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Jason the dream: Brown recaps hectic summer

Skater debuts programs, takes vacation, attends Champs Camp

Posted 8/29/13 by Jason Brown, special to icenetwork



Jason Brown enjoys some paddle boarding during his California vacation. -courtesy of Jason Brown

Jason Brown, a two-time medalist at the world junior championships, will make his senior international debut this fall, and later will attempt to earn a spot on the U.S. Olympic team. He's keeping a season-long blog for icenetwork.com.

SUMMER TRAINING

It shocks me to say that summer training has officially ended. I have no clue where the time went, but I am so excited for the fall to begin. :) Looking back at all the changes that happened this summer amazes me, but they could not have worked out any better. For as long as I can remember, my coach Kori [Ade] has wanted to make up a summer skating "camp" with both off-ice and on-ice classes, various lessons, having ice all day, etc. ... and she was able to do just that at our new training home in Monument.

Something really neat about Colorado is how people incorporate such an active, healthy and outdoorsy lifestyle into their everyday lives. The atmosphere makes you push yourself; it motivates you to get up and take a run or ride your bike. The mountains are beautiful, the weather is gorgeous, and the altitude definitely whips you in shape. Since I moved to Colorado Springs at the end of a two-week break from skating, I pretty much started at zero endurance. Then, I slowly got back into skating and when we started my programs, I could barely make it through my footwork. Even though I still need more time before I totally feel trained to make it through my rigorous free skate, I remember where I started, and I'm proud of how far I've come.

BROADMOOR OPEN, GLACIER FALLS

My first competition of the year was the Broadmoor Open in Colorado Springs. It was strange to compete in this event and not have to travel anywhere. For me, the first event of the season is always a reminder of what competition feels like. It's not that you forget the feeling, but it takes an event to remember what it is like performing with adrenaline and in front of a panel of judges, with only a six-minute warmup.

What I did this year, which has been different than other years, is progressively add triples into my program when I compete. For example, for Broadmoor, instead of doing all planned elements, we planned to make certain jumps doubles. By Glacier Falls, we added in a few more of the planned elements, but, yet again, didn't do everything planned. I've truly loved approaching the summer events this way, because it makes the program feel more manageable.

Finally, summer competitions are always the best for seeing friends across the country that you rarely get to see during the year. I love getting to meet up with them, cheer them on and see their new, spectacular programs they've been working hard on.

MINI SUMMER VACATION

After my free skate at Glacier Falls, my two-day summer vacation began. It was extremely nice to spend time with my family in California, especially since I've moved away from home. We went paddle boarding, bike riding up and down the ocean's shore, walked around the shops of Venice Beach, spent some time laying around the pool and just relaxing, soaking up as much sun and family time as I could get. :)

Vacation's awesome, but to be completely honest, those two days were the perfect amount of time I needed to relax and recover. After the end of that second day, I couldn't wait to get back on the ice to do what I love to do and take the next steps as we move into the Olympic competitive international season.

TRAVELING WITH KORI'S KIDS

Now that Kori has two kids, 3-year-old Athena and 4-month-old Kaia, traveling is a little more challenging. Trying to keep the older one entertained while the baby has to get fed, or figuring out how to fold the stroller while Kori has her hands full is always an adventure. It's been so much fun, and I pretty much laugh the entire way from security to our seats on the plane.

The funniest thing that has happened in the last two times we've traveled together was the compliments and comments people direct at us when we're going through the airport. I've gotten, "You guys have such beautiful children!" or "Wait for your daddy to help you get on the plane!" How do you respond to comments like these?! I guess what shocks me the most is that only eight short years ago, when I traveled alone with Kori, people would mistake her for being my mother -- how did I go from her son to her husband?!

I am definitely not the father, but I do hope one day I will be the father of such wonderful kids.

STARSTUCK

I am the type of person who gets extremely starstruck and nervous around high-level skaters as well as any remarkable athlete: my palms get sweaty, my thoughts begin to race, and I almost always regret not saying anything, but the cycle continues to repeat itself. This happened numerous times this summer, but I am going to tell you about two specific incidents.

First, when I was out to dinner with my roommates and I saw Christopher Dean with his kids, I kept contemplating whether or not to say hi. I didn't, and I regret that still to this day. He was even sitting at the table right next to us! I was so starstruck that I couldn't even turn my head, haha!

Next was when I saw Michelle Kwan at the rink in Artesia, Calif., when I was there for practice ice for Glacier Falls. While I was on the ice, Michelle came to the rink, and I immediately stopped what I was doing and skated over to my coaches and told them, "I don't think I can leave the boards!" Clearly, they made me, but any time I would take off for a jump or land, I would have to look away.

After the session, I was stretching outside talking to my mom, and Michelle and her sister, Karen, passed right by me. I just froze. I wanted to take a picture with the two of them so badly. It would have been so easy just to say hello and tell her how much I admire her, but I couldn't move or speak.

So, the moral of this story is, for anyone reading this who looks up to another skater, or any other person, don't ever miss your chance to ask for a picture or an autograph or just to say hi because from my experience, you'll always regret it.

CHAMPS CAMP

I had an incredible time at Champs Camp last week. Since it was my first time, I had no expectations; I was just dying to be a part of it!

Camp began with the Team USA group photo, which for years I've seen in SKATING Magazine, dreaming of the day I would get the honor to be in that photo. Then came Scott Hamilton's keynote speech. He told us about his life, his struggles and his triumphs, his greatest successes and how he grew from his failures. I sat there in awe, taking in his every word. He has the rare ability to capture an audience and make you feel like he is talking directly to you.. He inspires everyone to become the best person he or she can be, both on and off the ice. He is the definition of a true champion and someone I strive to emulate.

The following day, all the skaters performed their short programs. One thing unique to Champs Camp is that no one, other than the officials and select staff, is allowed to watch the practices or performances, not even the other skaters. So, when I went out to do my short program, I had no idea what the setting of the simulated competition was going to look like. It turned out that it was extremely chill: Officials scattered in the stands watching, talking amongst themselves and taking notes on their thoughts of the program.

The following day were the free skates, and the last two days were on-ice evaluations and talking about Sochi.

Throughout the week, we all had individual schedules where we met one on one with a nutritionist and a sports psychologist, had media training, met with packaging specialists (discussing costumes, "hair," etc.), did photo/video promo shoots and met with judges and U.S. officials to go over our new programs.

On Friday night, we had a team-building exercise where we had 30 minutes to make costumes out of duct tape and T-shirts. Each team had a different theme their costumes had to represent. The punk rock group beat the Spanish influenza by a slim margin to win the challenge!

The camp was such a special experience, and I can't begin to express how fortunate I feel to have been a part of it this year.

THE FALL SEASON IS BEGINNING

I started college this week! I'm only taking two classes this semester, English and Japanese. :)

Not only did school start this week, but so did the international skating season, with the first Junior Grand Prix event, in Riga, Latvia. Ten U.S. skaters are representing Team USA in all four disciplines.

Competition takes place Thursday through Saturday. Huge shout-out to my training mate, Jordan Moeller, who is competing in junior men's. He has been looking incredible, so I'm really pumped for him. Everyone, please send him good vibes along with the entire team. ... GO TEAM USA!



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