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Masterful Chen wins quad fest at Glacier Falls

Hochstein places second; Brown not deterred by sixth-place finish

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Nathan Chen, pictured here with coach Nadia Kanaeva, landed a quad toe-triple toe in his 169.26-point free skate, and he skated off with a convincing 14-point victory. -Klaus-Reinhold Kany

Last season's injury woes seem to be a thing of the past for [Nathan Chen](#), who won the [2015 Glacier Falls Summer Classic](#) in Anaheim, California, with a spectacular free skate that included two solid quadruple toe loops, the first in combination with a triple toe.

Performing a new free skate choreographed by Nikoli Morozov to Camille Saint-Saëns' "Symphony No. 3," the 16-year-old student of Rafael Arutunian opened with a quad toe-triple toe combination, followed by a second quad. Five good triple jumps followed. His only mistake was popping the first of his two triple axels into a single.

Since last season, Chen has gained not only height, but speed and power, and his component scores averaged around 8.2.

In his Michael Jackson short program Friday, Chen's quad toe was a bit shaky, but his six other elements were clean, including a safe triple axel, an excellent Level 4 step sequence (GOE's of mainly +2) and a good triple lutz-triple toe combination. He ended with 253.71 points.

"It's early in the season, and I'm pretty happy with how I did in both programs," Chen said. "There's still a lot of room for improvement. During the offseason, it was most important for me to get healthy first. Now, I have no more problems."

Chen, a two-time U.S. junior champion, was eighth in the U.S. last season. He will compete in the Junior Grand Prix (JGP) this fall, his fourth season on the junior international circuit.

"My next competition will probably be the Junior Grand Prix in Colorado Springs," he said.

Glacier Falls turns into quad fest

U.S. men have received a message: You can't hit a quad unless you try one, and the best place to do that is a summer competition. No less than eight of the 11 skaters tried a quad in at least one program.

Chen, who seems to have, for now, mastered the quad toe, isn't stopping there.

"I have landed a few other quads than the toe loop in practice, but it is too early to say if, and when, I will include them in the programs," he said.

Grant Hochstein opened his stylish new free, choreographed by coach Peter Oppegard to music from *Les Misérables*, with a strong quad toe loop, followed by two good triple axels, the second of which gained a +3 Grade of Execution (GOE) from the judging panel. Four other solid triples followed; his only flaw was singling a flip.

The Artesia-based skater, who placed ninth in the U.S. last season, fell on the quad in his short program, choreographed by Karen Kwan-Oppegard to "Due Tramonti" by Ludovico Einaudi. His other elements were rather clean. Hochstein placed second to Chen with 239.49 points.

"I am very pleased with Grant's programs so early in the season; he has taken what he learned at nationals and put it to work," Oppegard said. "He is starting to add not only the quad, but also a lot more artistry in his programs."

The judges saw it the same way: Hochstein gained the highest program components of the event, averaging about 8.5 -- with a maximum of 9.25 -- for interpretation.

Timothy Dolensky tried a quad salchow in his free skate to "Orchestral Variations on Themes of Chopin" by Anze Rozman, but it was downgraded by the technical panel. Dolensky's two triple axels were shaky, but the rest of his program was clean. He placed third overall with 222.03 points.

Brown places sixth

[Jason Brown](#) may have finished just sixth overall in the competition, but the U.S. champion accomplished some important goals: He tested out his two new programs, and he tried quads in competition for the second time following his first attempt at the 2015 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships.

Skating to music inspired by *The Great Gatsby* soundtrack, Brown was 11th in the short after falling on a quad toe loop and triple flip (both jumps were downgraded), as well as a fully rotated triple axel. His final spin did not gain any level, but his charisma and stylish steps were intact, and the program, choreographed by Rohene Ward, has plenty of promise.

Brown's free, choreographed by Ward to "Scent of Love" from *The Piano* soundtrack, is a masterful mixture of modern ballet and expressive floor dance. The skater landed a quad toe, but it was again downgraded. His first triple axel was landed on two feet, and there he fell on a second triple axel and triple flip. He placed fourth in the free with 136.24 points.

"I don't care about the result at all; I just wanted to perform my new programs," Brown said.

"We have given Jason a completely different genre to explore this season," Brown's coach, Kori Ade, said. "Without compromising on any of the choreography, he did what he was able to do at the moment."

Yet more quad attempts

Sean Rabbitt, a Tammy Gambill student who represents Glacier Falls FSC, placed fourth with 201.23 points without trying a quad. Australian skater Brendan Kerry finished fifth, gaining 194.96 points and showing two quad toe loops in the free skate. Israeli Daniel Samohin, 10th in Europe last season, landed a good quad salchow in his free skate and short program, but popped two quad toe loops and finished eighth. Jordan Moeller, who trains alongside Brown, two-footed the quad toe loop in the short and fell on it in the free. He placed 10th.

No free skate for Dornbush

Richard Dornbush, who trains under Gambill in Riverside, California, placed fourth in the short program to "Come What May" from *Moulin Rouge* with 69.64 points. He fell on his quad attempt and did not perform the free skate, because he will compete later this month at the Collegiate Championships.

Paniot of Ukraine wins junior event

Ukraine 's Yaroslav Paniot won the junior men's event with 172.99 points after landing the only successful triple axel of the event in his short program. Paniot was also the only man to try a quad jump, stepping out of a quad toe loop in his free. He popped an intended triple axel into a single in his free, but landed seven other triples.

"I have some problems with axel at the moment, but I hope to solve them soon," said Paniot, who is coached by former Ukrainian competitor Viacheslav Zagorodniuk in nearby Artesia, California.

"My next competition will be the Junior Grand Prix in Colorado Springs in early September," he said.

Harrison Wong, sixth in U.S. novice in 2014, landed three triples in his free skate and placed second overall with 154.29 points. Chase Belmontes of Colorado Springs tried triple axels in both of his programs, but the attempt in his short was downgraded and the axel in his free was popped into a single. He placed second in the free and third overall with 150.59 points. U.S. junior bronze medalist Paolo Borromeo, who won the short program with a clean performance, dropped to fourth overall with 149.16 points after falling three times in his free skate.



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