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## 'Hungry' Abbott to compete, skip Grand Prix Series

Four-time U.S. champion wants to focus on U.S. championships, worlds

Posted 6/15/15 by Amy Rosewater, special to icenetwork



*After a disappointing finish to the 2014-15 season, Jeremy Abbott has decided to focus exclusively on the U.S. championships, with a goal of returning to the world championships. -Jay Adef*

[Jeremy Abbott](#) has decided he will continue to compete in hopes of ending his competitive skating career with a medal at a world championships.

What the longtime national, world and Olympic competitor will not do, however, is compete on the Grand Prix circuit.

"I decided to take off the Grand Prix this season because I want to focus on nationals and worlds," said Abbott, who turned 30 on June 5. "My ultimate goal is worlds, to be honest. After coming back from U.S. championships, I talked with my coaches, Yuka [Sato] and Jason [Dungjen], and we discussed things. I felt hungry. I felt the fire in my stomach."

Abbott said that if he could land two quads (toe and salchow) by the end of June, that he would continue with his competitive plans. He didn't quite reach those goals, but he came close enough to stay in the game.

"I have been working really, really hard, and I was very close to my goal in May, and then I broke my blades on both my pairs of skates, so I was off for almost a month," he said. "Right before vacation, my skates were all set, but I was hoping to get the programs done and then I started to get show offers."

A four-time U.S. champion, Abbott had an emotional run at the 2015 U.S. Championships in Greensboro, North Carolina, where he placed fifth. Shortly before the event, Abbott's father, Danny, died after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Some speculated that he would retire after not making the world team.

Abbott said he did not watch much of the competition from worlds live, but that he followed the protocols and results closely and watched some programs later online.

"I heard about Elizaveta [Tuktamishva's] triple axel, and after I heard about that, I had to go back and watch it," Abbott said. "Her technical is just insane."

As for the men's competition, he didn't feel a strong desire to tune in.

"I just didn't watch," Abbott said. "I do love what the sport is doing technically, with the guys doing the quads and the ladies doing the triple axel and the triple-triples, but I would love to see more people pushing the artistic."

Abbott knows the landscape will be a little more crowded, with three-time Olympic medalist Evgeni Plushenko and Patrick Chan, a three-time world champion, announcing their returns to competition.

"I train with [Patrick] in Detroit, so I know," Abbott said. "But honestly, at this point in my career, what everyone else does makes no difference to me. I'm 30 years old and on my last leg. You can throw Patrick Chan back in the mix and the junior kids in the mix. It's always going to be a tough crowd, especially with the men."

Now, Abbott said, he is looking forward to having a full slate of training time between now and the U.S. championships to get himself prepared for another run at worlds.

"Whether I win a medal or not, I want to give myself a chance," Abbott said.

In five trips to worlds in his career, Abbott has finished as high as fifth twice (2010, '14). He placed 11th the last time his country hosted the world championships, in 2009, and hopes to compete at the event when it returns to the U.S., March 28-April 3 in Boston.

Because of Abbott's top-five finish in Greensboro, he does not have to compete in regional or sectional competitions to return to the U.S. championships. He may, however, try to sneak in a small competition sometime this fall just to get the programs under his feet.

But he likes the concept of having the entire fall to focus on training.

"The first time I brought up the option of not doing the Grand Prix, Yuka said no," Abbott said. "But when we discussed it again, she said yes. She told me, 'You have built a foundation, and your skating is only going to get better. You're ready to do this.'"

Abbott will do some shows this summer -- he is set to travel to Kazakhstan to perform in a couple of shows for Denis Ten's tour -- and will also spend time working on choreography for some other skaters. He has crafted Ashley Cain's short program for the upcoming season.

"She is a phenomenal skater," Abbott said of Cain. "When I watch her...there's just something special to her skating. It's that quality you can't quite put your finger on. We worked a lot of her skating and her movement and, at the end of the three or four days we worked together, I felt like she was a totally different skater."



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