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Motor City morsels: Rippon's boot meets Waterloo

Jackson GM comes to skater's rescue; Patient Brown works toward quad

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Adam Rippon was greatly appreciative of the trouble Raj Misir went through to fix the broken heel of his skate. -Getty Images

Waterloo has a new hero: Raj Misir, the Jackson Ultima general manager who saved the day for [Adam Rippon](#), who sits third at [2013 Skate America](#) after a career-best short program.

Misir was strolling Toronto's east side Thursday when news reached him that the heel of one of Rippon's boots broke off at the end of the skater's practice.

"I tried a quad, and the [right] boot snapped," Rippon said, and then added, "I was one step away from bubble gum and plastic ropes."

"I got a panic call," Misir said. "The factory in Waterloo was working on special boots for Adam; his heel height has to be a quarter of an inch lower [than normal]. So I went back to Waterloo, picked up the new

skates and got the blades mounted so he could have them for Friday's practice."

That's far from the end of the story, though.

"I got [to the skaters' hotel] about 10:30 at night, and the coach, Rafael [Arutunian], felt it would be better if we could get the old skates fixed up, to get Adam through this weekend," Misir said. "After I saw the skates, I realized I didn't have all of the equipment. The boot was pretty bad."

Luckily, the Walmart in nearby Deerborn, Mich., was open until 11 p.m.

"I had the staff there, plus some shoppers, running around picking up glue and tools for me, so I could get out of there before they closed," he said. "I was working on it in the hotel pretty late, so my next door neighbors heard drilling at 2 a.m."

Misir took the boot apart, put a metal plate inside and screwed the heel back to the sole. Soon after daylight, he was off again, this time to Home Depot.

"I bought a grinder to shave off the edges (of the new screws) so they would be nice and smooth," he said.

By Friday's early afternoon practice, it was mission accomplished: Rippon was back in his boots and had a solid session, landing several triple Axels.

"A little problem with my boot wasn't going to stop me skating," Rippon said. "I would have hopped around on one foot if I had to. ... Luckily, my guys at Jackson came through for me. They're the best guys."

"It's all part of our customer service," Misir said.

Patience is a virtue for Brown

When Olympic champion Evan Lysacek withdrew from Skate America with a hip injury, [Jason Brown](#) got the call for his first-ever senior Grand Prix. The 18-year-old was fresh off winning a silver medal at the Nebelhorn Trophy in Oberstdorf, Germany.

"It was a Monday, I had just gotten back from Nebelhorn, and it was a whole bunch of emotions," Brown said. "At first, it didn't kick in. It took a couple of days, and then it was, 'This is really happening, I'm going, I'm going.'"

Brown's experience at Nebelhorn -- where he shared the ice with one of his longtime idols, Nobunari Oda -- helped prepare him to compete here, and compete well. He stands second after the short program with a personal-best 83.78 points.

"It was a huge confidence builder," he said. "I was on every practice ice with [Oda] and in every warm-up group with him. He was super-kind on the ice, in the sense he wasn't staring me down or looking down at me. It was cool to feel he looked at me as an equal."

Brown, who mastered the triple Axel last season and now includes two in his free skate to music from *Riverdance*, doesn't have a quad in his arsenal yet. He still has a few tricks up his sleeve, though, including a "Tano" triple (one arm overhead) and combinations ending with both arms behind his back.

"I've never had a huge technical element mark (TES), so it's really about getting other points and features and boosting my grades of execution (GOE) where I can," Brown said. "I am doing the 'Tano' in both programs and a behind-the-back double toe on my triple flip-double toe combination in the long."

Brown and his primary coach, Kori Ade, moved from the Chicago area to Colorado this spring, in part so the skater could take advantage of training facilities at the Colorado Springs-based Olympic Training Center (OTC). They train at a rink in Monument, where Brown also works with Ryan Jahnke and Eddie Shipstad.

"I'm working a lot with [Jahnke] on skating skills," Brown said. "He does these cool exercises. During your [run-throughs], you wear a big band and he drags you along. It's really intense and really fun."

Brown works twice a week with Shipstad, with the focus on quad toe and Salchow.

"I've learned so much from the [triple] Axel about being patient, and taking the time [a jump] needs to develop and grow," Brown said. "When the quad is good, we will put it in the program. That's what happened with the Axel, four days before the [2012] Junior Grand Prix Final."



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