

December 4, 2018

Lausanne, Switzerland

Top skaters take center stage in Vancouver

ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final Preview

Following six weeks of exciting competition, the top six Men, Ladies, Pairs and Ice Dance couples of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series 2018/19 will take center stage at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final in Vancouver (CAN) this week. A total of 36 skaters/couples from nine ISU members have qualified during the six events of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series – Skate America in Everett, WA, Skate Canada in Laval, QC, Grand Prix Helsinki (FIN), NHK Trophy in Hiroshima (JPN), Rostelecom Cup in Moscow (RUS) and Internationaux de France in Grenoble.

Overview of the competitors

Reigning World Champion [Nathan Chen](#) (USA) and World silver medalist [Shoma Uno](#) (JPN) lead the list of qualifiers in the Men's after striking gold in their two Grand Prix events. Chen is also the defending ISU Grand Prix Final Champion and Uno the defending silver medalist. Chen scored a season's best of 280.57 points at Skate America while Uno posted a season's best of 277.25 points at Skate Canada. [Michal Brezina](#) (CZE), who picked up two silver medals on the circuit, returns to the Final for the first time since 2011 (SBt 257.98). [Sergei Voronov](#) (RUS) will compete in his third Final (SB 254.28 points). The two newcomers this season are [Junhwan Cha](#) (KOR), who is also the first Korean male skater to qualify for the (senior) Grand Prix Final (SB 259.78 points) and [Keegan Messing](#) (CAN/SB 265.17 points) who replaces [Yuzuru Hanyu](#) (JPN). Hanyu had qualified with two victories, but had to pull out due to injury.

The Ladies competition is a Russian-Japanese affair. Reigning Olympic and ISU Grand Prix Final Champion [Alina Zagitova](#) (RUS) headlines the event and comes with a season's best of 238.43 points to Canada. She will face [Rika Kihira](#) (JPN), who entered the senior scene with a bang this year, winning her two Grand Prix events like Zagitova did (SB 224.31 points). The teenagers are up against World bronze medalist [Satoko Miyahara](#) (JPN/SB 219.71) and 2015 World Champion [Elizaveta Tuktamysheva](#) (RUS/SB 219.02), who competes in her first Final in four years. Prepare for some triple Axels of Tuktamysheva and Kihira. [Kaori Sakamoto](#) (JPN/SB 213.90) and [Sofia Samodurova](#) (RUS/SB 198.70) will compete in their first (senior level) Grand Prix Final.

The Pairs event features four newcomers. World bronze medalists [Vanessa James/Morgan Cipres](#) (FRA) qualified for their first Final after winning their two events and setting a season's best of 221.81 points. World silver medalists [Evgenia Tarasova/Vladimir Morozov](#) (RUS) compete in their third consecutive Final and hope to recapture the title they had won two years ago (SB 220.25). [Natalia Zabiako/Alexander Enbert](#) (RUS) took gold in their two events as did the French and Tarasova/Morozov and are debuting in the Final (SB 214.14). [Cheng Peng/Yang Jin](#) (CHN) return to the Final after missing it last year (SB 207.24) while [Nicole Della Monica/Matteo Guarise](#) (ITA/SB 203.83) and World Junior Champions [Daria Pavliuchenko/Denis Khodykin](#) (RUS/SB 190.01) qualified for the first time. Della Monica/Guarise are the first Italian Pair Skating team to make the Final.

The Ice Dance event promises an exciting and close competition. World silver medalists [Madison Hubbell/Zachary Donohue](#) (USA) want to take the Grand Prix Final crown, but have to expect stiff competition from [Alexandra Stepanova/Ivan Bukin](#) (RUS) and [Victoria Sinitsina/Nikita Katsalapov](#) (RUS). Hubbell/Donohue achieved a season's best of 200.82 points at Skate America while Stepanova/Bukin have 200.78 points from Finlandia Trophy and Sinitsina/Katsalapov picked up

200.38 points in France. [Charlene Guignard/Marco Fabbri](#) (ITA) travel with a season's best of 196.26 points to Vancouver. 2018 Four Continents Champions [Kaitlin Hawayek/Jean-Luc Baker](#) (USA/SB 184.63) and [Tiffani Zagorski/Jonathan Guerreiro](#) (RUS/SB 183.04) also qualified. Except for Hubbell/Donohue, all couples are new to the Final.

Prize Money

The prize money made available by the ISU is 180,000 US\$. The prize money is awarded to winners and placed skaters/couples as follows:

Men and Ladies, Pairs and Ice Dance (per couple)

1st place: US\$ 25,000

2nd place: US\$ 18,000

3rd place: US\$ 12,000

4th place: US\$ 6,000

5th place: US\$ 4,000

6th place: US\$ 3,000

Schedule of the event

Thursday, December 6	Junior Rhythm Dance, Junior Men, Junior Pairs & Junior Ladies Short Programs, Men's & Ladies Short Program
Friday, December 7	Junior Free Dance & Junior Men Free Skating, Rhythm Dance, Pairs Short Program, Men Free Skating
Saturday, December 8	Ladies & Junior Ladies Free Skating, Junior Pairs Free Skating, Free Dance, Pairs Free Skating
Sunday, December 9	Exhibition Gala

Full entry lists and results of the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Series are available [here](#). Follow the conversation with #JGPFigure and #GPFigure.