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Skaters meet media, dignitaries at worlds media day

SCOB donates 250 tickets to city; Rippon, Wagner out for redemption

Posted 1/27/16 by Sarah. S Brannen, special to icenetwork



The skaters in attendance (minus Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani) pose with VIPs, including Boston mayor Marty Walsh (far left). -Sarah S. Brannen

Immediately after the [2016 U.S. Figure Skating Championships](#), five newly crowned champions headed to Boston to promote the upcoming world championships. Adam Rippon, Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani, and Tarah Kayne and Daniel O'Shea were joined by three-time ladies champion Ashley Wagner and 2015 dance champions Madison Chock and Evan Bates on the ice at the TD Garden, the venue for the event. (Gracie Gold was unable to attend due to another commitment.)

The mayor of Boston, Marty Walsh, welcomed the skaters to the ice, saying, "We're so proud a worlds 'home game' will be right here in our city."

Walsh spoke of the positive economic impact the competition will have on the city, and of how big a thrill it

is for the city to host the event.

"Few sports excite the imagination the way figure skating does," he said. "I hope Team USA brings home a world championship right here in our city of Boston."

Also present was Doug Zeghibe, the executive director of the host club, the Skating Club of Boston (SCOB). He noted that SCOB will become the only club in the U.S. to ever host the U.S. championships, world championships, U.S. Synchronized Skating Championships and World Synchronized Skating Championships.

Joining Walsh and Zeghibe at the podium were Amy Latimer, the president of the TD Garden; Dr. Ellen Geminiani of Boston Children's Hospital, the chief medical officer for the world championships; and Charlie Jacobs, the CEO of Delaware North's Boston Holdings.

Zeghibe also announced that SCOB will present 250 free tickets to the opening ceremonies and men's short program to the city of Boston.

Following the speeches, the skaters took the ice to present brief excerpts of their programs, in costume. Local media was out in force, and TV cameras filmed not only their performances but several other demonstrations. Adam Rippon did a lot of jumps and spins, and explained the details of the elements.

The Shibutanis spent some time filming a new "ShibSibs" video on the ice.

"We didn't have time (to make one) in Saint Paul," Alex said.

Wagner and Rippon were glad to have the opportunity to skate at the Garden again and erase some bad memories. In 2014, Rippon didn't skate well and missed the Olympic team, and Wagner finished fourth (but was named to the Olympic team).

"When we got here in the bus today, I saw a CVS drug store across the street," Rippon said. "After my short program two years ago, I ran over to that drug store to get a water, and I ended up getting really upset thinking about what had just happened. I couldn't redeem myself after that short program; I couldn't pull up! I had ruined my Olympic chances."

Two years later, Rippon feels a world away from that night in 2014.

"I just think of that boy, like, he was so immature, and it's not who I am anymore," he said. "It's so fun to be here now. I've grown up so much, and I feel so different, and so much wiser and more experienced."

Wagner looked around at the ranks of empty seats, imagining them filled to the rafters come late March. The seats are black and gold, the colors of the Boston Bruins.

"This rink is so yellow," she said. "I'm going to stop calling it yellow and I'm going to start thinking of it as gold."

After a long week in Saint Paul, followed by a quick stop in Boston, the skaters said they will be glad to get home Tuesday night.

But they are all very excited to return in two months to compete against the rest of the world.



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