

## Body of work gets Ashley Wagner on Sochi squad

Sunday, January 12, 2014 -- Anonymous (not verified)

Olympics

Monday, January 13, 2014

### Author(s):

Kat Hasenauer Cornetta

Four years ago, Ashley Wagner brought an impressive competitive resume into the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, but finished third and found herself on the outside looking in when the team for the 2010 Olympic Games was selected.

Saturday night, the two-time defending U.S. champion in ladies singles fell twice in her free skate, finishing fourth. She thought her Olympic fate may be the same as in 2010, but U.S. Figure Skating thought differently.

In a press conference yesterday afternoon, Wagner was named to the team headed to February's Games in Sochi, Russia, alongside Saturday night's U.S. champion Gracie Gold and 15-year-old silver medalist Polina Edmunds.

"It's been a really rough four years, and I've been working really hard," said a relieved Wagner. "I'm happy my federation was able to put aside one bad skate."

This is only the third time in history that the U.S. has deviated from sending the top ladies finishers at nationals to the Olympics. Wagner's inclusion bumped the national bronze medalist Mirai Nagasu, who finished fourth at the 2010 Games, from the team.

"It's based upon a body of work," Wagner said. "I didn't know if I had done enough in my career. I'm honored that my federation believed in me."

The Olympics will be Edmunds' first senior international competition, a fact that left many believing she would be the one bumped, if anyone. Her technical difficulty, one of the highest amongst U.S. ladies, and junior international competition success swayed the committee in her favor.

Indeed, the stakes were stacked against Nagasu. She struggled the last two seasons, finishing seventh at each year's national championships, but had turned around her performances in the latter part of this fall, finishing third at the Rostelecom Cup. Coming into this week's championships without a head coach and after a month training in Japan, Nagasu did not have many behind the scenes who could lobby for her Olympic inclusion.

"Mirai and I grew up together, we competed against each other," Wagner said. "What she was able to do in a matter of months is something I admire."

For Gold, the Olympic team announcement was a mere formality. The hard work of proving herself was finally finished.

“I think the Olympics will be slightly less stressful for me than qualifying for the Olympics,” Gold said. “This is a lifelong dream.”

Sudbury’s Simon Shnapir and Marissa Castelli of Cranston, R.I., are one of two pairs teams headed to Sochi, along with this year’s national silver medalists Felicia Zhang and Nathan Bartholomay. Caydee Denney and John Coughlin, favorites heading into the week, finished third and were left off the team.

“We’re just trying to enjoy all of these moments,” the Moscow-born Shnapir, now a two-time national champion with Castelli, said. “We’ve worked so hard and done so much on our eight years together and this is such a great pinnacle for us.”

Meryl Davis and Charlie White lead the ice dance contingent and will be joined by Madison Chock and Evan Bates, and Boston-born Maia Shibutani and Alex Shibutani.

**Source URL:**

[http://bostonherald.com/sports/other/olympics/2014/01/body\\_of\\_work\\_gets\\_ashley\\_wagner\\_on\\_sochi\\_squad](http://bostonherald.com/sports/other/olympics/2014/01/body_of_work_gets_ashley_wagner_on_sochi_squad)