

**"When I retire, the cheering and applause of the crowds will be something I will miss for the rest of my life. It is what I live for."**

I started doing things more consistently and I realized that things were a little easier than I had let them be in my head in the past."

Bradley then turned to his sister Becky, a figure skating coach, for guidance. "She kept me trained and motivated. Having her there at the boards was huge," he said. "She is the reason I started skating. My mom and dad would bring her to the rink for skating lessons and I would be in the lobby breaking things. That is literally why I started skating."

He won the short program at the U.S. Championships but expected to be in second place behind Jeremy Abbott after a less-than-stellar free skate.

After all, having two four-revolution jumps in his long program makes him technically competitive with anyone in the world. "So what do I do at nationals? I go out and pop my quads," he said with a laugh. "I just dropped the ball on my two biggest point earners and my two biggest confidence builders. I had six jumping passes left and I had to fight back and get back on my game.

"I can't tell you how huge it was for me to land both triple Axels after missing both quads. It was a gritty performance, but I got it done. I knew if I played it safe I would not beat Jeremy. That performance taught me a lot about myself."

Winning the title was unbelievable, Bradley said. "When my marks came up and I had a point and a half lead over Jeremy, I was like, 'Holy cow, I am really here.' When they handed me the flowers I had to smell them to make sure it was all real. I can't tell you how many times I have dreamed about being the national champion."

In late March, Bradley was focused on his first trip to Russia to compete at the World Championships. "I will likely be doing the hardest long program, which should give me an edge," he said. "I know I have weaknesses in other parts of my skating. The last thing I want to happen is to lose the title because I landed all my jumps but toe-pushed on my crossovers."

When asked what he planned to see in Moscow, Bradley laughed. "As superstitious a figure skater as I am, I will likely see my hotel room and the rink."

Looking ahead, Bradley said he enjoys performing and the attention of the fans too much not to continue skating. "Winning the national title was huge for me," he said. "It was the exclamation point on everything I have done. I feel like I am in a great place. I could walk away completely fulfilled with how my career has gone."

Bradley is majoring in business at the University of Colorado. "I have no idea what I will do with it," he said. "I chose it because it is a very wide field. It was kind of my way of buying time to make a decision about what I wanted to do when I was a grown-up."

— SUSAN D. RUSSELL