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The Inside Edge: Checking in with a YouTube Starr

Denney, Frazier ship up to Boston, the long way; False alarm at Westin

Posted 1/8/14 by Sarah S. Brannen and Drew Meekins, special to icenetwork



Starr Andrews' performance to Willow Smith's "Whip My Hair" has received nearly 15 million views on YouTube. -Jay Adef

Starr quality

12-year-old Starr Andrews isn't just the brand-new U.S. juvenile pewter medalist -- she's an Internet sensation. The video of her sassy performance to Willow Smith's "Whip My Hair" has nearly 15 million views on YouTube, partly owing to its being featured in on the websites of *People* magazine and Ryan Seacrest, among others.

Andrews said the video was recorded when she was only 9.

"My mom just put it on YouTube, and my auntie called and said it was going viral," Andrews said. "She

didn't know what that meant, so she looked it up, and then she looked at the video and it had, like, 3 million hits.

"It's exciting. It's kind of weird at first."

Rock in love

Rockne Brubaker is competing here this week, with partner Lindsay Davis, while his fiancée, Stefania Berton, and her partner, Ondrej Hotarek, prepare for the European championships next week.

"We had Skate Canada together this fall," Brubaker said. "And she came to the States for Thanksgiving."

Their wedding plans are ongoing, but Brubaker wasn't ready to go on record with details. At the moment, in any case, he's concentrating on competing in the senior pairs event. He was wearing very chic sneakers with pink day-glo laces, which exuded energy.

"They keep me moving!" he said.

Challenges

A few updates: Jessica Calalang and Zack Sidhu brought Chelsea Liu her skates, and all is well. Jason Brown spent all of Tuesday trying to get to Boston, without success. After spending a night with his family at their Chicago home, he got on a flight early Wednesday morning and made it here. Brandon Frazier said he and Haven Denney took 30 hours to get here from Florida, spending a night in Savannah along the way.

"We could have gotten here faster by car," he said. "We were joking that we could have flown to Japan and back in the time it took us to get here."

Frazier was having dinner at the hotel restaurant with John Coughlin, while Meryl Davis and Charlie White were at a nearby table with their moms, looking relaxed, happy and flawless, as always.

Max Aaron and Brandon Mroz got into town at 3 a.m. Wednesday morning and headed off to practice at the TD Garden a few hours later.

Water

Apparently, another pipe burst at the Westin, and the fire alarm there woke everyone up at 5:30 Wednesday morning.

"An announcement came on saying for all floors to be on alert," Coughlin told us. "Alex Shibutani is right across the hall from me and I yelled across, 'Alex, what did you do?' About 10 minutes later, they made another announcement saying the fire department had decided it was a non-emergency. Gracie Gold and everyone were out in the hall wondering what was going on."

Coughlin was wandering the lobby of the Westin, eating an apple.

"I eat, like, three apples a day," he said. "They have them right here in the lobby, so I think it's a good sign."

Tossie

A big crowd of skaters was standing by the boards watching the junior pairs short program Wednesday afternoon, including Marissa Castelli, Alexa Scimeca, Chris Knierim, Felicia Zhang, Nate Bartholomay, Matt Blackmer, Daniel Raad, Chase Belmontes, Quinn Carpenter and Brandon Forsythe.

Bartholomay threw a gift onto the ice for his friends Alyssa McDougal and Paul Schatz, and then picked up Castelli and pretended to throw her onto the ice, too.

As the junior ladies short program got underway, tiny Gretchen Donlan stood on tiptoes behind a big group of Boston skaters holding signs for training mate Megan Wessenberg, trying hard to see over everyone's heads and cheering enthusiastically.

Baby on board

We ought to have mentioned in our Jan. 5 column that a very pregnant Cynthia Phaneuf was at the Colorado Avalanche game when Brown, Jordan Moeller and Lukas Kaugars skated in the intermission. She is dating Columbus Blue Jackets player Maxime Talbot.

Sweep

Even during the lower-level events, a posse of sweepers has been busy picking up gifts for the skaters. Rachael Renton, the mom of one sweeper, was a sweeper herself during the Canadian championships back in the '80s. It was a different time; for one thing, people threw real flowers onto the ice instead of stuffed ones.

"We used to find love notes and phone numbers in the flowers," she said. "They didn't provide any meals for the sweepers, so the moms brought in casseroles for us."

Olympic champion sightings: 0 so far. We expect this to change very soon.

Michelle Kwan sightings: also 0, but we are hopeful. If we see her, we will tweet about it instantly [@SarahandDrew](#).

Off to the junior ladies short program!

Sarah and Drew



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