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Brown focused on getting healthy after setback

2015 U.S. champion won't defend title after re-aggravating back injury

Posted 1/7/16 by Amy Rosewater, special to icenetwork



Jason Brown will look to get fully healthy before he considers competing at the 2016 World Championships. -Getty Images

The [2016 U.S. Figure Skating Championships](#) are off the table for [Jason Brown](#), but the 2016 World Figure Skating Championships could still be on the docket.

Brown announced Thursday that he will not compete at the U.S. championships in Saint Paul, Minnesota, after re-aggravating his ailing back. The door remains open for the 2015 U.S. champion to compete at the world championships in Boston in March.

"I can't tell you how extremely disappointed I am that I cannot compete at nationals," said Brown, who has been struggling to train regularly since November, when he withdrew from the NHK Trophy with a back strain.

Brown said could not pinpoint the direct cause of the injury to one spin or jump. He did say that his back woes had gotten to the point where his training schedule was regularly disrupted and he could no longer take the pain. Doctors expect him to make a full recovery.

"I tried too hard to manage the pain until nationals," Brown, 21, said. "I just need more time to let it calm down."

Brown's withdrawal means that two of the 2015 U.S. men's medalists will be unable to compete this year. Joshua Farris, who claimed bronze last year at the event, has been sidelined this season with a concussion.

Adam Rippon, the 2015 U.S. silver medalist, will vie for the 2016 men's crown along with other top contenders, mainly Max Aaron and Nathan Chen.

According to the World Team Selection Procedures outlined by U.S. Figure Skating, a committee will meet following the conclusion of the men's competition to determine the makeup of the U.S. world team. In addition to the U.S. champion (as long as he is eligible), the remaining spots will be determined as follows:

1. Most recent U.S. Figure Skating Championships
2. Most recent Grand Prix Final
3. Most recent World Figure Skating Championships
4. Most recent Grand Prix Series competitions
5. Most recent Four Continents Figure Skating Championships
6. Challenger series international competitions during the current season
7. Previous season's U.S. championships
8. Most recent Olympic Winter Games
9. Most recent world junior championships
10. Most recent Junior Grand Prix Final

"Consideration will be given to add additional athletes/teams to the pool by reviewing the events above in priority order and adding others due to extenuating circumstances as approved by the respective International Committee Discipline Group," the document reads. Injuries are listed as potential considerations.

Brown became one of the most popular skaters in the United States in 2014 when he broke through in the senior ranks and made his way onto the U.S. Olympic team with a very memorable and dynamic program skated to music from *Riverdance*. The routine was so popular he continued to perform the free skate on the post-Olympic *Stars on Ice* tour.

Even though he does not have a solid quad in his arsenal, he managed to win the U.S. title in 2015 and was the top U.S. man at the 2015 World Championships in Shanghai, where he finished in fourth place. Based on Brown's performance and Rippon's eighth-place finish, Team USA earned three spots for the men's competition for the 2016 World Championships.

In a media teleconference, Brown did not say he will commit to attempting to compete at the world championships.

"At this moment, I am not looking that far ahead," Brown said.



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