

PAIRS



After Mark Militano skated off the ice at the World Championships in Bratislava last year, Johnny Johns made a promise—"If Mark quits, I'm skating with that girl next year." Almost a year later, Mark was in the stands, Johnny was on the ice with Melissa Militano, and the new combination won the National Pairs division that had been devastated by splits and injuries since last year.

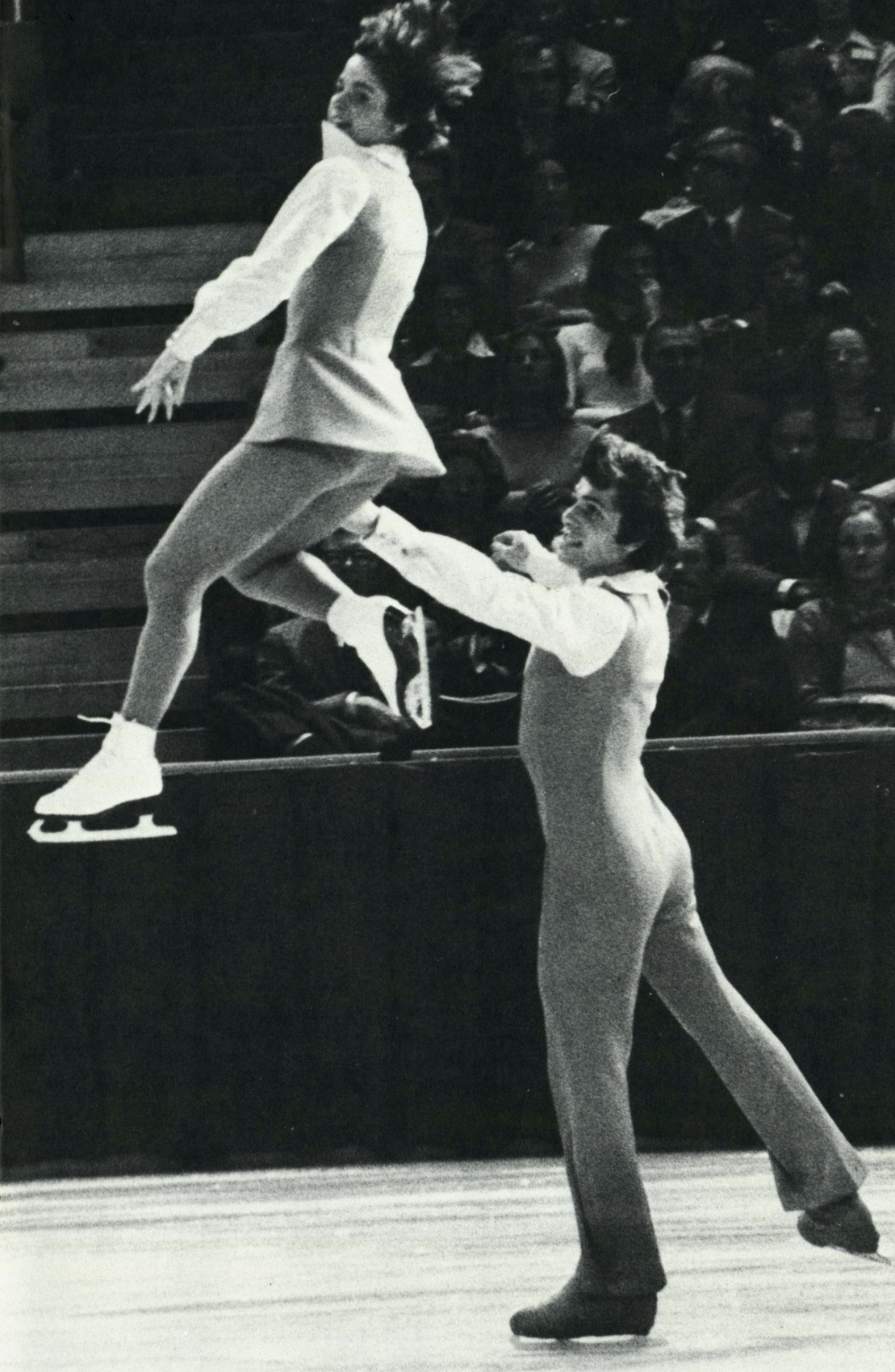
Not one of last year's seven senior pairs came back intact. Four had split up, and the other three were injured. Especially missed were the 1973 runners-up, Gale and Joel Fuhrman, who could not compete due to Joel's heel injury. Interestingly, members of the broken teams returned this year, recombined as two new pairs.

Melissa and Johnny looked spectacular in comparison to the remnants of the pairs, but they lacked real unison, which could be expected after their being together only eight months. They launched their free program, set to "Concerto in

'A' Minor for Piano" by Grieg, with a move designed for maximum impact—a double throw loop performed with no preparatory steps. The jump achieved the desired effect; the audience responded with thunderous applause, then sat spell-bound for the remaining five minutes. Side-by-side double Lutzes were Melissa and Johnny's top individual moves, while a super double split twist lift, best by an American pair in years, was their best pair move. Their finale, pull butterflies into a throw camel spin, again sparked the audience.

Tai Babilonia and Randy Gardner were last year's Junior Pair champions. Seasoned by a hurried trip to compete in

New Duo—Melissa Militano & Johnny Johns (above & opposite page) claimed the Pairs Championship. Their double throw Axel and loop, reports Mr. Zanca, "were as solid as the world could ever see." Photo above: David Leonardi; opposite page: Margaret Williamson.





Medal-winning debuts in the Pairs Championship were made by Tai Babilonia & Randy Gardner (above) and Erica Susman & Tom Huff (opposite page). Photos: Doris DeWitt. Lisa Carey & Doug Varvais (right) took the Junior Pairs title. Photo: David Leonardi.

Moscow last December, they marked their debut in Seniors by challenging the Mili-tano/Johns combination in the short program. Skating to one of Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsodies," they had livelier footwork and a more appealing back spiral entry into the death spiral. In the free skating, Tai and Randy used good press lifts as well as a six-jump combination of split jump/loop/falling leaf/double flip/Axel/double loop. They also performed the one-arm, twisting lift that Starbuck and Shelley used two years ago.

In Junior Pairs, Lisa Carey and Doug Varvais won easily. A top move for them was a big one-arm throw Axel, while their double twist lift was also good. Sheryl Franks and Mike Botticelli, both competing in the Novice singles events as well, combined for second place.





PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP

JUDGES: A—Mrs. Claire Ferguson, North Providence, R.I.; B—Mrs. Blanche Horsman, Buck Hill Falls, Pa.; C—Mrs. Jane Lincoln, Minneapolis, Minn.; D—Barlow Nelson, Tulsa, Okla.; E—Mrs. Betty Sonnhalter, Seal Beach, Calif.; F—Mrs. Jane Sullivan, Aspen, Colo.; G—Mrs. Ida Tateoka, Riverton, Utah. REFEREE: Robert McLeod, Norwalk, Calif. SHORT PROGRAM: Group A.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	M
1. (1) (1)	Melissa Militano, SC of New York, & Johnny Johns, Detroit SC							
	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	6/1
2. (2) (2)	Tai Babilonia & Randy Gardner, Los Angeles FSC							
	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	7/2
3. (3) (3)	Erica Susman, Los Angeles FSC, & Thomas Huff, Arctic Blades FSC							
	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	6/3
4. (4) (4)	Cynthia Van Valkenberg, Arctic Blades FSC, & Phillipp Groul, Jr., Denver FSC							
	3	4	6	4	4	5	4	5/4
5. (5) (5)	Beth & Frank Sweiding, Chicago FSC							
	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	7/5
6. (6) (6)	Suki Hoagland & Michael Sahlin, Denver FSC							
	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	7/6

JUNIOR PAIRS

JUDGES: A—Newbold Black, IV, New York, N.Y.; B—Mrs. Claire Ferguson, North Providence, R.I.; C—Mrs. Jane Lincoln, Minneapolis, Minn.; D—Barlow Nelson, Tulsa, Okla.; E—Mrs. Henrietta Nelson, Los Angeles, Calif. REFEREE: Hugh Graham, Jr., M.D., Tulsa, Okla.

	A	B	C	D	E	M
1. Lisa Carey & Douglas Varvais, Los Angeles FSC						
	1	1	2	1	1	4/1
2. Sheryl Franks, Hayden Recreation Centre FSC, & Mike Botticelli, SC of Boston						
	2	3	1	3	2	3/2
3. Rebecca Loghrey & Mike Chapin, Portland ISC						
	3	5	4	2	3	3/3
4. Rose Mary Wilzbacher & Rick Turley, St. Paul FSC						
	4	2	3	4	5	4/4
5. Tracy & Scott Prussack, Crystal Springs ISC						
	7	4	7	5	4	3/5
6. Darlene Duroure, Amherst SC, & Michael Dee, Buffalo SC						
	6	7	5	8	6	3/6
7. Amy Brown & Larry Gephardt, Buffalo SC						
	5	8	8	7	7	3/7
8. Allison Washer & Peter Oppegard, Troy SC						
	9	6	6	9	8	3/8
9. Vicki Carr & Paul Tassone, Wasatch FSC						
	8	9	9	6	9	5/9

Placements in the Pairs Championship are reported as follows: the **first** number in parentheses records each pair's placement in the short program; the **final** number in parentheses records placement in free skating only.