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MRS. CONSTANCE WILSON SAMUEL AND MONTGOMERY WILSON

# North American Championships

BY JOEL B. LIBERMAN  
*The Skating Club, New York.*

Mrs. T. W. Blanchard,  
Editor of "Skating".

Dear Mrs. Blanchard:

This critique (if it can be so dignified) was written piecemeal on the commuter between Scarsdale and New York City. Any unevenness in its tempo should not be taken as a comment on the road bed of the White Plains Division of the New York Central.

The North American Figure Skating Championship was held under the auspices of The Skating Club of New York on February 10th and 11th, 1933; the school figures and the first trials in Pairs and Fours were skated at The Ice Club, and the further trials in those events with all the other free skating at Madison Square Garden before a large and appreciative audience.

The skating in both departments and in all events was of the highest order, each competitor evincing a full command of the figures and the championship free skating repertoire. This can most readily be appreciated when it is realized that the figures are chosen just before the competition in the same manner as for the World's Championship from a selected list, all the simpler figures having been eliminated. It is a grueling test and one glance at the figures drawn by the ladies will show what they were required to do. The list that met their eyes that bright morning at The Ice Club contained the following:

1. Outside Forward, Inside Back Three.
2. Outer Forward Rocker.
3. Inner Forward Counter.

4. Double 3 Change Double 3 Backward.
5. Loop Change Loop Forward.
6. Bracket Change Bracket Backward.

The men drew:

1. Inner Back Edge.
2. Outer Forward Rocker.
3. Outer Forward Counter.
4. Double 3 Change Double 3 Forward.
5. Loop Change Loop Forward.
6. Bracket Change Bracket Forward.

#### LADIES' SINGLES

There was substantial agreement among the judges in the Ladies' event, except for the all important first place, and as to this it was sharply divided—three judges voting for Mrs. Samuel and three for Mrs. Gooderham, so that resort had to be had to the grand total of the marks on all the judges cards. Mrs. Samuel led with 2300.27 (out of a possible maximum of 2640) and Mrs. Gooderham trailed with 2283.68, a difference of 16.59, and on such a slender difference did this championship rest! But in the race for first, it does not matter how small the margin

“not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a  
church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve”.

The struggle between those two great rivals, Mrs. Constance Wilson Samuel of The Toronto Skating Club (North American and Canadian Champion) and Mrs. Edward H. Gooderham (Cecil Smith) of The Granite Club, Toronto, was renewed. This time it was Connie who won, but it was perilously close. Both of these skaters are real champions in school figures. Both make excellent turns, but Cecil's figures are rounder, she skates on a keener edge, but by the same token she is forced to sacrifice somewhat the retracing of the circles. In the latter department of the school figures Connie is superb. This necessarily involves flattening for an instant to make the circles overlap, but it takes a high degree of talent and a complete mastery of the skate to do it. Sonia is mistress of that art, although she relies on it less and less. Cecil skates her figures like Maribel Vinson, that is, once on a hard edge it is difficult to depart from the natural arc of the edge.

LADIES' SINGLES

		Judges	Rotch Boston	Howard Montreal	Liberman New York	Knapp New York	Gregory Montreal	MacLean Toronto	TOTALS
1.	Mrs. C. W. Samuel Toronto Skating Club	School	242.80	224.40	230.30	212.15	230.20	223.10	1362.95
		Free	163.52	162.06	153.30	148.92	150.38	159.14	937.32
		Total Place	406.32 1	386.46 2	383.60 2	361.07 2	380.58 1	382.24 1	2300.27 9
2.	Mrs. E. H. Gooderham Granite Club, Toronto	School	241.70	227.50	246.20	203.20	219.60	214.00	1352.20
		Free	159.14	163.52	163.52	160.60	140.16	144.54	931.48
		Total Place	400.84 2	391.02 1	409.72 1	363.80 1	359.76 2	358.54 2	2283.68 9
3.	Miss S. Davis Skating Club of Boston	School	215.00	207.60	219.10	187.30	186.00	189.20	1204.20
		Free	148.92	148.92	140.16	131.40	127.02	119.72	816.14
		Total Place	363.92 3	356.52 3	359.26 3	318.70 4	313.02 3	308.92 4	2020.34 20
4.	Miss A. Peppe Skating Club, New York	School	195.70	187.50	200.80	191.15	169.90	172.00	1117.05
		Free	148.92	164.98	146.00	150.38	134.32	162.06	906.66
		Total Place	344.62 4	352.48 4	346.80 4	341.53 3	304.22 4	334.06 3	2023.71 22
5.	Dr. H. Berger Winter Sports Club, New York	School	202.20	188.40	208.90	186.05	171.30	161.90	1118.75
		Free	135.78	122.64	128.48	113.88	99.28	131.18	731.24
		Total Place	337.98 5	311.04 5	337.38 5	299.93 5	270.58 5	293.08 5	1849.99 30

In the free skating Mrs. Gooderham had slightly the better of it from the judges but Mrs. Samuel's lead in the school figure total decided the first place. Mrs. Gooderham has a very difficult program which she skated in perfect style, in fact we have never seen her put together a better program nor perform as well. Her bright and appealing personality shines through her free skating, and it has never lost a certain (in the better sense) amateur quality. Mrs. Samuel has a smoother free skating style and flows more easily over the ice. Her program is well laid out and she is such a mistress of the art that moves that are treasured by others are casually omitted as not evincing enough novelty. That evening we thought she was not quite so sure in her free skating as she usually is, but it was a great responsibility to carry a single, a pair and a four on her slim shoulders. She succeeded in the first two—and almost ran away with all three.

Miss Suzanne Davis (The Skating Club of Boston) was ranked third and led the ladies for our country. Competing in the Olympics and World's Championships has given Suzanne a world of confidence. Her school figures rank very high and in free skating she has charm and personality. The spectacular split jump which she uses at the outset of her program is brilliant and her performance has speed and grace in a way that few others attain. We think it would be to her advantage if her program was deliberately shortened and all of her specialties crowded into a less interval of time. In the competition some of her best numbers came so late (even after the bell) that she did not receive the full marks which she deserved.

Miss Audrey Peppe of The Skating Club of New York was the real surprise of the competition and was placed fourth by the majority. She seemed to have emerged overnight from infancy to maturity; great strides have been made in both school and free skating, and the fundamentals of a first class skater are well established. Audrey skates her figures in good style, the circles are well rounded and she is always well over the skate. She has improved in making turns and in retracing. She has already mastered all the difficulties of a senior program. Her spins and one might almost say her jumps were considered the best of all of the girls. In a year or two she will have better rhythm, some pleasing dances and greater command of the spiral, and then the skaters who are queening it today may have to look to their laurels! Two of the judges considered her free skating the best that night.



MRS. E. H. GOODERHAM

Dr. Hulda Berger of The Winter Sports Club (New York) was placed fifth. Dr. Berger skated the figures in smooth fashion and she has cut the size of her figures with excellent results. It is remarkable that in the entire competition, with figures as difficult as may fall to the lot of both women and men, that no skater hesitated or failed in a single figure. Class tells after all! Dr. Berger's free skating is rhythmic and smooth. She has a fleet foot and is pleasing to watch. Her program is well laid out and she covers the rink well.

#### MEN'S SINGLES

Montgomery Wilson, of The Toronto Skating Club (North American and Canadian Champion) is a remarkable instance of a skater who has occupied first place in the men's division since the last North American and yet has not been content to mark time. Instead, he has studied the methods and styles of Schaefer and Grafstrom and adapted what they had to show to suit his own skating. The advantage of world competition is strikingly illustrated in Wilson. Left to American competition he would probably have arrived to the relative position which he occupies in American skating today, but his skating would not have achieved the mechanical and artistic perfection which he has attained. His school figures are amazing. They are of great size, on a hard and uncompromising edge, with true turns accurately placed in proper relation to the figure. The spectator also has the satisfaction of seeing complete figures formed, that is to say, from the take-off to the conclusion the figure is a complete whole, not an arc, a more or less spasmodic turn and then a concluding arc. Both Wilson and Mrs. Gooderham have the characteristic that their school figures reach a crescendo at the turn and then gradually and naturally finish with power. There is no occasion for picking out any particular figure as they were all first-class. In free skating, Wilson has a complete repertoire with the possible exception of the Spread Eagle which does not earn much from judges these days, which surprises me, for to do it properly at high speed takes as much practice as any spin, which is always a high point winner. Even a "natural eagler" has considerable work to do to make it a good looking free skating move.

What delights in Wilson is the neatness of his foot work. Both Connie and Bud have marvelously neat feet. There is no scrambling

MEN'S SINGLES

Judges		Rotch Boston	Howard Montreal	Liberman New York	Knapp New York	Gregory Montreal	MacLean Toronto	TOTALS
1. <b>Mr. M. Wilson</b> Toronto Skating Club	School	207.80	201.10	210.00	181.50	192.30	191.90	1184.60
	Free	141.12	146.16	143.64	141.12	137.34	146.16	855.54
	Total Place	348.92 1	347.26 1	353.64 1	322.62 1	329.64 1	338.06 1	2040.14 6
2. <b>Mr. J. L. Madden</b> Skating Club of Boston	School	186.10	161.30	196.10	186.40	167.40	152.50	1049.80
	Free	132.30	138.60	129.78	129.78	122.22	132.30	784.98
	Total Place	318.40 2	299.90 2	325.88 2	316.18 2	289.62 2	284.80 3	1834.78 13
3. <b>Mr. R. Lee</b> Twin Cities Skating Club Minneapolis	School	184.30	162.50	181.10	176.60	154.90	154.80	1014.20
	Free	128.52	123.48	127.26	131.04	124.74	137.34	772.38
	Total Place	312.82 3	285.98 3	308.36 3	307.64 3	279.64 3	292.14 2	1786.58 17
4. <b>Mr. W. Nagle</b> Winter Sports Club, New York	School	134.60	150.60	165.40	158.45	141.40	136.70	887.15
	Free	113.40	110.88	123.48	107.10	105.84	100.80	661.50
	Total Place	248.00 4	261.48 4	288.88 4	265.55 4	247.24 4	237.50 4	1548.65 24



or scraping now, but each step is taken cleanly with the body well prepared for a new move. Wilson naturally suggests Schaefer because he has a similar build and has the same important skating requirement, viz., a springy knee. His arms and hands are now excellently handled, and the program flows from beginning to end with an endless variety of difficult moves that equals any of the foreign programs; in fact, the program is better patterned than that of Schaefer and is, therefore, more pleasing. Canada has every reason to be proud of the Wilsons.

James L. Madden of The Skating Club of Boston was placed second by a majority of the judges and one judge thought his school figures even better than Wilson's. This is high praise indeed. We would not be inclined altogether to agree with this, but his figures have certainly improved. They are large, with accurate turns taken on a hard edge. Only one suggestion occurs to us with reference to Madden's skating (both school and free); he is too impetuous and skates with too much apparent effort. Skaters were never required to be as speedy and accurate as they are now, but the power is concealed and applied in some mysterious fashion, which was a mystery to the skater of only a few years ago. We, who were brought up with the Meyer "Discobolus" start, gaze with astonishment at these new creeping take-offs of the Boeckl school, which somehow keep the skater going more evenly than the older school. This is the second time that Jim has been runner-up in the North Americans. We would say that if he could control this power he might even take the last step and leap the last hurdle to the championship.

Robin Lee of St. Paul (present National Junior Champion) shows a genuine talent for skating and is not a forced product. Little by little, as his strength permits he is adding to his attainments both in school figures and free skating. His turns are well taken on a true edge; of necessity, in order to make figures of large size, he is compelled to make the skate travel on a less keen edge than a mature person and in the same way in free skating his tiny feet are compelled to reach far apart to cover the ground in "senior" fashion. All children seeking to present senior programs are forced to do this, and as a matter of fact, Robin does it less objectionably than the others. We all recall the "squat" positions that those infant phenomena, Megan Taylor and Cecelia Colledge were compelled to assume in order to cover the ice. That is not the impression that Robin gives as he has a very natural

style. In any event, this criticism is academic because these children will, of necessity, grow up and this handicap disappear. Robin strikes me as depending more on his own skating than the other youngsters and he is an observant and sociable skater, enjoying in true child-like fashion practicing with others. His quiet natural manner appealed to all with whom he came in contact and we are cheered in the thought that in Audrey Peppe and Robin Lee we have two youthful skaters who will bring the United States laurels in the future.

His free skating has variety and he covers the rink better than formerly with interesting moves requiring quick foot work. His spins, as before, are excellent and his jumps well executed. He has good rhythm and keys in his program with the music. It is always a treat to see him shyly doffing his little cap at the end of his program as though to say "for the time being that is the best I can do, but I will do better next time."

William J. Nagle of The Winter Sports Club, New York, makes great strides with every competition. His school figures are bolder than before and his loop figures have greatly improved. He has a full and complete senior program with good spins, spread eagle moves and jumps. His program is spirited and well laid out, and he is well liked by the audience.

## PAIRS

In the Men's Championship and in the Fours the skaters, for the most part, took their expected places, with Montgomery Wilson as an outstanding champion, but in the pairs the "between" pairs were a bit shuffled among the judges. The pairs and fours were required to skate twice, first for contents and second for performance and while the writer has competed under that system he never has judged a repeated performance before.

In our opinion it is a mixed benefit. Program and performance seem to be so intermingled, that it is something akin to giving a team a second try-out. A poorly performed, intricate and interesting program almost invariably gets a low rating for program. We think that most of the marks for program, where they were written down at all,

PAIR CHAMPIONSHIP

		Judges	Rotch Boston	Howard Montreal	Liberman New York	Knapp New York	Gregory Montreal	MacLean Toronto	TOTALS
1.	Mrs. Samuel Mr. Wilson Toronto Skating Club	Pro.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.1	5.0	65.0
		Per.	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.9	4.9	5.0	
		Total Place	11.1 1	11.2 1	11.2 1	11.5 1	10.0 2	10.0 1	
2.	Miss M. E. Smith Mr. J. Eastwood Granite Club, Toronto	Pro.	5.4	5.6	5.0	5.6	4.9	4.7	62.1
		Per.	5.4	5.5	4.9	5.1	5.3	4.7	
		Total Place	10.8 2	11.1 2	9.9 4	10.7 3	10.2 1	9.4 2	
3.	Miss K. Lopdell Mr. D. Cruikshank Minto Skating Club Ottawa	Pro.	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.3	4.0	4.5	58.8
		Per.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.6	4.5	4.5	
		Total Place	10.2 4	10.2 3	10.0 3	10.9 2	8.5 4	9.0 3	
4.	Miss G. Madden Mr. J. L. Madden Skating Club of Boston	Pro.	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.2	4.7	4.3	59.1
		Per.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	4.7	4.3	
		Total Place	10.3 3	10.2 4	10.3 2	10.3 4	9.4 3	8.6 4	
5.	Miss G. Meredith Mr. J. K. Savage Skating Club, New York	Pro.	4.6	4.5	5.1	5.0	4.0	4.0	54.9
		Per.	4.8	5.0	4.8	5.1	4.0	4.0	
		Total Place	9.4 5	9.5 5	9.9 5	10.1 5	8.0 5	8.0 5	

were changed after the second performance. With the exception of the Wilson pair, which was superbly skated both times, there was a vast difference between the first and second performance in every case. The Smith-Eastwood pair and the Lopdell-Cruikshank pair improved a hundred per cent while the two United States pairs retrograded.

Mrs. Constance Wilson Samuel and Montgomery Wilson of The Toronto Skating Club (North American and Canadian Champions) won the first place again. The Wilsons have a smooth and agreeable pair. They skate well together and have a number of difficult moves. Their jumps are well timed, both single and in combination, and as in all their skating their foot work is well nigh perfect. They received first place from all but one of the judges and made a distinct appeal to the public.

Miss Maud E. Smith and Jack Eastwood (The Granite Club, Toronto) were runners-up to the Wilsons and one judge thought the Smith-Eastwood pair the best. They gave a fine show the second night and proved to have a difficult program with great variety, some good lifts and a running style that is very attractive. All their specialties "clicked" in the Garden.

Miss Kathleen Lopdell and Donald Cruikshank of The Minto Skating Club, Ottawa, were third. This pair, in our opinion, shows greater promise than any of the others. Miss Lopdell has an authority of execution, and an ability to hold the pose on the run, which is definitely reminiscent of the style of Frau Gaillard and the Hungarian ladies. The performance on Friday night was disconnected and nothing quite materialized, and the bare spots in the program were painfully evident. There was a distinct lack of pair dances (ball room position or side by side) but on Saturday night the performance was flawless and the pair jumped to third place on the strength of that performance.

Miss Grace Madden and James L. Madden of The Skating Club of Boston were fourth. They gave a first-class performance on Friday night, in fact the best that we have ever seen them give, but Saturday the preponderance of single moves with dangerous single spins proved their undoing. This is a highly talented pair with a large repertoire and plenty of pace. It should be a simple thing to bring it to

the top rank. The ten-step is used too much as a filler. They might harken to the advice of the veteran Berger and his method of practice as described in Brokaw's book. He tells that his pair practised in a small rink and when they came to a big rink they tried to keep within the small rink proportions. Jim's natural exuberance seems to make him not only cover the rink but wish to leap over the boards. This unguarded statement is a result of chagrin on the part of your scribe, who had this pair well on its way to first place on Friday, to have it tumble into a limping second as a result of the performance on Saturday.

Miss Gertrude Meredith and Joseph K. Savage of The Skating Club of New York performed well on Friday but had a painful tumble on Saturday which marred their performance and prevented them from placing better. They had an excellent program (how good it is in content is not evident from the judges marks) and they performed it rhythmically and gracefully. It is worthy of note that performance is the keynote of success, because full credit is never given for program if the performance is not outstanding.

#### FOURS

For the first time in many years there was a Four competition in the United States. The interest in this form of group skating has, however, been kept alive by the appearances of Canadian importations under the leadership of Melville Rogers of Ottawa. The Fours were a treat. They have not changed a great deal in composition although the tempo is faster and the Rogers Four has brought Four skating to time to a marvelous degree of perfection.

*First Place*—Mrs. Elmore Davis, Miss Prudence Holbrook, Mr. Melville Rogers and Mr. Guy Owen (The Minto Skating Club, Ottawa) gave a beautiful and spirited performance Friday at The Ice Club. The hand in hand, passing, and posed moves were all performed with a rhythm which we have never seen surpassed in Fours. At the Garden, the skaters were not quite so harmonious, there were occasional slips, which showed up badly because of the flawless perfor-



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MR. CHARLES M. ROTCH, PRESENTING TROPHY TO MR. OWEN,  
MRS. DAVIS, MISS HOLBROOK, MR. ROGERS.

mance of the previous evening. But this team continued to arouse great enthusiasm and left a resolve in the hearts of members of local clubs to get up groups of this character.

*Second Place*—Mrs. Constance Wilson Samuel, Miss Elizabeth Fisher, Mr. Montgomery Wilson and Mr. Hubert Sprott (Toronto Skating Club). This proved again that the Wilsons are not only good at singles and pairs but are prime four skaters as well. In the second performance particularly they synchronized until one almost felt that with a little more practice they might forge to the front.

*Third Place*—Mrs. Theresa Weld Blanchard, Miss Suzanne Davis, Mr. Richard L. Hapgood and Mr. Fred A. Parmenter (The Skating Club of Boston) improved considerably the second performance and tried the innovation of changing tempo. Noteworthy in this Four was Miss Davis, who showed unmistakable signs of being a natural pair skater, and the Boston club is overlooking an opportunity. The repertoire of this Four was simpler than the others but it was well planned and kept to true Four arrangement in excellent fashion.

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So Canada again ran off with the first places. The United States was handicapped by the absence of its single champions, Miss Maribel Y. Vinson and Roger F. Turner, both of the Boston club, and its Pair Champions, Miss Beatrix Loughran and Sherwin C. Badger. Miss Vinson is a Senior at College and could not devote the necessary time to perfect the arduous school figure curriculum; and we thoroughly agree that she should not compete in International competition this year against contestants who can devote all their time to practice. Roger Turner was kept out by an injured knee. Our famous pair was not able to compete because Mr. Badger was abroad. We missed all sadly as they had excellent chances for first places.

Everybody agreed that the competition was flawlessly conducted and due credit should be given to Mrs. Cheever Porter and Miss Beatrix Loughran for the excellent handling of the Madison Square Garden arrangements and overseeing the additional facilities provided by the New York Club.

In a recent letter you asked me to be sure to write up the "impromptu" waltz and fourteen-step contests. How can you ask me to so descend from the Olympian heights of a North American competition? But in view of our long friendship I will "throw-in" a few words.

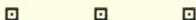
While the rating of the various skaters was being mathematically determined, a waltzing competition followed by a fourteen-step competition was held. After the first trials certain couples were selected to

remain in the competition and the final choice was determined by popular applause. The young and graceful Valerie Jones and the beloved veteran, Mr. Oscar L. Richard, both of The Skating Club of New York, were best liked by the audience in the waltz and the youthful Maddens of the Boston club caught the crowd in the fourteen-step, although the lively skating of Miss Suzanne Davis and our genial secretary, Dick Hapgood (this is legitimate, from a former secretary) were a close second.

Looking forward to seeing you at the National Championships at New Haven on March 17 and 18, I beg to remain,

Respectfully yours,

JOEL B. LIBERMAN.



## Toronto Club Honors Wilsons

Mrs. Constance Wilson Samuel and Mr. Montgomery Wilson were elected honorary life members of the Toronto Skating Club in recognition of their achievements in figure skating. For the third successive time they won the North American Championships for Singles and Pairs; they also hold the Canadian Singles and Pair titles.