

November 12, 2021

Tokyo, JPN

## **ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating 2021/22**

### **NHK Trophy, Day One**

2021 ISU World Ice Dance Champions [Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov](#) (RUS) and reigning World Pair Skating Champions [Anastasia Mishina/Alexander Galliamov](#) (RUS), 2018 Olympic silver medalist [Shoma Uno](#) (JPN) and 2018 Four Continents Champion [Kaori Sakamoto](#) (JPN) took the lead as the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating [NHK Trophy](#) opened in Tokyo (JPN) on Friday with the Short Programs and the Rhythm Dance.

#### **World Champions Mishina/Galliamov (RUS) claim lead in Pairs Short Program**

2021 ISU World Champions [Anastasia Mishina/Alexander Galliamov](#) of Russia skated into the lead in the Pairs Short Program, followed by teammates [Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov](#). Japan's [Riku Miura/Ryuichi Kihara](#) are currently ranked third.

Mishina/Galliamov put out a confident performance to "Esmeralda", hitting a triple twist, throw triple flip and side by side triple Salchow. The 2021 ISU World Champions from St. Petersburg picked up a level four for the twist, death spiral, lift, side by side combination spin and footwork to earn a personal best score with 78.40 points.

"This was probably the best short program of the season so far, because the short didn't go so well yet in the season," Mishina said. "This year we have got two Grand Prix that are towards the end, so it would have been too early for us to be in top shape from the very beginning. Now we are happy to start the Grand Prix."

"We now got into the competition rhythm, because at the beginning of the season we had a long break from our last competition, almost half a year and so we forgot these feelings a bit," Galliamov commented.

Tarasova/Morozov had to overcome a shaky start to their program named "Pygmalion and Galatea" when she fell on the triple toe, but recovered to produce a triple twist, throw triple loop and level-four elements. The two-time ISU European Champions tallied 75.78 points.

"We do not have the best impression about our performance as we made a big mistake. We did not show our best and we are bit upset," Morozov said. "But what is done is done and we will focus on the free skating tomorrow," he added. "Except for one, all elements were good and received plusses. It was nice to skate in front of so many fans, we were missing that," Tarasova noted.

Miura/Kihara's performance to "Hallelujah" featured a triple twist, triple toe and somewhat wobbly throw triple flip. The Skate America silver medalists set a new personal best with 73.98 points.

“Our twist lift was high and the level was very good. At Skate America, we were not in our best condition, so we could focus on this competition and I think that it was a good thing,” Miura shared.

“Compared to Skate America we wanted to make sure we nailed the things we missed, but we still made the same mistakes, but we became quite consistent in our performance. We didn’t expect to get a personal best,” Kihara said.

Skate Canada bronze medalists [Ashley Cain-Gribble/Timothy LeDuc](#) (USA) placed fourth at 70.75 points while [Audrey Lu/Misha Mitrofanov](#) (USA) are standing in fifth on 64.05 points.

### **Sinititsina/Katsalapov (RUS) edge out Chock/Bates (USA) in Rhythm Dance**

2021 ISU World Ice Dance Champions [Victoria Sinititsina/Nikita Katsalapov](#) of Russia edged two-time World medalists [Madison Chock/Evan Bates](#) (USA) for a narrow lead in the Rhythm Dance. Great Britain’s [Lilah Fear/Lewis Gibson](#) are third.

Sinititsina/Katsalapov delivered a fun dance to “You Can Leave Your Head On” and “Brick House”, completing intricate footwork. The 2020 ISU European Champions collected a level three for the Midnight Blues pattern, the rotational lift and the midline step sequence while the twizzles merited a level four for him and level three for her. The Muscovites netted 86.33 points.

“It was one of our best run-throughs we did. The Japanese crowd was amazing and there was a standing ovation for us and the others,” Katsalapov said. “We are so happy we did a good job today. We missed the people around us so much,” Sinititsina noted.

Performing to songs by Billie Eilish, Chock/Bates earned a level four for the pattern dance step sequence and the curve lift, while the midline step sequence and the Blues Pattern garnered a level three. The two-time ISU Four Continents Champions achieved a season’s best with 86.02 points.

“We had so much fun skating today, the crowd was incredible,” Chock told the press. “Just arriving at the rink before the event was fun. I just stopped and stood and looked at the crowd, because it was so amazing to see all the skating fans back in one place. It was our best one (performance) yet of the season, so we’re really pleased with how we skated.”

Fear/Gibson’s dynamic Disco medley was highlighted by fast twizzles and a whirling rotational lift. The multiple British Champions earned 76.43 points, a season’s best.

“It was a lot of fun and having a crowd is something we’ve missed so much. Just being out there on warm up and have them there cheering for us was such an honor and privilege,” Fear shared. “We just had the best time, a little technical error on the Blues, other than that we’re really happy with the performance. We felt it was a step up from Skate Canada,” she continued.

[Sara Hurtado/Kirill Khaliavin](#) (ESP) remain close to the podium in fourth place (76.40 points) followed by [Majorie Lajoie/Zachary Lagha](#) (CAN) on 74.45 points. [Kana Muramoto and Daisuke Takahashi](#) (JPN), the 2010 ISU World Champion turned Ice Dancer, placed sixth on 70.74 points.

## **Sakamoto leads teammate Kawabe in Japanese one-two captures Women's Short Program**

2018 Four Continents Champion [Kaori Sakamoto](#) of Japan captured the Women's Short Program. Teammate [Mana Kawabe](#) was the surprise of the day coming second ahead of Korea's 2020 Youth Olympic Games Champion [Young You](#).

Skating to "Now We Are Free" from "Gladiator", Sakamoto nailed a triple Lutz, double Axel, triple flip-triple toe and got a level four for her three spins. The 2020 NHK Trophy Champion scored a season's best with 76.56 points to take the lead.

"I was able to skate very cleanly and I was actually very calm throughout," Sakamoto said. "I was quite nervous and felt like I wasn't well grounded, but during the six minutes (warm up) I was able to get my usual jumps back and I was able to realize that I was back to my normal self."

Kawabe landed the only triple Axel in the Women's event and followed up with a triple Lutz-triple toe and a triple flip in her routine to "Shadow 5" and "Winter 1", an adaption of Vivaldi's Four Seasons. The 17-year-old posted a personal best of 73.88 points.

"My goal was to get 70 points, and I was expecting a score in the low 60s. I was happy and surprised that my score came out better than I expected," Kawabe commented. "I was able to do a good one (triple Axel) in the six minute warm up, so I was confident. I was very relieved after I landed it."

You crashed on her opening triple Axel but rallied to land a triple Lutz-triple toe and triple flip in her program to "Whirling Winds" from the "Leftovers" soundtrack by Ludovico Einaudi. She earned 68.08 points.

"I am very disappointed in my triple Axel today," the Skate America bronze medalist commented. "I did OK on the other stuff, but I had a wobble in my step sequence and in my ending pose, probably because I was nervous."

[Alysa Liu](#) (USA) is not far behind in fourth place at 67.72 points. She missed her triple Axel. [Eunsoo Lim](#) (KOR) finished fifth (65.23 points) while [Amber Glenn](#) (USA), who almost fell on her triple Axel attempt, rounds off the top six (63.43 points).

Skate America silver medalist [Daria Usacheva](#) (RUS) has withdrawn from the event following a bad fall in the warm up. According to a statement by the Figure Skating Federation of Russia, the athlete suffered a ligament tear in her right leg in the femur growth area. A full recovery is expected.

## **Uno (JPN) grabs lead in Men's Short Program**

Two-time ISU World silver medalist [Shoma Uno](#) of Japan grabbed the lead in the Men's Short Program. [Vincent Zhou](#) (USA) sits in second and Korea's [Junhwan Cha](#) placed third on the first day of competition.

Uno put out an excellent performance to two Oboe Concertos by Marcello and Vivaldi that was highlighted by a quad flip, quad toe-double toe, triple Axel and level-four spins. The 2018 Olympic silver medalist picked up 102.58 points, a season's best.

"To be really honest, it's not really about whether the performance was good or bad, but in my combination the (planned) triple (toe) became a double and I am very disappointed, because this season is still long, so now is not the time for me to try to play it safe. My first jump was a bit wobbly in the air. I wasn't really pushing myself enough," Uno explained.

Performing to "Starry, Starry Night", Zhou reeled off a quad Lutz-triple toe, quad Salchow and triple Axel, but the last two jumps were slightly underrotated (q). The Skate America Champion nevertheless achieved a season's best with 99.51 points.

"Actually, I felt a little bit shaky. My legs were a little bit nervous, and I think that was reflected in the quality of some of my spins and my triple Axel," Zhou shared. "I definitely understand why I didn't reach 100 points, but overall I'm pretty happy with my performance. I think it is a good point to move on to tomorrow."

Cha landed a quad Salchow, triple Lutz-triple loop and triple Axel in his routine to "Fate of the Clockmaker" and "Cloak and Dagger". The Korean Champion posted a season's best as well and got 95.92 points.

"I am happy with my performance. Last week I was at the Grand Prix in Italy, so this is my second one in a row. After arriving in Japan, I really had to find my condition and my rhythm again and I think worked hard and did my best for today," Cha noted.

[Makar Ignatov](#) (RUS) landed a rare quad loop and sits fourth at 90.54 points. [Sota Yamamoto](#) (JPN) finished fifth (86.05 points) followed by [Matteo Rizzo](#) (ITA) with 84.78 points.

The NHK Trophy continues Saturday with the Pairs Free Skating, Free Dance, Women's and Men's Free Skating.

Viewers are able to watch the [ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series](#) either via their national broadcaster / channel or via the [Skating ISU YouTube Channel](#) for countries where there is no broadcaster agreement in place. For more information please see [here](#).

The [General Announcement](#) of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series is available at the ISU website. The individual announcements are published under the respective events. For full entry lists and further information regarding the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series please visit [here](#). The ISU has an anti-Covid protocol in place to keep all participants of the events as safe as possible.

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series consists of six events: [Guaranteed Rate Skate America](#) in Las Vegas (USA) October 22-24, [Skate Canada International](#) in Vancouver (CAN) October 29-31, [Gran Premio d'Italia](#) in Turin (ITA) November 5-7, [NHK Trophy](#) in Tokyo (JPN) November 12-14, [Internationaux de France](#) in Grenoble (FRA) November 19-21 and [Rostelecom Cup](#) in Sochi (RUS) November 26-28. The [ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final](#) will take place in Osaka (JPN) December 9-12.

**About ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating**

The ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series started in 1995 (previously known as the ISU Champions Series) and consists of six invitational international senior events and the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final. The top six of the past World Championships are seeded. Competitors collect points in their 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.