

Bond-ing experience

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Shnapir, Castelli repeat

Other

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Before their championship pairs free skate at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, Simon Shnapir looked to partner Marissa Castelli to set the tone.

“Marissa said we didn’t have to be perfect,” said Shanpir, a 26-year-old from Sudbury. “She said to be aggressive and emotional.”

Castelli and Shnapir’s James Bond program may not have been exactly perfect last night, but their aggressiveness paid off. Their score of 132.58, plus their short program lead, were exactly what the Boston-trained pair needed to repeat as national champions with an overall 205.71.

Castelli, a 23-year-old from Cranston, R.I., was proud of how she and Shnapir were able to rebound.

“Before, when we would make mistakes, they would tumble into other mistakes, but we’ve worked on that,” Castelli said.

Silver medalists Felicia Zhang and Nathan Bartholomay performed a flawless program for a 201.72 overall.

The favorites, Caydee Denney and John Coughlin, had the best scoring free skate of the afternoon (136.03), but their fourth place after the short program left them in third overall at 201.43. The 2012 national champions’ Olympic team fate will be left up to a selection committee.

Hingham’s Gretchen Donlan and Andrew Speroff finished in eighth place, while Duxbury’s Alexandria Shaughnessy and James Morgan took 12th.

In the championship ice dance competition, Meryl Davis and Charlie White brought the Garden audience to their feet with their “Scheherazade” free dance, earning a

perfect score for the program to become the first U.S. ice dance couple to win six national titles. Their 119.50 free dance and 200.19 overall broke their previous American records.

“We are really proud of our consistency,” White said. “We have been lucky to be injury-free, which is another big part of it. And we’ve worked our butts off.”

The last 30 seconds of their four-minute program were especially impressive, with their speed through two traveling lifts building instead of waning.

Madison Chock and Evan Bates scored a 181.44 overall on their way to a second consecutive silver medal. Boston-born siblings Maia and Alex Shibutani brought down the house with their Michael Jackson free skate, leading them to the bronze medal.

Anastasia Cannuscio and Saugus’ Colin McManus finished seventh, while Dover’s Michael Bramante and partner Isabella Cannuscio placed 11th.

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