

Remembering and Reflecting After the 2009 AT&T US Figure Skating Championships

By: Jo Ann Schneider Farris

Not An Olympic Preview:

(January, 2009)

In the past, the United States National Figure Skating Championships that is held just before an Olympic year helps to give those involved in figure skating some idea about who may be competing in the Olympics, but instead, in 2009, the competition left everyone wondering what will happen in 2010.

A Different Girl Each Year:

Most people don't expect 2009's world figure skating team to be 2010's Olympic figure skating team. Also, many say that an American won't medal in the Ladies' event in Vancouver.

The reason for this bleak forecast is that since the 2006 Olympics, the US has had a different Ladies champion each year. There hasn't been time for any American lady to gain the much needed international figure skating experience and prestige.

Although 2009 US Ladies Champion, Alissa Czisny, qualified for the World Figure Skating Championships, in 2007, many don't feel she possesses the qualities of a world or Olympic skating champion.

Sasha Cohen or Michelle Kwan May Return:

It has been announced that 2006 Olympic Silver Medalist, Sasha Cohen, or nine-time US Ladies Figure Skating Champion and figure skating legend, Michelle Kwan, may return and try out for the 2010 Olympics. It has been said that their presence may make the 2010 US National Figure Skating Championships quite dramatic.

Johnny Weir Out:

2006 Olympian and three-time US Men's Figure Skating Champion, Johnny Weir, did not skate well at the 2009 US Figure Skating Championships. He placed 5th overall, and did not qualify for the 2009 World Figure Skating Championships.

Quadruple Jump and Eight Triples Did It For Brandon Mroz:

Brandon Mroz landed a clean quadruple toe loop and eight triples jumps in the Men's Free Skate event. He did not win the Free Skate, but earned the highest technical score. He moved up from fourth place after the Short Program to second overall.

Denney and Barrett Rose to the Top:

Caydee Denney and Jeremy Barrett, from Southwest Florida, paired up in June of 2008. The newly formed pair skating team received the highest technical score in both their short and long programs, and won the silver medal. They showed everyone that the new International Judging System (IJS) rewards those who are able to successfully do the most difficult elements.

New Ice Dance Champions:

Five-time US Ice Dance Champions, Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto, did not compete at the 2009 US Figure Skating Championships due to injury. Since Belbin and Agosto were not present, Meryl Davis and Charlie White easily won the event.

Keauna McLaughlin and Rockne Brubaker Won Again:

Only one of the US Figure Skating titles from 2008 was gained again in 2009. Keauna McLaughlin and Rockne Brubaker came from behind after the pairs short program and won the long program because of their high component score.

Jeremy Abbott Wins:

2008 Grand Prix Final Men's Champion, Jeremy Abbott, skated a dazzling short program, but didn't do the best he could do in his long program. That didn't matter, since he received a very high component score, and won the men's event.

2009 US Figure Skating World Team Members:

Below are the skaters who were chosen for the 2009 US World Figure Skating Team. (The skaters who were chosen, with the exception of Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto, received their world team assignments based on their showing at the 2009 US Figure Skating Championships.)

Ladies

2009 World Championships

- Alissa Czisny - 2009 US Ladies Figure Skating Champion
- Rachael Flatt - 2009 US Ladies Figure Skating Silver Medalist

Men's

2009 World Championships

- Jeremy Abbott - 2009 US Men's Figure Skating Champion
- Brandon Mroz - 2009 US Men's Silver Medalist
- Evan Lysacek - 2009 US Men's Figure Skating Bronze Medalist

Pairs

2009 World Championships

- Keauna McLaughlin and Rockne Brubaker - 2009 US National Pair Skating Champions
- Caydee Denney and Jeremy Barrett - 2009 US National Pair Skating Silver Medalists

Ice Dancing

2009 World Championships

- Meryl Davis and Charlie White - 2009 US National Ice Dance Champions
- Emily Samuelson and Evan Bates - 2009 US National Ice Dance Silver Medalists
- Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto - 2008 US National Ice Dance Champions and 2006 Olympic Ice Dance Silver Medalists