

November 23, 2019

Sapporo, Japan

## **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2019/20 NHK Trophy, Day 2**

[Yuzuru Hanyu](#) (JPN), [Alena Kostornaia](#) (RUS), [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) (FRA) and [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) (CHN) brought home gold from NHK Trophy in Sapporo (JPN) on Saturday and qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Torino (ITA). Six more skaters/couples booked their tickets to the Final at this sixth and last event of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series 2019/20.

### **Record-breaking Papadakis/Cizeron (FRA) untouchable at NHK Trophy**

Four-time ISU World Ice Dance Champions [Gabriella Papadakis/Guillaume Cizeron](#) of France were untouchable and set new highest scores on their way to the gold. Russia's [Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin](#) earned the silver medal and, like the French, a ticket to the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Torino (ITA) next month. [Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri](#) of Italy took the bronze.

Papadakis/Cizeron put out a captivating dance, interpreting the poem 'Find You' by Forest Blakk and to music by Olafur Arnalds. The program featured effortless footwork and lifts which blended with the music and the words of the poem. The Olympic silver medalists collected a level four for six out of seven elements to achieve a personal best with 136.58 points in the Free Dance. Overall they accumulated 226.61 points.

"We're really happy about our scores here. There has been a lot of improvement on both programs since Grenoble in France. We've been working technically a lot on the rhythm dance and also in the free dance I think we're really starting to impersonate all of the characters of our programs," Cizeron shared. "We had a great feeling on the ice and I think we were able to connect with the audience, so it was a really good feeling," he added.

Dancing to 'Primavera' and 'Cry Me a River', Stepanova/Bukin produced a strong performance that included level-four twizzles, lifts and a level-four combination spin. The 2019 European silver medalists posted a season's best of 124.74 points which added up to 208.81 points overall.

"We're happy with both programs and we want to thank the audience for their warm support," Stepanova commented. "I think when we get home, we'll discuss all our mistakes and deficits with our coaches and will work on fixing them," she continued.

Guignard/Fabbri delivered an interesting dance to 'Space Oddity' and 'Life on Mars' by David Bowie, and picked up a level four for five elements. However, Guignard slipped on the exit of the rotational lift. The European bronze medalists were ranked fourth in the Free Dance with 115.93 points, but overall remained in third at 198.06 points to take their second bronze medal on the Grand Prix circuit this season.

“We felt pretty disappointed with the performance today. We did a quite big mistake on the lift. We know we didn't have a lot of time to work on our free dance because we changed the rhythm dance, so the free dance was not really ready for this competition. But anyway we can't be happy with our performance,” Fabbri admitted.

Skate Canada bronze medalists [Lilah Fear/Lewis Gibson](#) (GBR) ranked third in the Free Dance with an entertaining Madonna Medley, and came fourth overall on 193.01 points. [Shiyue Wang/Xinyu Liu](#) (CHN) moved up from sixth to fifth at 183.11 points while [Christina Carreira/Anthony Ponomarenko](#) (RUS) slipped to sixth on 182.26 points.

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating [Standings Ice Dance](#).

### **Sui/Han (CHN) dominate Pairs to take second Grand Prix gold**

Olympic silver medalists [Wenjing Sui/Cong Han](#) of China skated to a confident victory with a little over 18 points to spare on Saturday. Canada's [Kirsten Moore-Towers/Michael Marinaro](#) earned the silver medal and the bronze went to [Anastasia Mishina/Aleksandr Galliamov](#) of Russia. All three teams qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final.

Performing to 'Rain, In Your Black Eyes', Sui/Han produced a triple twist, excellent throw triple Salchow and throw triple flip, a side-by-side triple Salchow as well as two level-four lifts. The only error came when Sui fell on the side-by-side triple toeloop. The two-time World Champions scored 145.69 points in the Free Skating for a total of 226.96 points and their second victory on the Grand Prix circuit this season.

“I regret the fall on the jump very much, but after that I think we gave our best. We want to show our very best at the Grand Prix Final,” Sui commented.

“Today we're quite pleased with how we concluded this Grand Prix event in Japan. We were able to bring across the emotion of our programs. We had some issues here like the error on the jump and we hope to fix them and to perform better in the final,” Han noted.

Moore-Towers/Marinaro completed a triple twist, triple Salchow-double toe-double toe combination, throw triple loop and Salchow in their routine toe 'Carry You' by Ruelle. The Canadian Champions earned 137.28 points which added up to 208.49 points.

“Overall we're happy with our week. Our goal was to qualify for the Grand Prix Final and we've done that. So we're super pleased with our first Grand Prix Final as a team,” Moore-Towers said.

“I think it's every athlete's hope that they will compete the way they train and we're happy to have done that this week. We left a few levels on the table that we'll pick up in a few weeks in Italy, but for the most part we're pleased.”

Mishina/Galliamov's performance to 'The Master and Margarita' featured a triple Salchow-Euler-triple Salchow combination, strong throw jumps as well as two level-four lifts. The World Junior Champions picked up 134.35 points for their effort and totaled 203.35 points for their second Grand Prix medal in their senior-debut season.

“Thanks to the support of the audience everything worked out for us and we hope to come back to Japan. We won't set any goals for placements at the final. We'll work on the elements to get a higher degree of difficulty and we'll try to skate as clean as possible,” Mishina said.

[Alisa Efimova/Alexander Korovin](#) (RUS) remained in fourth place with a solid performance (189.34 points). The new team of [Riku Miura/Ryuichi Kihara](#) (JPN) moved up from sixth to fifth place with 179.94 points.

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating [Standings Pairs](#).

### **Kostornaia (RUS) storms to second Grand Prix gold in Sapporo**

Russia's [Alena Kostornaia](#) stormed to her second Grand Prix gold medal. [Rika Kihira](#) of Japan claimed the silver medal and Olympic Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) of Russia moved up one place to take the bronze. All three qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Torino next month.

Performing to 'Twilight' and 'Supermassive Black Hole', Kostornaia nailed a triple Axel-double toeloop combination, triple flip-triple toeloop, a triple flip-Euler-triple Salchow as well as two more triples. However, she under-rotated and stepped out of her second triple Axel. The ISU Junior Grand Prix Final Champion collected all level fours for her spins and footwork and scored 154.96 points to total 240.00 points overall.

“I am very happy to have done a good program. There were mistakes, but overall it was still good,” the 16-year-old commented.

“I'm pleased to have achieved a record score in the short program and I would like to set records also in the free skating and total score, but so far this is just a dream. For the Grand Prix Final, my goal is as always to skate clean and to improve my technical score and my second mark,” she explained.

Kihira delivered an excellent performance of her program entitled 'International Angel of Peace', reeling off an excellent triple Axel-double toeloop combination, another triple Axel and four more triple jumps. The only glitch was an under-rotated triple toeloop in a combination with a triple flip. The spins merited a level four and the 2018-19 ISU Grand Prix Final Champion achieved a season's best of 151.95 points to accumulate 231.84 points overall and take her second Grand Prix silver medal of the season.

“For the short and free program I was able to concentrate almost fully and I was able to give a close to perfect performance, so I'm happy about that,” the 2019 Four Continents Champion noted.

“In the short and free program I was able to do something that was close to my personal best, but there were small mistakes. It was a tough competition and I believe that for the Grand Prix Final it's going to be even tougher.

“I want to look into my quad (Salchow) and I want to add jumps that can gain higher scores,” the 17-year-old added.

Zagitova took the role of Cleopatra in her Free Skating to music from 'The Feeling Begins' and 'Lawrence of Arabia' and rallied back from her faulty Short Program. The 2019 World Champion produced a triple Lutz-triple loop combination and four more triple jumps as well as two level-four spins, but she under-rotated a triple flip. The 17-year-old posted a season's best with 151.15 points and moved up one spot with 217.99 points overall.

"After the short program I was upset of course, but I pulled myself together for the free skating thanks to my coaches that found the right words. In the program, I was just thinking from one element to the next what I need to do," Zagitova said.

[Yuhana Yokoi](#) (JPN) pulled up from eighth to fourth with a strong performance (189.54 points). [Mako Yamashita](#) (JPN) placed fifth on 189.25 points and 2019 European Champion [Sofia Samodurova](#) (RUS) came sixth (183.27 points). [Karen Chen](#) (USA) dropped from third to ninth after making some errors (165.70 points).

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating [Standings Ladies](#).

### **Hanyu (JPN) triumphs by huge margin on home ice at NHK Trophy**

Two-time Olympic Champion [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) of Japan triumphed on home ice to claim victory with 55 points to spare. France's [Kevin Aymoz](#) skated to the silver medal and Canadian [Roman Sadovsky](#) moved up to take the bronze, the first Grand Prix medal of his career. Hanyu and Aymoz qualified for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final.

Hanyu opened his performance to 'Origin' (Art on Ice by Edvin Marton) with a quadruple loop and followed up with a quadruple Salchow, triple Lutz and a quadruple toeloop. When the two-time World Champion doubled his next planned quad toe he just changed his program on the go and threw in a quad toe-triple toe as the next jump (he under-rotated the triple toe).

Hanyu went on to complete a triple Axel-Euler-triple Salchow combination and collected a level four for his spins and footwork. The 2019 World silver medalist scored 195.71 points and racked up 305.05 points overall for his eighth Grand Prix gold medal.

"For now I'm happy that I was able to get through, leading up the free program, stayed healthy, had no pain and no injuries. I'm also now going to the final. I want to recover by then and do some more training and coordination to be ready for the Final," Hanyu said.

"If something happens with my quad toeloop like it did today, then I try to recover that and basically go over that barrier," he explained.

Aymoz's performance to 'Lighthouse' by Patrick Watson was highlighted by a triple Axel-triple toeloop combination and excellent spins and footwork. However, the French Champion under-rotated his quadruple toeloop and some of his triple jumps were not clean. The Internationaux de France bronze medalist notched 158.55 points and was ranked third in the Free Skating, but overall held on to second place at 250.02 points.

"Today was hard to me to fight, to I give the best I can tonight. For the moment, I'm just under tension and I'm still on ice, so I'm just happy to be there and skate," the Internationaux de France bronze medalist commented. "It's going to be my first Grand Prix Final. It wasn't the main goal of

my season. So I'm just going to take the experience of this competition to maybe get the podium in a few seasons," he added.

Performing to 'Hatikva', Sadovsky landed a quadruple Salchow, another quadruple Salchow (in combination with an under-rotated triple Salchow) as well as three clean triple jumps to set a personal best of 168.99 points. With a total of 247.50 points, he pulled up one spot.

"I feel I'm so really new to the senior Grand Prix circuit in general, so I'm happy that I could perform my long program really well. A little disappointed with my short, the silly mistakes that could be easily fixed and I'm hoping that this first success in the senior Grand Prix won't be my last," the Canadian told the press.

[Sergei Voronov](#) (RUS) slipped from third to fourth on 239.05 points. [Jason Brown](#) (USA) moved up from eighth to fourth at 231.27 points and [Sota Yamamoto](#) (JPN) came sixth (226.27 points).

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating [Standings Men](#).

NHK Trophy concludes Sunday with the Exhibition Gala.

Overall, 58 skaters/couples representing 11 ISU members competed at NHK Trophy November 22-24. The top 6 qualifiers of the Grand Prix series in each discipline will proceed to the Final in Turin (ITA), December 5 to 8, 2019. Full [entry lists, results, the General Announcement](#) of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series are available on [isu.org](http://isu.org).

### **Where to watch and follow the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2019?**

Viewers will be able to watch the Series either via their national broadcaster / channel and for countries where there are no broadcasters, the ISU will offer a live stream on the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) as of season 2019/20. You will find the full list in the [Where to watch news here](#).

Subscribe to the [ISU Newsletter](#) to receive the latest information and the "Where to Watch" news and you can also subscribe to the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) to receive notifications when live streams start or new videos are published.

Highlights, clips, interviews, behind the scenes:

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### **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2019/20**

[Skate America - Las Vegas \(USA\) – October 18 – 20](#)

[Skate Canada International – Kelowna \(CAN\) – October 25 – 27](#)

[Internationaux de France – Grenoble \(FRA\) – Novembre 1 – 3](#)

[SHISEIDO cup of China – Chongqing \(CHN\) – November 8 – 10](#)

[Rostelecom Cup – Moscow \(RUS\) – November 15 – 17](#)

[NHK Trophy – Sapporo \(JPN\) – November 22 – 24](#)

[ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final \(Senior & Junior\) – Torino \(ITA\) – December 5 – 8](#)

[The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series](#) started in 1995 (previously known as the ISU Champions Series) and consists of six international senior invitational events and the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. The skaters are seeded and invited to the six Grand Prix of Figure Skating events based on the results of the previous ISU World Figure Skating Championships. Competitors collect points in their ISU Grand Prix events towards the qualification for the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. Only the top six Skaters / Couples in each discipline can qualify for the Final.