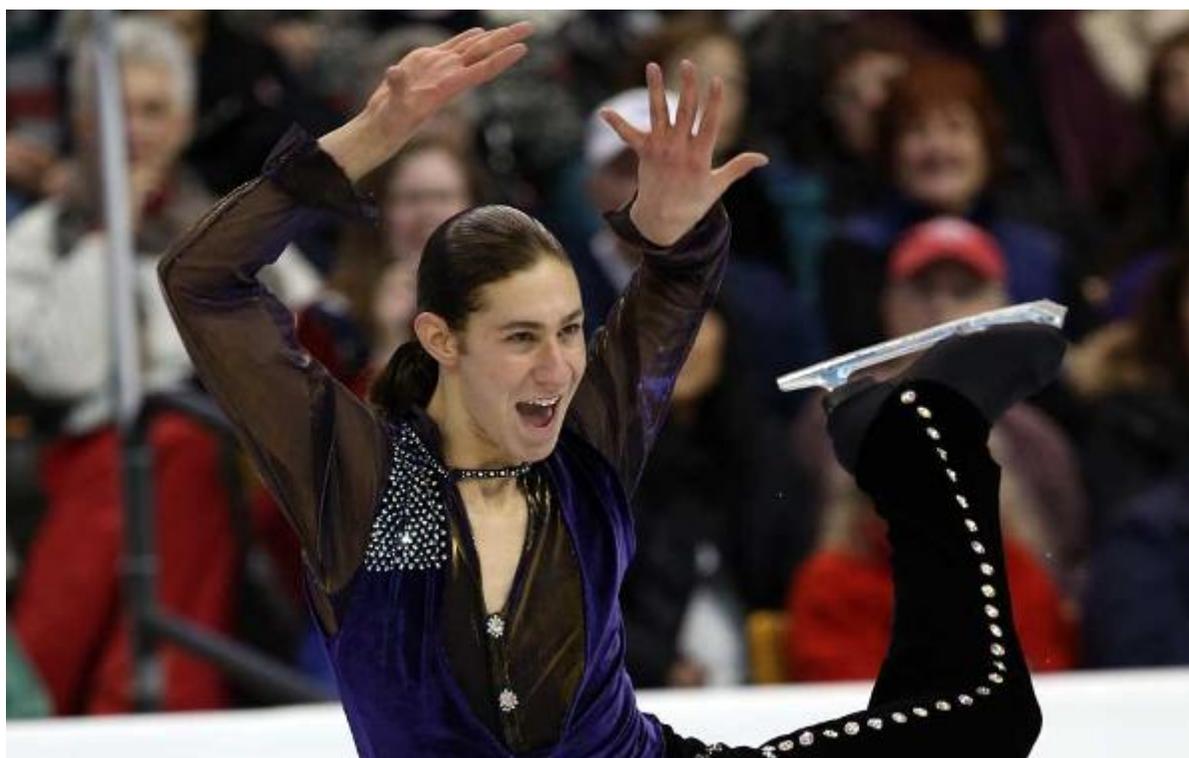


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Boston Beans: Brown is most happy fella

Scimeca, Knierim post personal best en route to pewter

Posted 1/12/14 by Lynn Rutherford and Amy Rosewater, special to icenetwork



Jason Brown kept himself in the discussion for one of the two available Olympic spots, accruing 87.47 points en route to a third-place finish. -Jay Adef

Jason Brown has been on a natural high in Boston all week, and why not? After his first senior Grand Prix season, he owns a fourth-place finish at Skate America and a bronze medal (and standing ovation) from Trophée Eric Bompard. While veterans like 28-year-old Jeremy Abbott are taking nerve-racking final shots at U.S. Olympic teams, Brown's senior career still lies ahead.

But the preternaturally cheerful, even-tempered teen thinks his time could be now.

"I know my goals are in the next couple of years," said Brown, who sits third after the short program here. "At the same time, who knows what can happen? If I make the Olympic team and I'm able to skate clean, I could end up on the podium. Maybe not one or two but that third spot, who knows?"

And if he doesn't qualify for Sochi, that's OK, too. There are other possibilities, other dreams, like the 2014 World Junior Figure Skating Championships, to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in March. It's all good.

"It is my last year (of junior eligibility), and I would love to make the most of it and win that junior title," Brown said. "I've gotten the bronze and silver, so there's still more to do on the junior circuit. I would also love to go to Four Continents, or maybe even Four Continents and junior worlds, if not the Olympics."

Kori Ade, who has coached Brown since he was small, claims the skater has his ups and down like everyone else. They're just harder to spot.

"With Jason, the glass is always full," she said. "I think that's why we're a good team, because I'm a lot that way. We're resourceful and make the best of it and try to find a silver lining."

Ade, who moved with Brown from the Chicago area last spring to train in Monument, Colo., credits the skaters' parents for his sweet and optimistic nature. She cites an incident a few days before Brown left for Boston: Changing lanes on Colorado's I-25 highway, her pupil spun out and hit a median three times, wrecking his car.

"He called his parents," Ade said. "He said, 'You should be angry, I totaled the car.' His mom, Marla, said, 'No, it's an old car, we're happy you're OK.' They always put a positive swing on things."

Positive as Brown and Ade may be, they have no control over the judges at Sunday's free skate. Without a quad, he will have to skate clean and maximize points on his triple Axels, spins and steps to have any shot at one of the two U.S. men's Olympic spots.

"He was not thought of initially for Sochi for two reasons: One was the quad and the other just that he was a first-year senior," Ade said.

"He's got the spins and steps, and he's got the GOE (grade of execution) marks if he skates the way he can. It will come down to components. If he is rewarded for transitions and skating skills, I feel we haven't seen the highest score yet."

So, will the judges reward Brown or hold back?

"I'd be very disappointed if they did that," Ade said. "Three years ago when Jason was a first-year senior (at the U.S. championships), I felt he was underscored for his transitions and his choreography. I approached a few judges and said, 'Help me understand this.' Their answer was, 'He is not going to get the scores until he has a triple Axel.' I respect that. But when it comes to choreography and transitions and performance, Jason is at the top. I know he is."

- Lynn Rutherford

Scimeca, Knierim post personal best

After placing second at the 2013 U.S. Figure Skating Championships and finishing ninth at worlds, the highest placement for a U.S. team in those championships, Alexa Scimeca and Chris Knierim placed fourth at the U.S. championships this year. They were a disappointing fifth in the short program but rallied to post a personal-best 124.99 in the free skate and place fourth overall.

"We had to come back from the short," Scimeca sad. "We were disappointed about that, but it made us zone in and focus on what we needed to. We just promised each other before we started the program that whatever happens, we are going to be grateful that we are here. We just enjoyed the moment. It was a great skate."

Although the couple did place as high this year, they had a respectable showing, especially since Knierim suffered a broken bone in his leg last summer that kept him off the ice for about a month.

- *Amy Rosewater*



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