

Japan's Hanyu Wins Olympic Figure Skating Gold With 2 Falls

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Hanyu won Olympic gold Friday after a free program event that saw big errors from all leading medal contenders.

After winning the team short program earlier in the Games and going on to smash the individual short program world record on Thursday, the 19-year-old Hanyu was one of the gold medal favorites.

But in the free program Hanyu fell twice — once on his opening quadruple salchow and again on a more straightforward triple flip — to score a total of 280.09 points. Canadian world champion Patrick Chan, the hot medal favorite going into the Games, failed to make up the four-point overnight deficit with an equally shaky skate that forced him to settle for silver with 275.62.

"I was trying not to think about winning a gold medal, but I couldn't deflect the pressure,

which was massive," Hanyu said.

"I'm so proud of this feat as a Japanese. The Olympics is so wild and unpredictable. I've never been this nervous for a competition in my entire life. I'm upset with the performance I had, but I left everything I had out there," he added.

Chan was dejected.

"Feeling the medal slip away was definitely a lingering thought. I'm disappointed, but life goes on," he said.

An unlikely bronze went to Kazakhstan's Denis Ten, who scored 255.10 for the 20-year-old's first major international medal.

The event was overshadowed by the controversial pre-competition withdrawal of Russian star Yevgeny Plushenko, who suffered a back injury in the warm-up and promptly announced his retirement.

The session will be remembered as a missed opportunity for Chan, who passed up the chance for revenge after Hanyu beat him in December's Grand Prix Finals.

The 23-year-old Canadian nailed his opening quad but the routine went downhill from there, with a touchdown on his following jump and an all-out fall later in the Vivaldi-inspired performance.

Chan had needed a segment score of 182.58 to snatch the gold medal – a score that should have been within the reach of a skater who won the Trophée Eric Bompard in November with 196.75 points.

The most impressive performance of an unspectacular evening was that of Kazakhstan's Ten, who appeared to be totally out of the reckoning after the short program, where he lingered in ninth place.

Off the ice, Plushenko's dramatic withdrawal on Thursday continued to resonate, with national debate raging on why he was allowed to go to Sochi in the first place. Just hours before Friday's free program the debate even drew the attention of President Vladimir Putin, who defended Plushenko and pointed out the 31-year-old played a big part in helping Russia win gold in the team event earlier in the Games.

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