

# INTERNATIONAL SKATING UNION

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## **2004 ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships, Day Four**

The 2004 ISU World Junior Figure Skating Championships went on Thursday in The Hague, The Netherlands, with the Original Dance and the Men's Free Skating.

### **Ice Dancing, Original Dance**

Today's competition started with the Original Dance. The Original Dance of the 2003/2004 season is the "Swing Combo". The couples can choose any two or three of the following rhythms: Blues, Jive, Rock'n'Roll, Jitterbug, Swing and Boogie-Woogie.

In what was an interesting competition, Russia's Elena Romanovskaya/Alexander Grachev beat Junior Grand Prix Champions Nora Hoffmann/Attila Elek (HUN) to win the Original Dance and to take the overall lead. Morgan Matthews/Maxim Zavozin (USA) finished third. Romanovskaya/Grachev had opted for a Blues and Rock'n'Roll. The sensual Blues featured a hydro blade move and the diagonal step sequence. In their energetic "Jailhouse Rock", the two-time World Junior bronze medalists completed a dance spin combination and a fast side by side footwork line to earn marks from 5.1-5.6 for required elements and from 5.2 to 5.8 for composition. "It went well, and we did everything we can do", Romanovskaya said. "I think nobody is going to say that we placed first with a bad performance." Grachev already focused on the Free Dance. "I don't think about today's placement, we still have to do the Free Dance tomorrow. We have to focus on the Free Dance in order to skate it well. Today, we were quite confident. We especially like the Blues."

Hoffmann/Elek put out a solid OD to a Rock'n'Roll ("Great Balls of Fire") and a Blues ("Big Legged Woman") that included a side by side footwork line with excellent twizzles and a nice dance combination spin. Their marks ranged from 5.1 to 5.5 (A) and from 5.2 to 5.7 (B). "I think we did a good OD today", Elek commented. "Maybe the judges think that they (Romanovskaya/ Grachev) have more speed, because they don't do the same deep edges (as we)," Hoffmann added. "But it's far from over. We're going to fight for the first place tomorrow. We did our best in the OD and hopefully we'll do our best tomorrow (in the Free Dance)."

Dancing to Rock'n'Roll, Blues and Jitterbug, Matthews/Zavozin showed a good rotational lift with a change of direction as well as a dance spin with change of position, but their twizzles at the end of the side by side footwork line were a bit out of unison as he came close to her. The Junior Grand Prix Final bronze medalists received marks up to 5.4 for required elements and up to 5.6 for presentation. The team was very pleased with their performance and the result. "We felt very good about our OD", Matthews told the press. "From beginning to end, we didn't lose energy." Referring to the twizzles, Zavozin explained: "I just came a little close, but it wasn't a big deal."

Natalia Mikhailova/Arkadi Sergeev (RUS) came fourth with an enjoyable performance to Rock'n'Roll and Blues and still have a shot at the podium.

### **Men, Free Program**

The Men's event finished with the final Free Skating. First to skate of the top contenders was overnight leader Andrei Griazev of Russia. The 18-year-old from St. Petersburg hit a huge triple Axel-triple toeloop combination right away in his program to a selection of Fellini soundtracks and pumped his fist. Another big triple Axel followed, but then Griazev doubled his Lutz and stepped out of a triple flip. He recovered to hit a triple Salchow-triple toeloop combination, a triple loop and a solid double Axel. His spins featured good positions and he put a lot of energy in his straight line footwork towards the end of the program. The marks ranged from 5.4 to 5.7 for technical merit and from 5.6 to 5.8 for presentation.

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Jordan Brauning (USA) was next and opened his program to "Patton" with a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and a triple flip-triple toeloop combination. The American put down his hand on his triple Axel, but he landed three more triples and his combination spin was very well centred and fast. The 17-year-old scored marks up to 5.6 for both technical merit and presentation which put him in second place at this time. His teammate Evan Lysacek followed right after him. Skating to Sergei Rakhmaninov's Second Piano Concerto, the two-time World Junior silver medalist produced a triple Axel-double toeloop combination, then he did a three turn out of his second Axel and added another double toeloop. The Four Continents bronze medalist continued with a triple Lutz-triple toeloop combination and three more triples, but he stepped out of a double toe that he did in combination with a triple flip. That meant he had done four combinations, which is not allowed. Lysacek's marks ranged from 5.3 to 5.7 for technical merit and from 5.4 to 5.8 for presentation, and he lost on a three to six split on the panel to Griazev, winning his third silver medal at Junior Worlds. Griazev took the title, his first medal at Junior Worlds after a 14<sup>th</sup> place in 2002, the only time he competed at Junior Worlds before. Brauning captured the bronze medal in what was his first time at Junior Worlds. Last year's bronze medalist Alban Preaubert of France, who stood in third place following the Short Program, missed a triple Axel and also fell on a double Axel to slip to fourth overall. "It was a very important competition for me, I felt a lot of responsibility", Griazev told the post event news conference. "It was tough, but almost everything worked well. I feel a bit tired now, but to have won the gold medal is a dream come true."

Lysacek obviously was disappointed. "It was hard for me to get through this week", he said. "I've had a great season, all the competitions so far have been going really well. I had a lot of confidence coming in (here), but I was tired from all my travels this year. Tonight I just tried my hardest. Second again - I'll take it. Maybe I just wasn't meant to win this competition." For Lysacek, it was the last year in Juniors. Brauning commented: "I'm just really happy to be here. It's my first time (to compete at Junior Worlds). A place in the top five was a goal, to be in the top three is like he (Griazev) says really a dream come true. I hope to be back next year and do better. I skated pretty much as well as I could skate."

The Championships continue tomorrow (Friday) with the Ladies Short Program and the Free Dance. For full results, please see: [www.isu.org](http://www.isu.org)

The New Judging System, which was developed following a decision of the ISU Congress in 2002, was used for the 2003 Grand Prix of Figure Skating series and Grand Prix Final. As the ISU Council prepares the New Judging System for a Congress decision in June, the interim 6.0 system will be used at ISU Championships. The New Judging System received widespread support from skaters and officials during the Grand Prix series and the Council will propose that it be included in ISU Regulations from 2004/5 onwards. The ISU's Figure Skating Member Federations will debate and vote on the proposal at the Congress in June.

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