

Echo Cassill wins Metro Spotlight Award

Written by Metro Sports Report

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Cedar Rapids Jefferson senior Echo Cassill is the winner of the Metro Spotlight Award for high school girls this week, the Metro Sports Report announced Sunday.

Cassill is an accomplished figure skater who has won four U.S. Figure Skating national showcase titles, with three duet championships and one extemporaneous title.

Cassill is a member of the Eastern Iowa Figure Skating Club and began practicing the basic skills when she was five years old. She has been skating for 13 years and has taken lessons from Tanya Street-Burgess and Amy Blades for about 10 years.

Cassill has competed in the Upper Great Lakes Regionals for the past eight years. She performed before 2,500 people at a Cedar Rapids RoughRiders hockey game last week at the Cedar Rapids Ice Arena and received a big ovation.

Here is our Question-&-Answer session with Echo Cassill:

MSR: What is your favorite individual highlight in sports?

ECHO: My favorite individual highlight in skating was actually in October when the Eastern Iowa Figure Skating Club hosted regionals. I was about to skate my short program and had one of the worst five-minute warmups ever and I could see my coaches were a bit antsy. When it came time to perform, I did a great program and honestly surprised myself and my coaches. I haven't had a performance as satisfying as that one in a long time.

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MSR: What is your favorite team highlight in sports?

ECHO: My favorite team highlight was when my duet partner and I won parade of duet champions at national showcase. We had so much fun with that performance.

MSR: Who has had the biggest influence on your sports career?

ECHO: My brother, Landon, has the biggest influence in my sports career. Though our sports are very different, I have learned so much from him (Landon is a professional race car driver). He has taught me how to be a good competitor on and off of the ice. I have seen all sides of his career from his biggest success to nights where we all know the outcome should have been better and either way it ends up, he is always congratulating the winner and thanking his team.

There are no meltdowns or screaming, only a gracious attitude toward the people that got him to where he is at that moment. I could go on and on about how I look up to him, but growing up with my brother being a part of something that well-known has ultimately taught me how to treat others whether they are supportive of me or not.

My other influence is my other brother, Zac. Though he isn't the most athletic, he is probably the most driven person I know. He is a very passionate geoscientist. I was able to watch him work hard and persevere in college and he has taught me that hard work really does pay off.

MSR: What are your future goals in sports?

ECHO: My future goals for sports are to give back to figure skating through coaching and performing and being a good role model to the younger skaters. Being a good role model is very important to me because I remember how much I looked up to the older skaters at the rink and how I would try to be exactly like them, whether it was on or off the ice. Giving back to skating is a future goal to me because kids my age are going to the Olympics and starting to coach. We have some pretty big shoes to fill to keep this sport as successful as it is now.

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While those are my future goals, I am also looking forward to the opportunity that has recently come up to fulfill my dreams. I have the opportunity to audition live for Disney on Ice next month when they come to Cedar Rapids. Being a part of an organization such as that would be an honor. I remember going to Disney on Ice shows and wishing I could perform on a platform such as that.

MSR: What are your favorite classes in school?

ECHO: My favorite classes in school are French and literature. I'm hoping to go to college and major in French and communications or maybe sports psychology.