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Andrews holds on to top ladies at Challenge Skate

Pulkinen topples men's field by more than 31 points in Salt Lake City

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The junior ladies medalists (L-R): Silver medalist Kaitlyn Nguyen, gold medalist Starr Andrews and bronze medalist Alexia Paganini. -Sarah Arnold

The leaders entering the final day of competition at the [2016 Novice and Junior Challenge Skate](#) held on to take the top podium spots Sunday in Salt Lake City.

Junior ladies

Starr Andrews extended her lead to win the junior ladies event -- a big improvement from the eighth-place finish she earned in the novice ladies competition at this event last season.

"I made sure I was prepared this year," Andrews said. "I trained two programs in a row at home so that I would be ready for the altitude. It feels good to be able to do what I did in my performances this year."

Skating to music from *Black Swan*, Andrews opened her free skate performance with a triple salchow-triple toe-double toe combination worth 10.70 points. She earned 101.47 points for the segment, en route to a total score of 158.94.

Despite a fall on her second triple lutz attempt, Kaitlyn Nguyen turned in the top free skate of the day, earning 103.59 points for her "Chess" performance. She opened with a triple lutz-half loop-triple salchow combination and then went on to complete six additional jumps -- five of which took place in the second half of the program. She finished with 155.33 points to take silver.

Alexia Paganini rallied from a sixth-place short program to round out the podium. Her performance to *The Nutcracker* included five triple jumps, including a triple toe-triple toe combination, and two Level 4 spins. She earned 95.19 points for the segment and 140.32 overall.

Junior men's

A coaching change over the offseason proved positive for Camden Pulkinen, who won the junior men's title by more than 31 points.

"This season, I moved to Colorado Springs to work with Tom Zakrajsek and Becky Calvin," Pulkinen said. "It's shown me what training really is. I've seen so many different kinds of skaters come through and train, and I can watch them and learn different things from all of them. I want to be a blend of all of them -- a great jumper, a great spinner, a great artistic skater. The environment there has really helped my overall package as a skater."

Pulkinen, who relocated from Scottsdale, Arizona, won the free skate in Salt Lake City by nearly 20 points, earning a segment score of 114.66. Although he fell on an opening triple axel, Pulkinen stood up on his remaining elements during his routine to "Sarabande Suite" by Globus. He completed four jump elements in the second half of the program on his way to a total score of 178.78 points.

Mathew Graham came back from fourth place after the short program to win silver with 147.39 points. Skating to "Make It Rain" by Ed Sheeran, Graham's free skate featured six triple jumps, including a triplelutz-double toe-double loop combination. He earned a segment score of 95.03 to finish 1.28 points ahead of bronze medalist Mitchell Friess, who finished the week with 146.11. Friess earned a free skate score of 92.15.

Junior Pairs

Earning a total score of 136.29, Gabriella Marvaldi and Daniel Villeneuve won the junior pairs competition by more than 23 points. The duo, who teamed up prior to this season, will make their international debut at the Junior Grand Prix (JGP) event in Estonia later this month.

"This event definitely boosted our confidence going into the rest of our season," Marvaldi said.

"I think now we're going to go home and work on our footwork and the movements of our choreography before the next event," Villeneuve added. "Our elements were all pretty solid here, so we're very happy."

Skating to music from *Les Miserables* with impressive speed, Marvaldi and Villeneuve completed an opening split-double twist and side-by-side double loops to earn a segment score of 86.15.

Isabella Gamez and Griffin Schwab landed a throw double salchow and throw double loop in their free to music from Stravinsky's *The Firebird*. They earned 74.66 points for the segment and 112.81 points total. Juliette Erickson and Nathan Grundhofer won the bronze with a segment total of 83.19, finishing the event with an elegant free skate to music from *Beauty and the Beast* worth 53.93 points.

Novice ice dance

Sophia Elder and Christopher Elder won the novice ice dance title with a total score of 74.27. Their "Masquerade Waltz" free dance included Level 4 curve and rotational lifts and a Level 4 twizzle sequence. They finished with a segment score of 54.16. Although they won the title by more than seven points, the siblings admit they didn't feel their best throughout their final performance.

"I think the altitude here made a difference, and so did our nerves," Christopher said.

"I think we learned a lot here, though," Sophia added. "Going forward, I think it would be great to get in some altitude training and keep learning how to stay calm in competition. I think learning from what we did here is really going to help us moving forward in our career."

In third place after the pattern dance, Katarina DelCamp and Maxwell Gart turned in a solid free dance to music from *Slumdog Millionaire* to win the silver medal with 66.87 points. Their performance included two Level 4 elements, a straight line lift and combination spin for a segment score of 51.13. Rebounding from a sixth-place finish in the pattern dance, Gianna Buckley and J.T. Michel performed the second best free dance of the event, earning 51.34 points for the segment, en route to the bronze medal with an overall total of 62.90.



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