

[Subscribe](#)[Login](#)[Register](#)[HOME](#)[SCHEDULE + RESULTS](#)[SKATERS](#)[NEWS](#)[PHOTOS](#)[FANS](#)

## Tar Heel tales: Chen here for experience, not medal

Dornbush has good news to share; Rippon rejuvenates with "Nyah"

Posted 1/21/15 by Lynn Rutherford, special to icenetwork



*A recent growth spurt could force Nathan Chen to alter his program content at these U.S. championships. -Jay Adef*

Some of the sport's "experts" -- including several icenetwork contributors -- picked 15-year-old [Nathan Chen](#) to land on the senior men's podium at the [2015 U.S. Figure Skating Championships](#). But the skater himself has something to say to those people: Not so fast.

In fact, Chen would rather not be included in discussions about the favorites in Greensboro.

"This is my first senior nationals," the 15-year-old said after his Wednesday morning practice. "I am basically here for the experience."

The teen, who trains in Southern California under Rafael Arutunian, can blame himself for the hype. He landed a quad toe-double toe combination in his free skate at Pacific Coast Sectionals in November and

racked up an incredible score of 243.89 points at the event.

Sectional tallies are not generally comparable to international scores, but the monster number set tongues wagging that Chen, who was born May 5, 1999, might finish in the top three in Greensboro and be sent to the 2015 World Figure Skating Championships in March.

Chen hopes to hit the quad toe here, as well as a quad Salchow and triple Axel, a jump he didn't try at sectionals. But an injury to his left heel may change those plans.

"It just started last Wednesday," he said. "There is a problem with the growth plate. I've grown a few inches over the past few months."

"I'm still planning up to three quads in my free skate -- two toes and a Salchow -- and triple Axel, but we have to see what happens," he continued. "My other jumps, the triples, are OK. It only bothers my big jumps, the quad and the Axel."

Chen competed at the Junior Grand Prix in Croatia in October, winning the silver medal. He would like to put out good performances here and be selected for the 2015 World Junior Figure Skating Championships, to be held in Tallinn, Estonia, in early March, but he isn't focusing on that either. Last season, he won bronze at junior worlds.

"It has been in my thoughts, but I'm not thinking about it too much right now," he said. "Especially after my heel, I just want to get through this."

### **Dornbush has good news on several fronts**

[Richard Dornbush](#) landed a solid quad toe loop when he won the bronze medal at the Cup of China in November, and the jump is planned for his Coldplay free skate here in Greensboro.

"We experimented with different quads, the toe and Salchow, to get the feel of both in competitions," said Dornbush, who trains in Riverside, California, under Tammy Gambill. "Eventually, I want to do both (in a free skate). Coming into nationals, I feel more comfortable with the toe. I have a lot of experience with the Salchow under my belt."

The jump seems to be consistent -- Dornbush hit several in his Wednesday morning practice -- but the skater is quick to add that it's still a challenge.

"In no way are quad toes easy," said the skater, who placed fifth in the U.S. last season. "Even if you do nine out of 10 in practice, doing it in competition is another matter entirely."

It was a challenging fall season for the 23-year-old, who also finished seventh at Trophée Éric Bompard. He took three upper-level physics classes at the University of California in San Diego, while also traveling and competing. A bad case of food poisoning he picked up while on his way Paris in late November, followed by a bout with the flu when he returned home, complicated matters.

"It was really difficult, but I'm glad I did it. It was a great experience," he said. "This quarter is a bit easier, I'm only taking two physics classes and an accounting class. And I'm happy to report I got through all of my (fall) classes successfully."

Dornbush is even happier to report that his mother, Shelley, is on the mend after spending about a week and a half at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles suffering from what was eventually diagnosed as typhus.

"The people at Cedars-Sinai did a great job, and we are all super grateful," he said. "She is doing much better; she is back home. She has the support of the whole community. She is very involved in her church, and several church groups are taking good care of her, as well as my dad (Richard)."

While Dornbush's parents are unable to attend the U.S. championships, his maternal grandparents will be in Greensboro to cheer him on.

### **Rippon rejuvenates with "Nyah"**

[Adam Rippon](#) had some blunt words for his 10th-place effort at Skate Canada and fifth-place finish at Trophée Bompard.

"My Grand Prix season [stunk]," the 25-year-old said. "After my Grand Prix, I was like, 'OK, I need to get my life together, I need to do the quad Lutz again.' I needed rejuvenation. And I needed music that would inspire me to land it...something intense."

Rippon's short program was set to "Tuxedo Junction," a foxtrot that dates back to the pre-WWII era. It was elegant and smooth, but it didn't scream, "Land your quad!" So Rippon worked up a new short himself, set to "Nyah," a powerful, Latin-infused selection from the *Mission: Impossible II* soundtrack. He plans to use a version of "Tuxedo Junction" as a show program.

"['Nyah'] sounds like the music of a champion," said Rippon, who won U.S. silver in 2012. "It's the music for someone who wins the short program at nationals."

The skater, who trains alongside Chen under Arutunian, is planning not only the quad Lutz but a combination of his "Rippon" triple Lutz with a triple toe, as well as a triple Axel, in his "Nyah" short.

"I really like the Lutz jump (done with both hands over his head)," he said. "I feel like I have the momentum to add a triple toe to it. I've been working on it this summer."

For his free skate to a Liszt piano concerto, Rippon is also planning the quad Lutz, and has moved one of his triple Axels into the second half. He has also changed a triple flip-triple loop combination into a sequence of triple flip-loop-triple Salchow.

Rippon admits the jump layout is ambitious but thinks he has to make a statement. He placed a disappointing eighth in the U.S. last season.

"I want to step up my game a little bit," he says. "Doing the quad Lutz makes me sound threatening."



[Privacy Policy](#)

[About Our Ads](#)

[Terms](#)

[Blackout Restrictions](#)

[Login](#) | [Register](#)

Copyright © 2006 - 2018 Ice Network, LLC