is in very good shape. We hope maybe to move up one spot or at least to hold our position."

Team Canada moved up one spot and now sits in fourth on 59 points. Multiple World Ice Dance medalists [Kaitlyn Weaver/Andrew Poje](#), [Keegan Messing](#) and 2019 Four Continents silver medalists [Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) all ranked fourth in their segments, each adding nine points to the team score.

France slipped to fifth and now has 54 points. 2019 World Ice Dance Champions [Gabiella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) once again were the highest scoring team members, setting a new record score of 135.82 points with their Free Dance to "Duet" and "Sunday Afternoon". The five-time European Champions were awarded a perfect 10.00 across the board for performance and interpretation. 2019 European Champions [Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres](#) came second in the Pairs Short Program with a solid skate except for one wobble on James's triple toeloop.

Team Italy remained in sixth place on 52 points. The highest scoring team members were [Nicola Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#), who placed third in the Pairs Short Program (10 team points). European Ice Dance bronze medalists [Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri](#) were fifth in the Free Dance (8 team points).

The ISU World Team Trophy in Figure Skating continues Saturday with the Pairs and Ladies' Free Skating. For more information, full entry lists and results please see the [ISU event website](#) and TV Asahi's [official website](#). Follow the discussion on social media by using the hashtags #figureskating and #WTTFigure.

The event is available to view on the following Channels: [NBC Gold](#) in the USA, [TV Asahi](#) in Japan, [Channel One](#) in Russia and [ISU Skating Channel](#) for the rest of the world.