



NEWS

Rippon heading home for the holidays

Family traditions await the U.S. men's competitor

By Lois Elfman, special to icenetwork.com

(12/20/2010) - While U.S. men's competitor and two-time world junior champion Adam Rippon likes pretty much everything about living and training in Toronto, he freely admits he's yearning to spend some time at home in Clarks Summit, Penn., this holiday season.

"To be honest, I'm craving to go home," Rippon says. "I miss home so much. I love where I am. I love Toronto. I love living here. I'm thankful to have found such a great apartment so close to the Cricket Club. But I miss being with my family, and I'm really looking forward to spending Christmas with them."

A regular tradition in the Rippon household is to spend Christmas Eve at the home of one of his mother's sisters. His family is Irish, but his aunt's husband is Italian, so dinner is a traditional Italian Catholic feast of seven different fish dishes. Although not a fish lover, Rippon says everything she prepares is delicious.

"On a normal Christmas there are about 30 to 40 people, but I think this year it might be close to 60 because my cousin is getting married the weekend before," Rippon says. "My Aunt Gail is the main chef of the whole dinner. She loves it and really looks forward to it every year. We, my aunts and uncles will bring a dish, but she does all the main courses. She's really into it, and she's really good at it."

Sometimes after dinner, a few people will head to Midnight Mass, but church is quite a distance away, so they don't go every year.

Rippon, 21, is the oldest of six children (the youngest is 11), and this year he has thoroughly enjoyed buying presents for each of his siblings. There are no more Santa Claus believers, so no one stays up or waits for Santa's arrival. They all rise early on Christmas morning to open their gifts.

"This year, I've been able to earn my own money through skating in shows, so I can go and get gifts," he says. "I love getting gifts for my brothers and sisters. I'm obsessed with it this Christmas season, honestly."

There are no special family rules for buying presents even though there are six kids. Everyone gets everyone else something.

"My smaller brothers and sisters, at their school they have a day of Christmas shopping," Rippon says. "They can get little things, like key chains, so it only costs them \$1 or \$2. The little ones have an eraser for everybody or a little box of pens. So they can give everybody a small gift."

At press time, Rippon had finished all his shopping for his siblings but was either still pondering his mother's present or didn't want to reveal much information.



Adam Rippon and his family are gearing up for the holiday season. (courtesy of Adam Rippon)

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"I'm in the process of getting my mom something," he says. "I want to get something really big because my mom turned 50 this year (her birthday was the week after his). I did not get her a birthday present because I wanted to get her a big Christmas/birthday present. I want it to be special and something that she'll use."

Amazingly, none of his siblings put in gift requests. They've left him to his own devices, "but I kind of know what everybody's into, so it wasn't too challenging," he says.

There's joking that Rippon is now of legal drinking age, so he could be sampling the spiked eggnog these holidays. Although he'll have to produce identification because everybody thinks he's 16.

"Since my 21st birthday was during Skate America, I did not go out and have the time of my life before my short program," he jokes. "At the end of the competition, I was in the bar having dinner with my mom and my cousin, who lives on the West Coast and came to watch. All of a sudden, the waiter comes over and he said, 'The gentlemen over there bought you a drink.' [Simon Shnapir](#) and [Jeremy Barrett](#) bought me my first drink."

Rippon will be back in Toronto before New Year's Eve to continue training for the 2011 U.S. Figure Skating Championships.

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