

The United States Championships

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Chicago Figure Skating Club

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIONS were hosted by the Chicago Figure Skating Club on February 28, March 1 and 2 at the Chicago Arena. Celebrated at the same time were the twenty-fifth anniversaries of both the United States Figure Skating Association and the Chicago Figure Skating Club, and so the Nationals marked the beginning of a new era in figure skating championships in the United States. Noticeable was the increased number of men returned to the fold. War and skating veterans Eugene Turner, Wally Sahlin, Bobby Specht, Eddie Le Maire, and Canadian Champion Ralph McCreath, who held the North American title before he left for service four years ago, were all present. Among other former and present Canadian Champions in the audience were Wally Diestelmeyer, Osborne Colson, Montgomery Wilson, Susie Morrow, and Joyce Perkins. A grand reunion!

Former North American Lady Champions present were Constance Wilson Slatkin, Maribel Vinson Owen, and Theresa Weld Blanchard, now Editor of SKATING magazine. Tony Forbes, champion of microphone antics, is back from the service and at it again. Glad to have you back, Tony!

1946 is an important year, sparked with post-war vigor and new life, alternated and steadied by the soothing touch of pre-war normalcy. It is also the year of many changes! *First*, and most obvious, was the greater acceptance and appreciation of amateur figure skating by public audiences, due possibly to editorial respect and generosity in newspaper and magazine lineage. Moving picture shorts, one, Paramount's "Rhythm on Blades," and the other, a Pathé News short done in Chicago at the Nationals, are both soon to be released to build further audience appreciation of amateur figure skating.

Hardened box office men bowed to our Saturday night ticket sales which resulted

in a capacity house. Window sales to the general public in the last hour before the meet reached hundreds of dollars, which was surprising because amateur events have before drawn only interested spectators and not the public.

The announcer did an excellent job of educating the audience to the high standard and dignity of figure skating competitions and properly keyed his explanations to an understandable level. They liked it and wished for more. Then too, his delightful banter helped to stimulate judges and relax contestants at eight o'clock in the morning.

The *second* change for the better came in the choice and interpretation of music. A stronger beat replaced background rhythm. Skating programs were built right into the music more than ever before. In some cases the skater matched his music to his personality and type of skating. The *third* change showed an increasing influence of the modern dance, evident in the pairs and fours.

The *fourth* change was in the better use of color and design in costumes. More thought was put into the planning of both. This year's designs were simpler, nicely permitting the beautiful skating bodies to be included as part of the design. A new and popular color called "bittersweet" was introduced by both groups of fours, coincidentally, also by Gretchen Merrill in her school figure costume. Color was handled nicely. In several pairs, the color of the girl's dress was repeated in the man's ascot. A "little boy blue" skated colorfully in medium blue tights with jacket to match.

The *fifth* change was observed in the printed program containing sixty full pages of schedules, lists of contestants, articles, and advertising. The size was almost that of SKATING, and the cover was dressed in silver in honor of the twenty-fifth anniversaries. (Copies may be obtained from the Chicago FSC, 630 McClurg



UNITED STATES CHAMPIONSHIP TROPHIES

Court, Chicago 11. Price twenty-five cents.)

Sixth was the new microphone method used in announcing marks, which speeded up the program. The judges wrote down the marks for the announcer, and the danger of spilling red and black cards all over the ice was eliminated.

Seventh in something new was the creation of a Purple Heart Fund to provide seats for disabled veterans, who appeared to enjoy the free skating immensely.

The *eighth* wonderful change came in the results of the Gold Dance. Youth certainly took over. It was a great thrill to see fourteen-year-olds, Anne Davies and Carlton Hoffner, dance off with the championship. It should prove to young skating cubs that the dance can be lots of fun as well as wonderfully competitive for youth, too.

THE WINNERS—Gretchen Merrill reigns supreme again as Lady Champion. Dick

Button dynamited his way into the Men's Senior Championship via last year's Junior route. Barbara Jones, still a skating sweetheart, took over the Junior Ladies' crown. John Lettengarver twisted and turned his way into the Junior Men's win. Gloria Peterson won the Ladies' Novice; Dudley Richards, the Men's Novice. Junior Pair winners were Yvonne Sherman and Robert Swenning. Senior Pairs were defended and held by youthful Donna Jeanne Pospisil and Jean Pierre Brunet. The Silver Dance cup was taken by Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Queisser. Eileen Seigh stole the audience with her free skating ability and charm, and the hearts of all fellow contestants with hugs and pats and words of encouragement. The Oscar L. Richard Award which went to her for her free skating program was well placed indeed. The Bedell H. Harned Trophy, for the club whose skaters earn the great-

est number of points in all events at the National Championships, went to the Washington FSC.

The Nationals as a whole was a successful one from all standpoints. The ice was excellent, music well handled, program timing good. Chairmen of all committees, judges, referees, and all who helped can now sit back and purr contentedly over a job exceptionally well done.

Judging Incident

H. Kendall Kelley
National Judge

DURING THE NATIONALS an unusual incident occurred in connection with the judging of the Ladies' Novice, which puzzled many of the spectators, competitors, and even judges themselves. Since the tabulation of final results does not reveal the answer, an explanation of the facts may be of interest.

At the end of the school figures, a notice was posted on the bulletin board showing Virginia Baxter, Olympia SC, in the lead, with Gloria Peterson, Seattle SC, second. As the free skating marks were announced, Virginia obtained higher marks than Gloria from all judges, making it appear inevitable that Virginia was the winner. Yet the final outcome was that Gloria had won. No hue and cry was raised (a fine note of good sportsmanship), yet many people were curious as to how this apparent mathematical impossibility could occur.

The facts are as follows. At the end of the figures, Gloria stood first on the cards of Judge No. 3 and Judge No. 5, tied for first with Jane Lemmon (Philadelphia SC & HS) on the card of Judge No. 2, seventh on the card of Judge No. 1, and tenth on the card of Judge No. 4. Virginia stood first with Judge No. 4, second with Judge No. 1, third with Judge No. 3, fourth with Judge No. 2, and fifth with Judge No. 5. Since neither skater had a clear majority of firsts, it was necessary to go by the total of ordinals. Virginia's 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 added up to 15; Gloria's 1, 1, 1½, 7, and 10 added up to 20½, so Virginia was posted as

leading at the end of the school figures.

In the free skating Virginia received higher marks from all judges than Gloria with the following results. The higher marks given Virginia by Judges Nos. 3 and 5 did not quite overbalance the lead these judges had given Gloria in figures, so Gloria remained first on their cards. Judge No. 2 gave Gloria a higher free skating mark than he gave to Jane Lemmon, thereby breaking his tie for first, but he did not give Virginia a mark sufficiently higher than Gloria's to put her ahead. Therefore, Gloria got another first on Judge No. 2's card, giving her three firsts, or a clear majority in the final result. Judges Nos. 1 and 4 also pulled their total for Virginia up as a result of her free skating, but their two firsts were overbalanced by the three firsts the other judges had given Gloria.

It is hoped that this somewhat involved explanation may clear up the question as to this particular incident and may also stimulate skaters to study the USFSA RULEBOOK on how marks are computed and winners decided.

LADIES' SENIOR FOR GERTRUDE CHEEVER PORTER TROPHY

JUDGES: Alex Krupy, Chicago; Joel Liberman, New York; M. Bernard Fox, Boston; H. Kendall Kelley, Cleveland; Mary Louise Premer, St. Paul.

1.	Gretchen Van Zandt Merrill				
	<i>The SC of Boston</i>	1	1	1	5
2.	Janette Ahrens				
	<i>St. Paul FSC</i>	2	2	3	11
3.	Madelon Olson				
	<i>St. Paul FSC</i>	3	3	4	17
4.	Eileen Seigh				
	<i>Philadelphia SC & HS</i>	4	4	3	17
5.	Roberta Jenks Burns				
	<i>The SC of Boston</i>	5	5	5	25

MEN'S SENIOR FOR GEORGE H. BROWNE MEMORIAL BOWL

JUDGES: Mrs. L. M. Drake, Jr., Chicago; Carl Engel, Chicago; Heaton Robertson, New Haven; Joseph K. Savage, New York; Alex Young, San Francisco.

1.	Richard Button				
	<i>Philadelphia SC & HS</i>	1	1	1	5
2.	James Lochead, Jr.				
	<i>St. Moritz ISC</i>	2	2	2	10
3.	John Tuckerman				
	<i>St. Moritz ISC</i>	3	3	4	17
4.	Patrick Kazda				
	<i>Chicago FSC</i>	4	4	3	18

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