



## NEWS

### The Inside Edge: Farris and Brown, friendly rivals

Just 22 days apart in age, both hope to go to 2014 worlds together

By Sarah S. Brannen and Drew Meekins, special to icenetwork.com

(08/01/2012) - **Jason Brown** and **Joshua Farris**, both 17, have been rivals since they were 12, trading places on podiums at the intermediate, novice and junior levels. (Although they were born in different years, Brown is just 22 days older than Farris). Last season, Brown won the **Junior Grand Prix Final**, with Farris taking the bronze medal. At the **2012 World Junior Championships** they switched places; Farris won silver, missing gold by a hair, and Brown took the bronze.

Brown, who is from Chicago, has spent the last month training in Colorado Springs, Colo. We met up in Drew's apartment for an interview, with Sarah chiming in by Skype. Brown is bubbly, enthusiastic and very, very talkative. Farris is soft-spoken and a little bit shy at first.

"I've known Josh since we were juveniles," Brown said. "We were both 10. I looked up to him when I was a juvenile; he won the year I didn't make final round. I remember being in the stands watching him. He's so amazing, his jumps are so good. He's such a great skater. We get along well -- no fights!"

Both boys laugh at the idea that they could be enemies off the ice.

"We're not **Evan [Lysacek]** and **Johnny [Weir]**," Farris said.

"It's one of those things where you're very focused during the event, and then when it's over, you talk, it's normal," Brown said.

We asked each boy to say what he likes about the other's skating.

"I could go on and on," Brown said. "His jumps are to die for."

"Why, thank you," Farris said.

"His triple Axel is, to me, the best in the world," Brown said. "I could watch it over and over. And his skating skills are amazing."

Farris laughed. "I'm trying to get to where yours are," he said.

Brown went on. "When I was younger, Josh was like a rubber band and super flexible, and Kori (Brown's coach) would say, 'Look at that, look how flexible he is.' And that's why I became so flexible."

"I love the expression you have on the ice, the carriage you have on the ice," Farris said to Brown. "When you step on the ice, you grab everybody; everybody stares at you."

It's probable that not many people realize that Farris does a lot of his own choreography. He choreographed some of his short program last year and about half of his free skate. For the coming season, he choreographed his own short program to a Bach cello suite.



Jason Brown (left) and Joshua Farris laugh through a Skype call with Sarah S. Brannen. (Drew Meekins)

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"I've always loved that piece," Farris said. "There's one particular moment I really wanted to skate to. I actually did pretty much the whole short program. Damon [Allen] did the footwork and helped me polish it up."

We asked Farris if he had ever choreographed for anyone else.

"No, I'm kind of shy when it comes to other people," he said bashfully.

We asked Farris to explain his process.

"When I first listen to the music, I shut the door and listen to it in my room for two or three hours," Farris said. "I get the music in my head, get the flow of it, then try things on the floor because I don't want to try something that looks extremely ridiculous on the ice. And then I try it on the ice."

Brown started laughing when Farris talked about looking ridiculous and told a story about working with his choreographer, **Rohene Ward**.

"There's a window at our rink," he said, "And all the moms and people sit behind it and watch. Rohene decides to start our short program *right* in the window. And it starts with a hip roll. All the mothers were *dying*. Rohene was like, 'Go more full out, more full out!'"

Ward has been choreographing Brown's programs for years.

"I love working with him," Brown said with enthusiasm. "He's so talented. He's amazing."

Ward spends a lot of the year touring in Europe, so we asked how he works with Brown when he's in the States.

"It depends on the day or what mood he's in," Brown said. "We always do something with choreography, and then we'll work on jumps -- like we'll work on choreography into a jump. We could work on five seconds of a program for an hour, so that's really fun and exciting. It's never boring. There's so much more he's giving you, and you think it can't get better or harder; he's always pushing you. I love working with him."

We wondered if Brown has any interest in doing choreography, like Farris does.

"I don't know if I'm good at it," he said. "I love skating to music, I love making up transitions and stuff, but I wouldn't ever trust myself to make up my own program. Sometimes I would choreograph a part and not tell Rohene, and then he would ask 'Who changed this?' and I would say, 'I have no idea!'"

Our next question was a tricky one. If each could change something about the other to improve their skating, what would it be? Both squirmed, clearly reluctant to say anything critical about each other.

"I would probably say to not get down on yourself that much," Brown finally said. "He's so good, it's just unbelievable what he does. He gets very hard on himself, which is unbelievable. He's 17 and popping off quad toes left and right."

"I think everything you do is great," Farris said to Brown. "The only thing is, on your Axel, you need to have a smaller free leg. He goes out too far and he has a hard time snapping quick. It'll come easier."

We wondered what the two youngsters would like to take from some of the current top men, if they could.

"I love how smooth **Patrick [Chan]** is on the ice," Brown said. "And he has perfect posture. I would love to steal that. And **Daisuke [Takahashi]** -- I would like to take a little of his style."

"I love Daisuke's carriage on the ice," Farris said. "He's fun to watch. I want to be that entertaining. I really want **Jeremy [Abbott]**'s fluidity, his grace across the ice, and that's what I've been trying to work towards. He's my idol for the second mark."

Having talked about Olympians, we started talking about the Olympics. Brown has been staying at the Olympic Training Center in the Springs, and he enjoyed meeting some summer Olympians before they left for London.

"The gymnastics men's camp was there, so that was amazing, being in the dining hall with them," Brown said. "Athletes come in for physical therapy, and one girl is like, 'Oh, I pulled a muscle fencing.' And then she said, 'I hurt my shoulder shooting.' And then she was talking about running! She was a pentathlete. I like trying to guess what sport people do. And everyone was saying, 'When do you leave for London?'"

We all agreed that it would be nice if there were more than one medal per discipline in skating, as there are in other sports like gymnastics.

"I think they should add events, a jump event and a spin event," Farris said.

"I know, wouldn't it be nice to go to the Olympics for spins!" Brown said.

Having finished one-two at so many competitions, we asked if the boys had ever imagined finishing in first and second at the senior level at the U.S. championships.

"That would be a dream come true," Brown said. "That's how I always hoped and dreamed it would be. It would be unbelievable. And then we could go to worlds!"

"2014 Worlds, we're going," Farris said. "That's our goal."

"That would be the best," Brown said. "That would be so exciting."

In the meantime, both boys are planning to compete on the Junior Grand Prix circuit for one more year. They could have gotten a Grand Prix assignment, so we asked them to explain their decision.

"Kori and I were talking about it, thinking about what we were going to do," Brown said. "Going into junior worlds, I knew I was going to stay junior another year. It's to do with how the world rankings are done, and we wanted to make sure I had a cushion with the world rankings. The hope is that I'll skate senior next year. I don't know why I would stay junior the Olympic year."

"At first I really wanted to do a Grand Prix," Farris said. "When I found out I would only have gotten one, I was on the fence about it. I talked to my coaches about it, and we came to the conclusion that if I did one and didn't do well, I didn't want to take that risk of not getting one next year. Plus, we get even more experience. I'm satisfied with my decision. We're young and we've got plenty of time."

"And we're looking toward 2018," said Brown. "It would be so exciting!"

Enjoy the Olympics everybody!

Sarah and Drew

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