



Gillis Grafstrom

Besides being one of the world's foremost figure skaters, Gillis Grafstrom was an enthusiastic collector of art treasures, all having some connection with figure skating. His three oldest books on skating were: an English book by Jones which appeared as early as 1772; one by a Frenchman, Garcin, published in 1813; the third by a German, Zindel, appearing in 1825. An old oil painting by Molenaer of a glorious winter landscape was one of the pearls of his collection. He possessed many beautiful lithographs, colored English prints, and etchings. Unmatched was his collection of old skates; the most valuable being a pair made of beautiful wood, the metal parts all of silver.

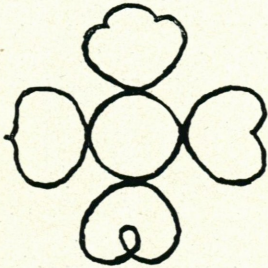
Grafstrom and His Special Figures

By Benjamin T. Wright

The Skating Club of Boston

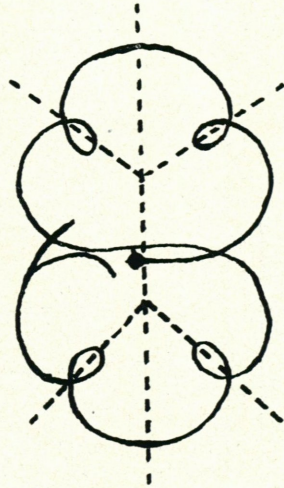
GILLIS GRAFSTROM of Sweden has often been called the greatest skater who ever lived. He was an outstanding competitor for many years and his record in the Olympics is unparalleled. He won the Olympic Championship in 1920, repeated in 1924 and 1928, and placed second in 1932 at the age of thirty-nine. He also won the World's Championship in 1922, 1924 and 1929.

Grafstrom was famous for his interpretive numbers and dances, such as his famous Swedish Mazurka, and may be called the originator of interpretive skating. Vivi-Anne Hulthen is one of the outstanding exponents of Grafstrom's style, as she began her career in Sweden while he was at his peak. Grafstrom is less well-known for his special figures, of which he invented more than fifty.



Special figures have a long history as old as that of skating itself. They fall into two classes: those which are not done on the basic figure eight, such as stars and other complicated combinations; and those which are based on the figure eight. Grafstrom was equally versatile in both, but his special figure eight figures are of great interest to us today. Mr. Jeremiah Beall of New York records in 1925 that "he (Grafstrom) does a back double-loop-change-double-loop with the same facility that a very good skater would do a double-three-change-double-three." He also invented and perfected other complicated

paragraphs such as the Rocker-Counter, a four-lobed figure, and a continuous Loop Rocker. One of his most famous figures he called the "change of mind" as it consisted of a back outer Counter immediately followed by a Bracket.



In 1925 he sent to Mrs. Blanchard for use in SKATING some of these famous figures as Sweden's recognition of the great impetus given the sport by the pioneer skater, Jackson Haines. The illustrations appearing on these pages were reproduced from the original Grafstrom drawings.

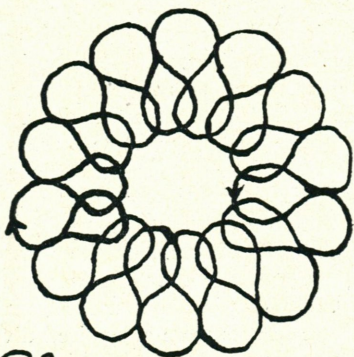
Although he was perhaps the outstanding exponent of them, Grafstrom never performed his special figures in competition. Before World War I many of the special figures, both stars and others, were a part of the schedule of the International Skating Union for international competitions. These figures were a required division of the World Championships, but after the war they were dropped and the 41 figures that we know and use today were the only ones prescribed.

Despite the fact that the figures were no

longer skated competitively, Grafstrom's influence on them has not died out. In England in 1937 the National Skating Association instituted a Platinum Test, even higher than the Gold, which included some of the special figures, such as rocker eights, counter eights, three-loop-three, bracket-rocker-bracket and various others. This test was taken and passed at Bourne-mouth by Graham Sharp, the present World Champion.

Few members of the present generation of skaters ever were lucky enough to see Grafstrom skate, but he is remembered and revered by the old-timers. Every move he made was graceful and done with apparent ease, and his control was perfect. The picture on page 4 shows the unparalleled form typical of a real champion. One reporter, on witnessing his free skating in the 1929 World Championship, wrote: "Where others, after a jump, frequently make a noise on again touching the ice, Grafstrom does not. He is dignified in all he does. He comes out of his spins without even that scarcely perceptible hesitation to be seen in all the others when there might seem to be some doubt about the balance."

Grafstrom died in April 1938, and although his name is all but forgotten, the tremendous debt skating owes him cannot be underestimated.



Change-of-edge star

Summer Skating

By Helen Barrett

Chm., USFSA Summer Sessions Com.

SUMMER SKATING FANS will be pleased to know that there will be skating this year. The Summer Sessions Committee of the USFSA is busy granting approval to the clubs which wish their session to be on the approved list. Our responsibility to skaters is to assure them that the high standard of this sport will be maintained during the Summer Session and that they will be protected from unethical practices.

We ask the clubs sponsoring Summer Sessions to provide good ice, sufficient patch sessions, and definite times for free style and ice dancing. Recognized professionals for figure skating and ice dancing will be available, and all Dance Conferences, Schools of Judging, carnivals and ice shows will be properly sanctioned or granted permission by the regular USFSA committees. Times for figure and dance tests will be provided and authorized judges will be present to judge them. If at all possible, time will be allocated for the Eighth, or Gold, Test and the Gold Dance Test.

Skating centers in the United States providing these facilities receive the approval of the USFSA for their session and will include mention of this approval in their advertising. Skaters attending approved Summer Sessions are assured the courtesies, protection, and ethics of their home club.

Sessions approved at press-time:

THE SKATING CLUB OF LAKE PLACID, Olympic Arena, Lake Placid, N. Y.

THE HIAWATHA SKATING CLUB, Pullar Community Stadium, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

THE ST. PAUL FIGURE SKATING CLUB, St. Paul Auditorium, St. Paul, Minn.

PIKES PEAK FIGURE SKATING CLUB, Broadmoor Ice Palace, Colorado Springs, Colorado.