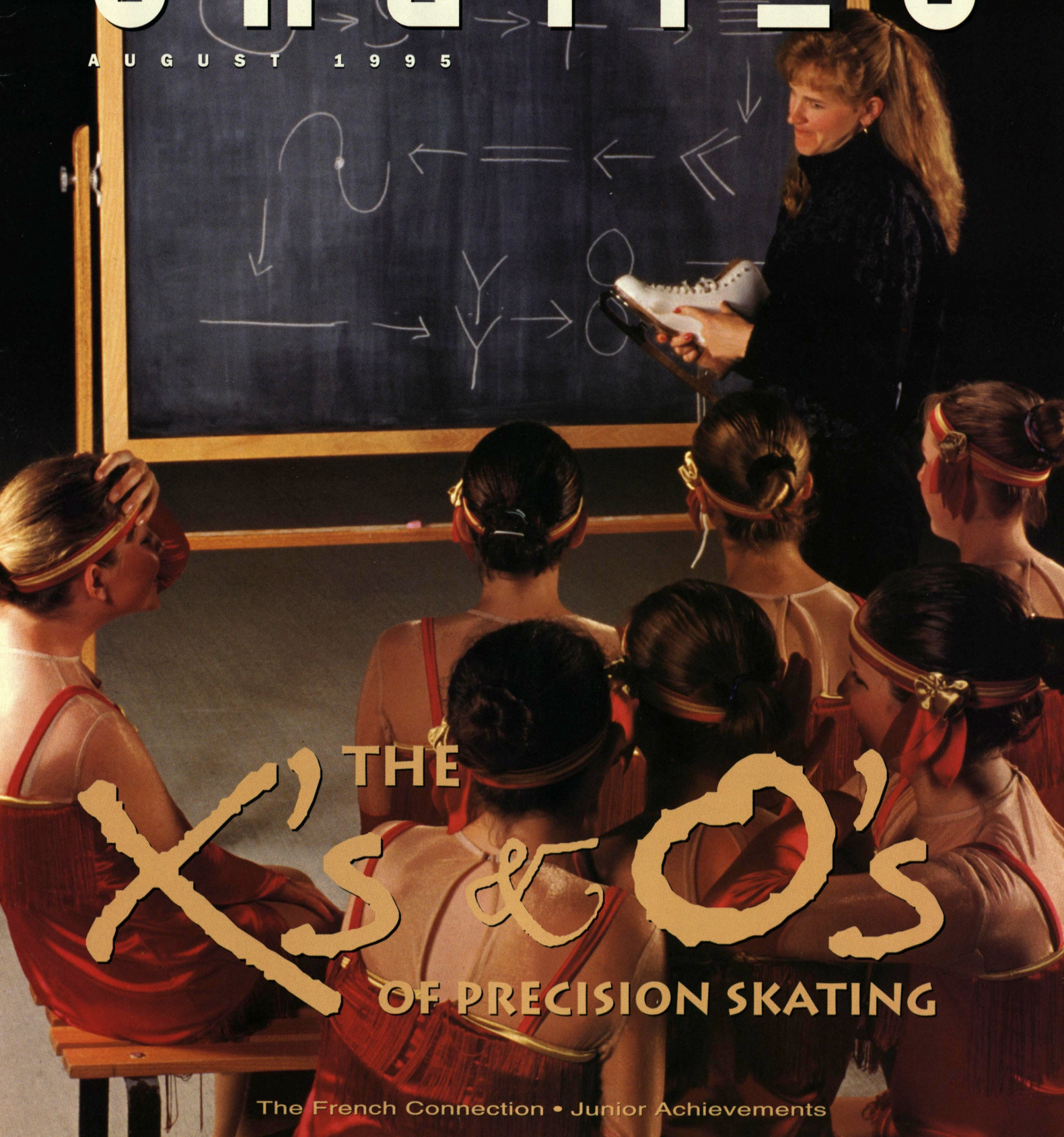


SKATING

AUGUST 1995



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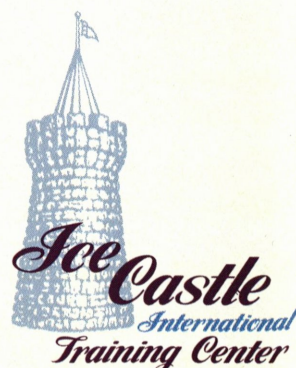
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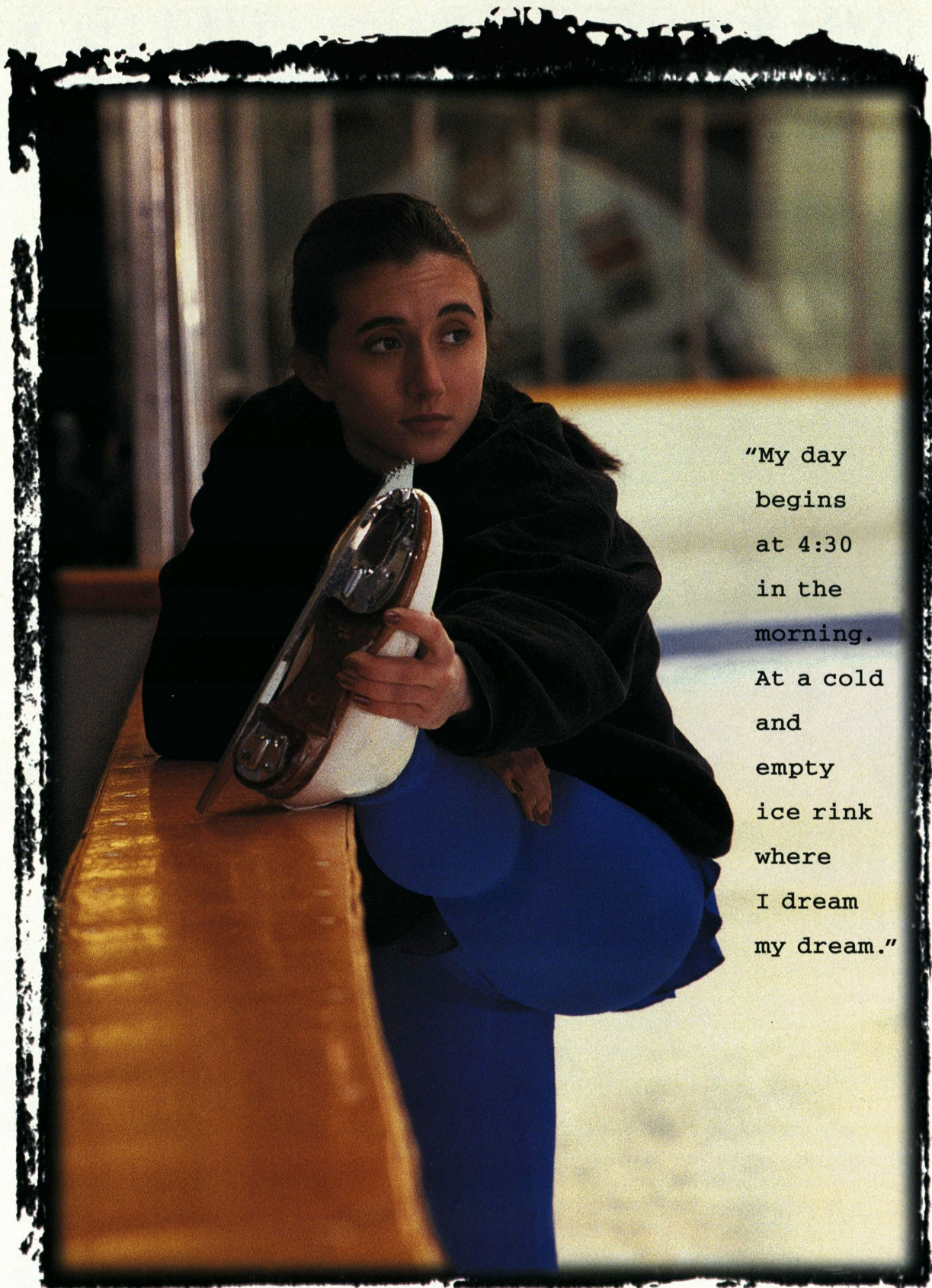
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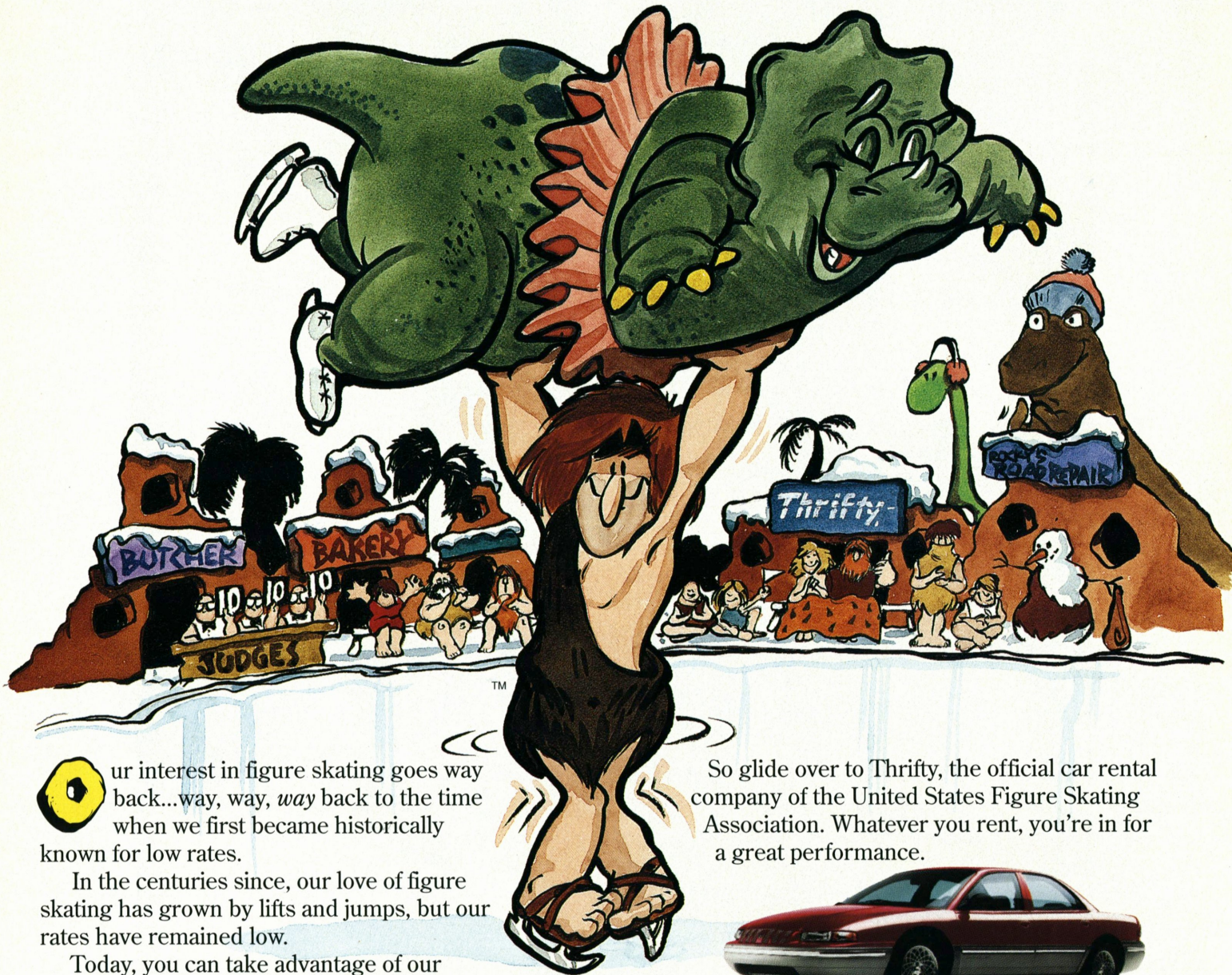
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ice rink
where
I dream
my dream."


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SKATING

VOLUME 72 NUMBER 8

FEATURES

X'S & O'S OF PRECISION SKATING

Four top precision coaches explain how they have created winning programs.

by Paul Harvath

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENTS

U.S. figure skating's stars of tomorrow are moving their way through today's Junior ranks.

by Ellen Radin and Jay Miller

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

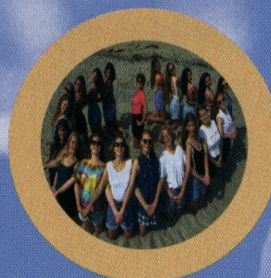
Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy took the silver medal in ice dancing at the 1994 World Championships and the bronze in '95. This year they have set their sights even higher.

by Jean-Christophe Berlot

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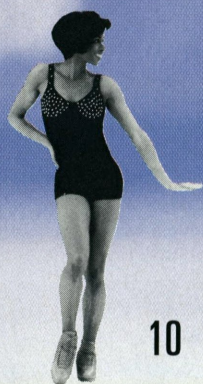
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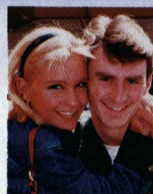
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COVER

As a result of its burgeoning popularity, the X's and O's of precision skating are being studied by thousands of skaters — young and old — throughout the United States. Coach Ann Marie Copp and members of the Ann Arbor Express Novice precision team are among those who have helped make precision the fastest growing discipline in the U.S. and the world.

Photograph by Paul Harvath.

George S. Rossano

SOME RESULTS OF CHANGE

By Morry Stillwell, USFSA President

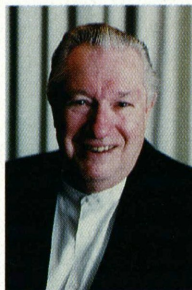
We are all aware of the changes that engulfed "amateur sports" as a result of the International Olympic Committee opening its events to professional and famous sports figures.

Basketball's "Dream Team" in Barcelona was followed by the I.S.U.'s own Winter Olympic "Dream Team" in Norway. Achievements of these Dream Teams were not universally triumphant, but amateur sports changed forever. A second — and according to the I.S.U., the last — reinstatement period has come and gone. The USFSA can now concentrate on projects and programs that will encourage our members to remain eligible. The main ingredient here is money.

The USFSA's Memorial Fund has done a wonderful job over the years of providing support for our skaters. Funds provided by the USOC, while minimal, also have helped USFSA skaters continue their competitive careers, bringing glory to themselves and joy to all the rest of us. It was obvious that with the increasing popularity of skating, internally-generated funds could not provide the support needed to encourage our skaters to remain eligible. USFSA income from dues fails to provide enough funds even to support all the services requested by our Clubs and their membership, much less to provide any money to athletes directly. Fortunately, Claire Ferguson, during her administration, with Jerry Lacey as the negotiator, has provided the USFSA with an ABC contract that assures additional skater support through 1999. Our International Challenge series has provided additional funds to our U.S. Team skaters, while satisfying commitments within the ABC contract.

An important development that will benefit the eligible skater is the inclusion of Skate America as part of a five-competition series ending with a sixth event to be called the Grand Prix Final. Discussions over the last three years have finally resulted in Canada, France, Germany, Japan and the United States joining forces to produce the Grand Prix series. The I.S.U. has joined with the member nations of the Grand Prix Group (GPG) in providing some of the prize money to be awarded in this series.

The sport continues to evolve. The I.S.U. has approved an International Open Competition series, organized by outside promoters and sanctioned by the country in which the event is held. Rules have been changed by the I.S.U., so that these proposed events will be conducted under rules similar to the original



STILLWELL

Continued on page 11

SKATING

EDITOR
JAY MILLER

ASSISTANT EDITOR
MARY ANN PURPURA

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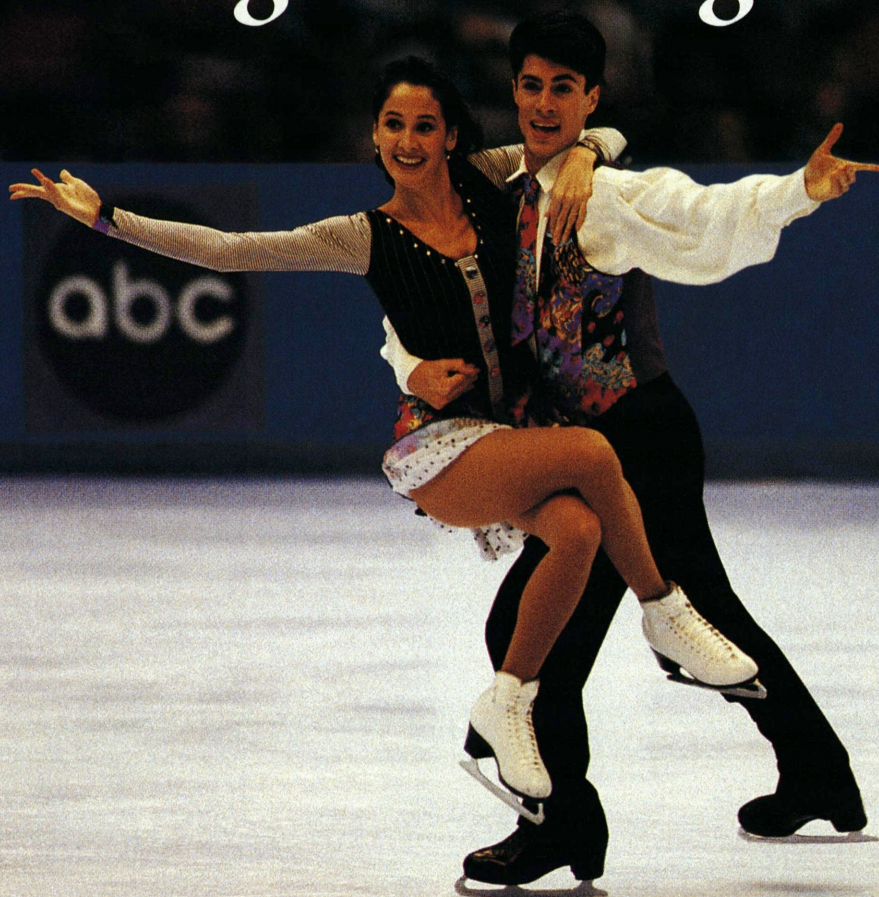


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ABC SPORTS/USFSA 1995 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Saturday, February 11 – U.S. Figure Skating Championships (Men) 4:30 – 6:00 PM
- Saturday, February 11 – U.S. Figure Skating Championships (Ladies) 8:00 – 10:00 PM
- Saturday, February 18 – U.S. Figure Skating Championships (Pairs) 4:30 – 6:00 PM
- Saturday, February 25 – U.S. Figure Skating Championships (Dance) 4:30 – 6:00 PM
- Saturday, March 18 – Chrysler Skating Spectacular (From the U.S. Championships) 4:30 – 6:00 PM
- Sunday, April 16 – Hershey's Kisses Pro-Am Challenge 4:00 – 6:00 PM
- Sunday, May 7 – Campbell's Soups Tour of World Champions 4:00 – 6:00 PM
- Sunday, November 12 – Sudafed Skate America International 2:00 – 4:00 PM
- Sunday, November 19 – Sudafed Skate America International 4:00 – 6:00 PM
- Saturday, December 9 – Thrifty Car Rental International Challenge 2:00 – 4:00 PM

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Lucrative Grand Prix gets green light

The newly created International Grand Prix of Figure Skating will unify five of the world's most prestigious skating events into a lucrative skating series for the world's top eligible competitors, series organizers announced recently.

The inaugural series, which will offer \$1.25 million in total prize money, will be comprised of Sudafed Skate America International '95, SunLife Skate Canada, Trophée de France, Sparkassen Nations Cup on Ice and NHK Trophy (please see page 33 for dates and sites). The series will culminate with a newly created event — the Grand Prix Final, Feb. 23-25, 1996, in Paris, France —

offering an additional \$700,000 in prize money.

"The Grand Prix adds stature and prestige to the five individual, international competitions," said USFSA President **Morry Stillwell** of Malibu, Calif., who along with I.S.U. President **Ottavio Cinquanta** and the presidents of the skating federations of Canada, France, Germany and Japan formed the nucleus of the Grand Prix organizing group. "The events will also provide greater exposure of our eligible skaters to the world viewing audience."

Eligible singles skaters, pairs and dance teams will have the opportunity

to qualify for the Grand Prix Final through a point system that will rank the skaters according to their combined performance in two of the five aforementioned Grand Prix events. Skaters may participate in more than two of the Grand Prix events, but all must declare by Sept. 1 which two events will be their point-earning competitions.

The Grand Prix Final will feature the top six point-earning ladies' and men's singles skaters, as well as the top four pairs and dance teams, and no country may have more than three competitors in the same discipline. ■

USFSA joins with America Online

The USFSA's maiden voyage into cyberspace began in mid-August when the organization formally launched its USFSA Online information service on America Online (AOL), the fastest-growing consumer on-line service in the nation with more than three million current subscribers.



Online

USFSA Online will provide AOL subscribers with immediate, round-the-clock access to general information on the USFSA, results from major competitions, biographies and photographs of top U.S. skaters and press releases coming out of USFSA's Media Relations

Adult Nationals, Precision Challenge Cup announced

The 1996 version of the wildly successful U.S. Adult Figure Skating Championships is slated for April 18-21 in Lake Placid, N.Y., the USFSA recently announced.

A formal competition announcement is being prepared and will be available at the end of August.

Another event that has recently been approved by the I.S.U. Council is the World Challenge Cup, an international precision competition being viewed as a trial for a World Precision Championships by the end of the century. The Challenge Cup, featuring international senior precision teams by invitation, is slated for April 4-6, 1996, in Boston, Mass.

The United States will be represented by two teams, which will be determined at the 1996 National Precision Championships, March 27-30, in Chicago, Ill. ■

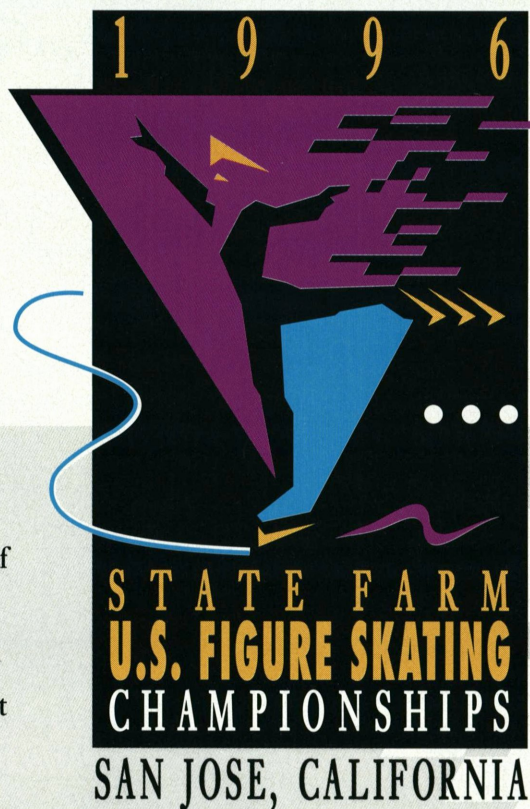
Department. USFSA Online operates under The Grandstand Sports Services, Inc., an interactive sports services provider to AOL.

"We're delighted to have USFSA Online with The Grandstand," Grandstand President **Ken Schoenberg** said. "We feel the USFSA is the premier skating organization in the United States and will bring a wealth of infor-

mation to Grandstand members."

Current AOL subscribers may access USFSA Online through keyword: USFSA. The USFSA e-mail address is USFSA1@aol.com. The new e-mail address for *Skating* magazine is SkateMag@aol.com. Anyone interested in subscribing to AOL may call 1-800-827-6364 to obtain the necessary information and software to sign on. ■

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THE COMPETITIONS

All events will be held at the San Jose Arena except those marked with an asterisk which will be held at the Ice Centre of San Jose.

Session	Event	Date	Start Time
Session 1	All Compulsory Figures Events*	Saturday, Jan 13	9:30 am - 7:15 pm
Session 2	Novice Events*	Monday, Jan 15	11:30 am - 8:15 pm
Session 3	Novice Events*	Tuesday, Jan 16	11:45 am - 9:00 pm
Session 4	Junior Compulsory Dance and Junior Men Short Program	Tuesday, Jan 16	12 noon - 2:50 pm
Session 5	Championship Compulsory Dance	Tuesday, Jan 16	7:00 pm
Session 6	Junior Original Dance and Junior Ladies Short Program and Championship Original Dance	Tuesday, Jan 16	10:30 am - 2:20 pm
		Wednesday, Jan 17	2:35 pm - 7:00 pm
Session 7	Opening Ceremonies and Championship Pairs Short Program	Wednesday, Jan 17	7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Session 8	Junior Pairs Short Program and Junior Men Free Skating	Thursday, Jan 18	10:30 am - 2:50 pm
Session 9	Championship Men Short Program & Championship Pairs Free Skating	Thursday, Jan 18	2:50 pm - 5:15 pm
Session 10	Junior Dance Free Dance	Friday, Jan 19	7:45 pm - 10:00 am
Session 11	Junior Ladies Free Skating	Friday, Jan 19	12:35 pm - 5:00 pm
Session 12	Championship Ladies Short Program & Championship Dance Free Dance	Friday, Jan 19	7:30 pm - 9:15 am
Session 13	Junior Pairs Free Skating and Championship Men Free Skating	Saturday, Jan 20	9:15 am - 12 noon
Session 14	Championship Ladies Free Skating	Saturday, Jan 20	5:00 pm
	Exhibition of Champions	Sunday, Jan 21	2:00 pm

*Tickets for \$5.00 available at the Ice Centre of San Jose only.

Schedule subject to change



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Sudafed Skate America '95 International field taking shape

SUDAFED
SKATE AMERICA
INTERNATIONAL



1995
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The ladies' competition for Sudafed Skate America International '95, Oct. 26-29, in Detroit, Mich., is shaping up to be a rematch among the medalists from the 1995 World Championships.

As of press time, 1995 World silver medalist **Surya Bonaly** of France had confirmed her participation in this the first event of the newly formed Grand Prix of Figure Skating series. Reigning world champion **Chen Lu** of China and the United States' **Nicole Bobek** of Chicago, Ill., have been named by the series organizers as the Grand Prix entries for this competition, but

each has until Sept. 1, 1995, to confirm her participation. **Laetitia Hubert** of France, who captured sixth at the '95 Worlds, has joined Bonaly as a confirmed participant.

For the men's competition, reigning U.S. champion and '95 World silver medalist **Todd Eldredge** of South Chatham, Mass., and World bronze medalist **Philippe Candeloro** of France have been named as the Grand Prix entries, but have yet to confirm.

In the dance competition, '95 World bronze medalists **Sophie Moniotte** and **Pascal Lavanchy** of France have confirmed they will compete in Detroit. Other top dancers who have been named by series organizers to compete are reigning world and Olympic champions **Oksana Griatchuk** and **Evgeny Platov** of Russia and **Anjelika Krylova** and **Oleg Ovsiannikov**, also of Russia. The Russian teams also have until Sept. 1 to confirm.

Grand Prix entries for the pairs competition, but yet to confirm, are '95 Worlds bronze medalists **Jenni Meno** of Westlake, Ohio, and **Todd Sand** of Costa Mesa, Calif., and Russia's **Marina Eltsova** and **Andrey Bushkov**, fourth-place finishers at the 1995 Worlds.

The tentative schedule for Sudafed Skate America International '95 is as follows: Oct. 26 (evening) — compulsory dance, pairs short program and men's short program; Oct. 27 (evening) — original dance and ladies' short program; Oct. 28 (afternoon) — pairs free skating and men's free skating; Oct 28 (evening) — free dance and ladies' free skating; and Oct. 29 (afternoon) — gala exhibition.

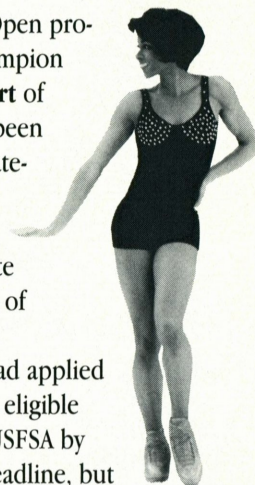
Individual session tickets for Sudafed Skate America International '95 go on sale Aug. 21 and are available by calling 313-396-7910. ■

Names In The News

USFSA approves Flack Burghart reinstatement

Reigning U.S. Open professional ladies' champion **Rory Flack Burghart** of Wasilla, Alaska, has been approved for reinstatement as a fully eligible competitor through a recent vote by the USFSA Board of Directors.

Burghart, 26, had applied for reinstatement to eligible status through the USFSA by the April 1, 1995, deadline, but was not recommended for reinstatement by the USFSA's Sanctions and Eligibility Committee by virtue of information obtained immediately before the reinstatement deadline. Burghart then filed a formal grievance with the Association. The Grievance Committee voted in her favor and recommended that the Board of Directors approve her reinstatement. The Board of Directors approved her reinstatement through a mail vote announced July 21.



FLACK BURGHART

Miscellaneous

Reigning U.S. men's champion **Todd Eldredge** has recently signed with **Nancy Kerrigan's** fiancée and agent **Jerry Solomon** for representation.

Kerrigan, meanwhile, was recognized June 30 in a special award presentation by the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program for "her courage and commitment in the face of adversity" and for serving as a positive role model for today's youth.

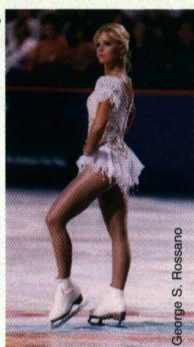
Olympic gold medalist **Peggy Fleming** has signed with IMG for exclusive representation. ■

Bobek, Eldredge tops at Team Challenge

Detroit's dynamic duo of **Nicole Bobek** and **Todd Eldredge** added yet another title to their impressive list of 1995 accomplishments by capturing first in their respective disciplines at the 1995 USA vs. The World Team Challenge, July 15, in Kennewick, Wash.'s Tri-Cities Arena.

Bobek, the reigning U.S. ladies' champion and '95 Worlds bronze medalist, improved upon her third-place standing after the short program by winning the free skating portion over reigning World ladies' champion **Chen Lu** of China and '95 World silver medalist **Surya Bonaly** of France to capture the gold in the ladies' singles competition. Fellow U.S. Team competitors **Michelle Kwan** and **Tonia Kwiatkowski** finished fourth and sixth respectively.

Eldredge, whose stellar year has



BOBEK

included a third U.S. men's title and a silver medal finish at the '95 Worlds, captured first in both portions of the men's singles competition to win the gold in the four-man field. Fellow U.S. Team member **Scott Davis** finished fourth behind Ukraine's **Viacheslav Zagorodniuk** and Great Britain's **Steven Cousins**.

In the pairs competition, newcomers to the international scene **Shelby Lyons** and **Brian Wells**, fourth-place finishers at the 1995 U.S. Championships, could not overcome the experience of Latvia's **Jelena Bereznai** and **Oleg Shliakhov** and finished second in the two-pair field. There was no dance competition at this event.

Despite winning gold in two of the three events, the U.S. Team fell to the World Team in the team standings — 496.30 to 483.45. Action from the 1995 USA vs. The World Team Challenge, organized by Jefferson-Pilot Sports and sanctioned by the USFSA, is tentatively scheduled to air Oct. 14 and Oct. 21 on CBS. Please check local listings. ■

U.S. assignments for upcoming events

Grand Prix International

Aug. 22-27, 1995

St. Gervais, France

- Men** — Ryan Jahnke
- Ladies** — Karen Kwan
Sydney Vogel
- Pairs** — Erin Elbe &
Jeffrey Weiss
- Dance** — Cheryl Demkowski &
Gregory Maddalone

Nebelhorn Trophy

Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 1995

Oberstdorf, Germany

- Men** — Matthew Kessinger
- Ladies** — Patricia Mansfield
Tara Lipinski
- Pairs** — Shelby Lyons &
Brian Wells
Danielle Hartsell &
Steve Hartsell
- Dance** — Kate Robinson &
Peter Breen
Eve Chalom &
Mathew Gates

President's Message

Continued from page 6

USFSA Pro-Am competitions. Even with rules that give greater credit for the artistic and creative element of skating, some ineligible skaters have indicated that they are not eager to participate in open competitions. Fortunately, the USFSA does not need to deal with this problem as it is their own personal decision.

Since the new events are driven by United States televisions' appetite for skating, most of the competitions will

take place in this country. The promoter produced competition presents some genuine challenges to the USFSA and to the promoter. The promoter has had difficulty in learning how to work with the USFSA/I.S.U. structure and we are challenged to understand the promoter or television instant decision-making process. Dealing with only ineligible skaters, the promoter has become accustomed to changing schedules and rules at a minute's notice. On the other hand, it is possible that the USFSA/I.S.U. approval and sanctioning process could be streamlined.

Skating continues to evolve under pressures brought on by increasing popularity. Many of you can remember the time when a skating event, if reported at all, was only on the society page. Now major skating competitions are there for the World to view and some 250-plus sports reporters cover our U.S. Championships. While this popularity brings on new challenges and responsibilities, I believe that the USFSA will continue to benefit from this popularity. We should continue our leadership role in the evolution of skating. ■

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Photos & Text
By Paul Harvath

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when jumps, figures,
or dance patterns
become too time-
consuming or costly.
Precision Teams allow
these skaters to
continue to improve
and compete in an
environment that
builds social skills
and teamwork.

For years, the best kept secret in figure skating was safe with the handful of clubs and countries that participated in the fledgling skating discipline known as precision skating.

In the past several years, however, thousands of energetic and skilled participants, coaches and officials have helped blow the cover on the secret through their dedication and devotion to the sport.

For those of you who are still in the dark, precision skating is executed by teams of as few as eight to as many as 24 members. Intricate maneuvers and elaborate choreography and costuming are the most visible elements of precision skating, but perhaps the most important elements of the burgeoning sport are the ones that are less visible to the untrained eye. For the participant, precision skating combines all of the skill and artistry of individual skating with the camaraderie and valuable lessons that come with virtually any team sport.

There are numerous examples of the growing popularity of the sport, such as its recognition last year by the International Skating Union, the forma-

tion of a technical committee and the I.S.U.'s quest to develop a Precision World Championships by the end of the century. In the United States, one of the more glaring testaments of the arrival of the sport came this past April at the 1995 U.S. Postal Service Precision Championships when more than 1,700 skaters converged on San Diego to compete for national titles under the first-time ever glare of national television lights and under the banner of a first-time ever title sponsorship.

Now that secret is out, many in the skating community have begun to wonder how they can incorporate precision into their club programs. What has worked in the past? Where do you start? What should you expect? These are some of the questions that formed the basis of this article.

For an insider's perspective on precision skating, *Skating* interviewed four of the top precision coaches in the United States to gain insight into the creation and maintenance of a successful program. Although each has different backgrounds, methods and circumstances, their stories are hopefully inspiring and educational.

THE

X

S & O's

OF PRECISION SKATING

California Dreamin'

**"I JUST DREAM OF
HAVING 40 KIDS
TRYING OUT FOR MY
TEAM."**

**KAREN WIESMEIER
SAN DIEGO ICETTES**

All one has to do is wander along the beaches near San Diego, Calif., to understand the diversions that lead to Karen Wiesmeier's longing for more participation in the San Diego FSC's precision program.

Against these odds, however, this Canadian-born dynamo has built the West Coast's most consistent and strongest program of Juvenile, Intermediate and Junior teams.

The teams have become familiar faces on the medal podiums at the Pacific Coast Sectional Championships and annually raise their own money to fund their trip to the U.S. Precision Championships.



THE ICETTES OF SAN DIEGO FSC

Wiesmeier took up skating in Quebec in the 1970s and quickly found herself precision skating with Les Chatelaines, a team initially formed to skate exhibitions in England and Scotland. In its second year, this team entered the prestigious Ilderton International competition and surprised the field by winning the Senior event with a profoundly artistic number.

Wiesmeier left Les Chatelaines to pursue her skating career under the tutelage of Margaret and Bruce Hyland in San Diego. She eventually returned to Canada and started a Juvenile team in Broussard, Quebec, where she faced challenges, not of participation, but of being an English-reared Canadian coaching a French-Canadian team. Since she was the only coach with precision experience, Wiesmeier used an interpreter to instruct the eager youngsters.

Returning to San Diego in 1981, she used her precision coaching experience to lead an Ice Skating Institute of America (ISIA) Juvenile team at the Ice Capades Chalet in La Jolla. Two years later, the team followed Karen in her move to teach at San Diego FSC in Mira Mesa. The team was welcomed into the club which already had the Blazers (Novice) and Icettes (Junior) under the leadership of Sheila Deweese.

Coincidentally, this was the first year for the U.S. Precision Championships and within two months of finding out about it, Wiesmeier found herself coaching at this event.

Her dedication and perseverance caught Deweese's attention and in 1988, Wiesmeier was asked to take over the Junior and Novice teams. Initially hesitant and intimidated because of the closeness of age to the skaters, she

accepted the challenge and is still coaching the Juvenile Starlites, the Intermediate Sun Blazers and the Junior Icettes.

Today, this precision veteran of almost 20 years thinks nothing of the daunting task of coaching three teams.

Formal tryouts are held three weeks after the U.S. Precision Championships with the aid of judges and another coach to evaluate stops, spirals, stroking, crossovers, chassés, edges and basic precision footwork appropriate to the team level. Only one formal tryout is held, but skaters may be asked to skate with a team for several practices on a trial basis.

Precision skaters are at a premium in California and Wiesmeier has been known to start the year with 13 skaters and eventually create enough interest to pull together a competitive team of 16 to 20 skaters.

The team skates year-round since they must pay for their sessions whether they are there or not. Creative vacationing allows for each team to have a month off while another team doubles up on practices. Since primetime ice is \$275 per hour, the teams are forced into some early morning ice. Thus, the Icettes find themselves on the ice at 4:15 a.m. and practice until 6:20 a.m., when the Sun Blazers take the ice for their hour-long practice. The Starlites practice for one hour at 11 a.m. when they are hit with the primetime fee. The weekly practices are supplemented with off-ice sessions and additional ice is procured just before the U.S. Precision Championships.

Wiesmeier develops programs after coaching and watching at Nationals. Upon returning home she "goes nuts" in

developing the next year's programs.

After narrowing down a theme and gathering music, she brainstorms with her friend, fellow Canadian precision coach Lynn Forget from Laval, Quebec. Once the major elements of the program are developed, she calls on choreographer Sylvia Turner to help with the finishing arm and head movements.

When asked why the West Coast hasn't seen the growth in teams that the East and Midwest has experienced, Wiesmeier replied, "It's really tough, there's kind of an attitude about precision skating — some of the better skaters don't want to do it. There aren't that many skaters and we don't get to see that many (precision) competitions."

This year's U.S. Precision Championships in San Diego, Wiesmeier says, has been a tremendous boost to precision skating in California because it displayed the best the sport has to offer.

Wiesmeier says her favorite part of coaching is "watching these kids develop, starting from nothing and watching it slowly come together."

Her dedication to the team goes beyond the skating.

"I love my kids ... I've got one girl who's been on the team 10 years. They've been through some really hard times where they get disappointed at Nationals and they just keep coming back and you know they do it because they love it."

Countering the highs of the past 15 years, Wiesmeier says, are the frustrations caused by the lack of participation.

"I love being on the West Coast, but I just dream of having 40 kids trying out for my team and having the kids want to



FUN IN THE SUN: COACH KAREN WIESMEIER (CENTER) AND HER ICETTES CIRCLE UP ON THE BEACH IN SAN DIEGO.

work so hard for that spot that they improve their skills. I look at Team Elan and Hayden and think, "Man...must be nice!" I wish everybody had the same opportunity...then we'd be playing a whole different ballgame."

Despite not having the deepest of talent pools from which to draw, Wiesmeier is proud of the continuity and motivation level she has achieved in her program.

"It's real easy to just give up and say, 'What am I doing this for? The kids could do that too, and so the greatest accomplishment is just hangin' in there."

"There are some years after Nationals when I say, 'I am nuts! I'm not doing it for my health. I'm not doing it for the money. Why am I doing it?' But, I love it! I don't get the same feeling from (coaching) individual skating."

For Wiesmeier, the bottom line is her love for the sport. "I love being on a precision team...I love to have that teamwork going out there."

Many programs have come and gone over the years, but stable long-term programs take a dedicated person to lead the team. This person may not be a triple gold medalist, but has exceptional organizational and social skills. When selecting a coach for a team find one who will stay with your club and the program through the difficult times as well as the prosperous times. When you find a coach, allow him or her to have final say in music, costumes, choreography and all on-ice activities. One person with the final say is essential.

Career Women

"PRECISION COACHING IS NEVER WORK TO ME."

JEANNINE CULLEN
TEAM ELAN

The match of Jeannine Cullen's drive and focus to the Detroit SC's pursuit of excellence is a combination that has produced the country's largest precision program with more than 150 skaters on six teams.

Cullen is a pioneer in making precision coaching a profession — she is on salary at DSC and is responsible solely for the teams.

Beyond the skating and choreographic skills needed, she is much like the manager of a small company — evaluating talent and monitoring each skater's progress and attitude in order to match her to the proper team.

Cullen started skating in 1972 and after forays into competitions and testing, she joined Ice Capades and eventu-

ally skated with a show in Japan. After returning to Detroit in 1982, she found herself coaching four USFSA precision teams at Juvenile, Novice, Junior and Adult levels in Berkley and Royal Oak, Mich. Through her coaching efforts, she has coached in all but the first U.S. Precision Championships.

Team hopefuls begin trying out during the last part of July over three Sundays. All potential team members register and are directed to the proper team based on age. At tryouts, music for the upcoming season is played and footwork and portions of the program elements are taught. One third of the tryout is footwork and the program elements. The remainder is stroking and skating patterns.

"What's important is to see if they catch on quickly or not at all," Cullen says of the tryout process. "By the third tryout, they may have seen all the footwork for the year's program." Cullen adds that when considering younger skaters at the Preliminary and Juvenile levels, she chooses those who she thinks will pick up the footwork by January of that season.

For the Preliminary, Juvenile and Novice levels, Cullen relies on two additional coaches — Traci Bozich and Brooke Sloan — who coach and help pick the members for these younger teams. With 150 to 170 people turning out each season, tryouts can be an extremely hectic process.

Since the inception of Team Elan, all skaters have been given a spot.

"They may not be happy where they are placed, but everyone is placed," Cullen remarked.

Each year, Cullen carefully looks at the

makeup of each team "to make sure the flow (of skaters) continues through the program and there isn't a log jam at any one level."

Themes for programs are selected well before tryouts from a list she maintains at home. She is constantly adding to the list and an idea may be on there two years before it is used for a program.

After the theme is selected, Cullen spends \$400-\$500 on compact discs to find music to match the theme. She feels the beginning and the ending are the most important pieces of music and she strives to find pieces that "move" her.

Winning is nice, but having a place for people to skate is a better goal. As a program ages, performance cycles will occur in the skaters' ages, abilities and financial resources. One year's champion may not make a final round the next year. As more clubs develop programs, this will be even more obvious. Sound long-lasting club precision programs are founded on commitment to doing the best you can with the resources you are granted. Look at the team's growth over the year rather than benchmarking it against other clubs to measure the program's success.



TEAM ELAN OF DETROIT SC

Bozich and Sloan also supply ideas for themes and music, but Cullen has the final say in music selection.

"Some years you just bomb and strike out and other years it works," she said.

In the past, Cullen would choreograph her numbers by listening to the music and drawing patterns. After several times through the drawing process, a reoccurring pattern would prevail and she would use that as the basis for her programs. For this year's program at the U.S. Championships, she used a different approach.

"I left parts of the program open, I would go from here to here and layout the groundwork for a big trick and when we got to the open areas, we physically tried things (on the ice)...I would inspire something and maybe the team would do it wrong or maybe it would turn out really neat."

With all the potential conflicts involved in managing a program this large, surprisingly the coach finds the tediousness of floor practices her least favorite part of coaching.

The tight schedule dictates that she alone runs the floor practice for the Senior team. She utilizes the other coaches to handle this weekly task for the other teams while she is concurrently out on the ice.

Cullen says her favorite moments in coaching come when she can stand back in an arena and watch her teams skate at a competition.

"The medal is not the important part. The most exciting thing for me is to watch them perform and really perform, and then it doesn't matter anymore...to see them skate and do it right...that's really neat."



THE HEART OF TEAM ELAN: (LEFT TO RIGHT) COACHES JEANNINE CULLEN WITH HER DAUGHTER KAITLIN, BROOKE SLOAN AND TRACI BOZICH ARE THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL TEAM ELAN, SHOWN IN BACK.

Cullen is understandably proud of her accomplishments with Team Elan, which grew from a concept at DSC in 1990. She is quick to point out, however, that coaching ability is not something that is learned.

"The ability to recognize music and teach people to express it is truly a gift," Cullen explained.

One gets the sense that this gifted individual will be at the helm of the successful Team Elan program for a long time to come.

Cullen is the only coach of the four interviewed who coaches an adult team. When asked to compare her approach with this group as opposed to her other teams, Cullen said, "I put the music together and sort of have some input on the costume, layout the choreography and by October they could be on their own. I just sort of referee. I come in twice a week, referee and offer some advice."

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Super Glue

**"THE COACH IS LIKE
THE GLUE OF ALL
THOSE INVOLVED
WITH THE TEAM IN
THE CLUB."**

**LYNN BENSON
HAYDENETTES**

Lynn Benson is the very personable Super Glue of one the most successful precision programs in the United States.

The Haydenettes have been the Senior precision team champions in five of the last seven years with innovative choreography, costuming and skating which have continually raised the standard of precision team skating in the United States.

With such an outstanding competitive record, one envisions skaters from all over the area vying for a spot on the team. In reality, a significant majority of the team must be from the youth of Lexington, Mass., area because of a will

involving the Hayden Recreation Centre. With this limitation, how does Benson continually orchestrate the skating magic of the Haydenettes? Part of the secret lies in understanding the personality, philosophy and life of the coach herself.

Sometime before 1970, Benson found herself competing in Novice Ladies at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships. Although rewarding in its own right, the stress of competition at this level eventually drove her away from skating entirely.

Eventually, two friends convinced her to join the fun and travel of Ice Capades. Initially a line skater, Benson's talent and showmanship caught the eye of the director, who convinced her to become an understudy for a principal part. Finding the principal skating becoming as stressful as competing, Benson moved away from show skating and hung up her skates one more time.

Subbing for vacationing coaches at Hayden eventually led Benson back to the ice as a full-time professional. After witnessing her first precision competition in 1977, she knew she had found something special. With the help of her husband, a plan was developed and presented to the club board which led to the creation of the Haydenettes.

In 1979, the team competed in its first competition where they placed seventh out of nine teams. The team's ensuing celebration prompted a puzzled official to ask, "You do know you placed seventh, don't you?" The celebration was for the birth of a team, a place for skaters who may have otherwise quit skating due to the increasing rigors of jumps and testing.

Throughout the '80s, the Haydenettes

established themselves first in the Junior division and then in the Senior division and are now regarded as one of the best senior teams in the United States. Since 1990, Benson has taught only precision in Hayden and continually balances the needs of the teams with the needs of her husband and two children.

Tryouts for the teams are held in the spring at the end of the season. Three judges aid Benson in the selection of team members. Each skater is given a number and is run through basics of stroking, crossovers and freestyle moves and is evaluated on look, carriage and speed.

"The most important requirement to me is the heart, but you really don't know that until they are on the team." Since her members must be comprised from the youth of Lexington, she rarely turns away skaters and usually ends up with 30 members on each team.

The magic of Benson's numbers begins in the spring of the preceding year when a theme for the programs is identified. Benson says the hard work begins in June when the search for the perfect music that is ideally "crowd-pleasing, not too artsy and...not been used a lot" takes place.

After finding the right music, the pieces are finalized and readied for the first practice in September.

In September, the entire team — old and new members alike — are taught the previous year's long program. It's a time-consuming process, but one that Benson feels very strongly about.

"You're not starting from square one. You've got a program. You've got a bunch of kids who know the program and the new ones come into shape so much quicker," Benson says.



**THE HAYDENETTES
OF HAYDEN RECREATION CENTER FSC**

Development of the short program is the next essential step, while parts of the new long program are interwoven throughout the early season.

Choreography is developed from a box of index cards where Benson keeps her ideas that emerge throughout the year. The program is created out of these ideas and input from the team as the opportunity arises. Once the program is taking recognizable shape, she brings in a dance choreographer to assist with the arms, expression and feeling for the music.

One key to Benson's success is her belief that a precision team number is much like a stage production for the judges, so when that music starts, as she says, "It's showtime!" To ensure that her numbers have the necessary entertainment quality she desires, Benson brings in an old acquaintance from her days in Ice Capades for advice.

Benson emphasizes the competitive aspects very little in her coaching.

"It's too much pressure thinking about trying to do well, or beating someone — just thinking about it makes me uneasy," she says.

What has been very hard on this coach is "the separation between precision and my family. I'm constantly beating myself up saying, 'Should I just not do precision? Should I just be a mother?'"

Benson's least favorite part of coaching is the time spent alone, which she recognizes as a necessary evil to doing the job properly.

"The time away from the team when I'm by myself and...all those hours at home trying to figure out what you're going to do at practice and how this formation is going to work, the music selec-



THE MASTER OF THE MARIONETTES: COACH LYNN BENSON AND THE HAYDENETTES SHOW THE CREATIVITY OF ONE OF THEIR HIGHLY POPULAR PROGRAMS — "THE MARIONETTES."

tion process, it's all very isolating. Nobody understands it unless they've done it. People don't want to hear about the time involved — they want to see what happens on the ice."

Offsetting the rigors of balancing the demands of home and the precision team is the sense of accomplishment Benson enjoys from having developed a successful program that remains in contention every year.

"I think a coach really is the glue that holds the (precision) organization in the club together, and I think over all these years having the organization staying there with all its little problems and glitches is an accomplishment."

There are, however, other reasons why Benson continues to coach precision.

"Well I don't knit, I don't crochet, I don't paint and I'm not very creative in the kitchen, so there's nothing that I do that I start with nothing and end up with a product. This is the only thing in my

life where I can start with nothing, like a blank canvas, create something and afterward say I helped do that. That's a nice feeling. I love that."

When asked about all of the medals and championships, Benson replies, "They're just frosting on the cake, but you've got to have the cake first."

So much for not being creative in the kitchen!

College Pride

"MIAMI WAS A UNIVERSITY BEFORE FLORIDA WAS A STATE!"

VICKI KORN
MIAMI UNIVERSITY

Just ask Vicki Korn about Miami University's newest varsity sport — precision skating — and her face lights up with an effervescent smile.

"I can't believe all the new things we get to do!" Korn exclaimed.

University support of ice time, priority scheduling, fitness training, sports medicine, tutoring and other training amenities previously reserved for football, basketball, hockey and other varsity sports are now available for the Miami University Precision Skating Team.

A first in precision skating, this elite status has captured the interest of the entire precision skating world. This is

one unusual precision program, and skaters from all over the country are now considering MU highly among their college options because of the unique opportunities that could be afforded to them.

The program has definitely come a long way from its origins as a form of entertainment for the intermissions of the university's hockey games. Now Korn confronts the challenging task of interviewing potential student skaters for a team to compete at an international level.

A far cry from the days of recruiting students from her one-credit hour physical education skating class, Korn will hold a formal tryout for more than 30 potential team members this fall. Because only three of 10 MU applicants are accepted each year and a minimum ACT score of 25 is required, this team has credentials and commitments both on- and off-the-ice.

Korn's responsibilities as coach of the team started in 1984, when she accepted the job of Director of Figure Skating at the university. Throughout the '80s, this team attended one USFSA competition a year, but did not attend a Precision Midwesterns because the school's spring

break coincided with the event. In 1991, schedules changed and the team finally attended its first Midwesterns in Fraser, Mich. The program has never been the same since.

The combined resourcefulness of the coach and the previous national experience of incoming team members led the team to Midwestern and U.S. Junior titles in 1993.

Unfortunately, I.S.U. rules became effective in the spring of 1993, which made the Miami team age-ineligible to compete internationally. The team promptly moved to the Senior division where they were bronze medalists in 1994 and 1995. Korn proudly points out the team's banners that hang next to the hockey team's banners in the rafters of Goggin Arena noting these accomplishments.

The team's first invitation to an international competition came this past season, and while exciting, proved a difficult endeavor because of the short

Use every resource you can find and continue to develop new ones. Start by attending a precision workshop and ask lots of questions. Every club has unique opportunities and challenges, but someone out there probably has the answer to your question. Video experts, music aficionados, travel agents, and seamstresses all can have active roles in a precision program. Look at the club roster and find who is willing to volunteer their talents.



THE MIAMI UNIVERSITY PRECISION TEAM

time frame this team has to work under for a January competition. After the team was selected in the last week of September, the short program was developed in three weeks of three to four practices a week and was skated at MU hockey game intermissions. The long program was initially presented to judges in December and underwent intense modifications before the international competitions.

One modification resulted in what Korn now refers to as the worst moment of her coaching career.

It was during a practice for Snowflake International that the team captain arose too early from a lunge in a splice and caught the oncoming spiraling skate on the bridge of her nose. This disaster sent a message to Korn that she alone is the one who understands the stresses her skaters are under and she must be the judge of what risks to take with these young ladies.

Korn's favorite part of coaching this team is "the family feeling and particularly the great feeling just after a top-notch performance." That kind of performance only comes from a year of demanding practices including practices when some of the team members want to defer their responsibilities as young ladies.

The coach's philosophy of "treating you like young ladies as long as you act like young ladies and treating you like children when you act like children" is tested at practices a couple times a year. Although those practices are her least favorite part of coaching, she understands the process as these skaters grow into young women. She also hopes some of her students take their experiences and love for precision skating with them

into their lives and eventually become coaches of future teams.

When talking with Korn, you sense her genuine commitment to the sport and the skaters she coaches. You also understand she is on to something very special at MU. She understands the responsibility to the university, but also to the sport and its future in the United States. ■

Paul Harvath coached precision skating at all levels for seven years in Ann Arbor, Michigan. As an adult competitor with the Ann Arbor FSC's Debonaires, Harvath has competed at the U.S. Precision Championships every year since 1984.

Finally, Precision Skating is not bounded by age, ability, or club size.

Most any USFSA club can form a team to fit into one of the 11 categories; youth team, teen team, adult team, preliminary, juvenile, intermediate, novice, junior, senior, adult or masters. The opportunity awaits all who wish to try. Hopefully this article has been helpful and inspirational for those people who will make it happen.



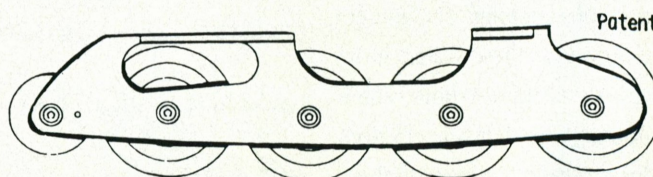
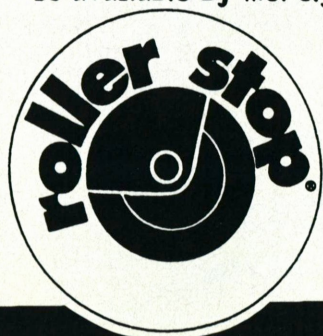
BANNER PROGRAM: MIAMI UNIVERSITY COACH VICKI KORN (SECOND FROM RIGHT) AND MEMBERS OF HER MU PRECISION SKATING TEAM PROUDLY POSE UNDER THE BANNERS HANGING FROM THE RAFTERS OF MU'S GOGGIN ICE ARENA.



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The names Matthew Kessinger (pictured top left), Timothy Goebel, Ryan Jahnke, Jessica Joseph and Charles Butler (pictured bottom left) may not roll off the tongue of even the most ardent supporters of figure skating.

But, when one is considering the long-term prospects and promise for U.S. men's skating and ice dancing, these up-and-coming stars are among the many young talents that will figure even more prominently than their current Senior counterparts such as Todd Eldredge, Scott Davis, Renee Roca and Gorsha Sur.

As top finishers in their respective disciplines at the 1995 U.S. Championships and other domestic competitions such as the U.S. Olympic Festival, skaters such as Goebel, Jahnke and Kessinger will continue to emerge in the next several years as they progress to form the nucleus of talent in the U.S. fields of men's singles and ice dancing heading into the 21st Century.

Following is the first installment of the two-part series, "Junior Achievements," which will give a brief look at some of the up-and-coming talent competing in the Junior ranks this season. In the October issue of *Skating*, we'll conclude "Junior Achievements" with a look at the ladies and pairs.





Allsport Photography

Road to Olympics for Goebel may have begun in Omaha, Neb.

Competitive skaters that have reached the level of success enjoyed by up-and-coming talent Timothy Goebel usually recall a precise moment or incident that has driven them to fervently pursue their goal of becoming a world-class athlete.

Not so, says the 14-year-old Goebel, whose rise through Junior men's ranks is traced back to public sessions with his parents at their local rink in suburban Chicago. But some-

Goebel

where in his journey from public sessions to private lessons, Goebel latched onto his dream of becoming an Olympic champion. Then again, maybe it really happened somewhere along a journey between Chicago and Omaha, Neb.

That's where Goebel and his mother, Ginny, met Olympic gold medalist and coach Carol Heiss Jenkins during a trip to the 1992 Midwesterns. Recognizing the opportunity for her son to pursue his Olympic dream from one who had lived it, Ginny and Timothy made the from Chicago to Lakewood, Ohio, to train under Heiss Jenkins at Winterhurst FSC.

The move left Goebel's father, Richard, home alone in Chicago — a transition that was initially difficult for young Timothy. "I missed my Dad," he

said. "It's been hard, but I know it's worth it."

The dividends that he has reaped since making the move have been impressive — a national novice title in 1994 and a silver-medal finish at the '94 U.S. Olympic Festival to qualify for the 1995 Junior Worlds, where he finished 14th. After a fifth-place finish at the 1995 U.S. Championships, Goebel is now setting his sights on the Junior men's medal podium at the '96 U.S. Championships. He hopes to add the triple Axel to his arsenal that already includes triples through the Lutz.

Goebel's approach to skating is very much in synch with his outside interests. A fan of science of math in his studies at Harding Middle School, Goebel is an avid student of the physics of skating and jumping as well. He spends considerable time daily off-ice doing flexibility and strengthening exercises. Twice a week, he visits the Cleveland Clinic sports medicine department to work with a physiologist on additional stretching and weight training. Not surprisingly, Goebel aspires to be a cardiovascular surgeon.

Even Goebel's outside interests are tied to improving his skating. Such is the case with his twice-weekly karate lessons, which he says "helps with concentration and the explosiveness of the kicks helps with jumps."

Although still young and developing in all facets of his life, Goebel's dedication to his goals is not unlike that of champions many years his senior.

— Ginger Tracy

A quick look at Timothy Goebel

Born: Sept. 10, 1980 in
Evanston, Ill.

Ht: 5'4" **Wt:** 114 lbs.

Club: Winterhurst FSC

Hometown: Chicago, Ill.

Training Town: Lakewood,
Ohio

School: Harding Middle
School

Coaches: Carol Heiss
Jenkins, Glyn Watts

Choreographer: Watts

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Jahnke believes in the basics

Ryan Jahnke may be the last of a dying breed — a young skater who plans to continue to compete in both figures and freestyle.

The 17-year-old Michigan native feels strongly about the value of figures in his personal approach to skating.

"I really feel that figures are like scales in music. You don't want to throw out the basics," Jahnke said, adding that he's preparing to conclude his eighth figure test. "I'm planning on keeping them up."

Jahnke has enjoyed recent success in both elements, having captured the bronze medal in Junior men's freestyle at the '95 U.S. Championships and fourth place in Junior figures at the '94 U.S. Championships. As a novice competitor, Jahnke won the men's freestyle title in 1993, one year after earning the silver medal in the figures competition.

Entering his 10th year of skating, Jahnke is continually motivated by the rapid progress and competitiveness of his peers in the Junior ranks.

"I think this group of guys is great because we have so much variety — different styles and different abilities," he said. "I think that most of these guys have better technical abilities than many, many juniors in the past. There's always something for me to strive for."

Outside the rink, Jahnke enjoys playing the flute in his high school symphonic band and going to theatrical and musical shows when he has the chance. Upon graduation from high school, Jahnke plans to attend college to study engineering or sports medicine.

"I'd really be interested in doing something that could help athletes train better," he said.

Looking toward the upcoming



Jahnke

competitive season, Jahnke says he hopes to add the triple Axel and triple flip to his arsenal, but is most looking forward to the opportunity to test his skills in the international arena. He is scheduled to make his first international appearance at Grand Prix International, Aug. 22-27, in Paris, France.

"Even though I haven't had the opportunity (to compete internationally) before, I basically have the outline of what the top international juniors are capable of and what I need to do to beat them," Jahnke said. "I can't wait...it's going to be great!"

A quick look at Ryan Jahnke

Born: March 21, 1978, in Detroit, Mich.

Ht: 5'10" **Wt:** 152 lbs.

Club: St. Clair Shores FSC

Hometown: Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich.

Training Town: St. Clair Shores, Mich.

School: Grosse Pointe South High School

Coach: Diana Ronayne

Choreographers: Ronayne, Stephanie Pizzo, Scott Discoll

Men's Singles



Ingrid Butt

Matthew's mindful of the mental aspects

For Matthew Kessinger, last year's success in the Junior men's division was a classic case of mind over matter.

Throughout the year, Kessinger apparently spent as much time and thought on improving his mental readiness as he did on his physical preparedness. The approach paid off with a U.S. Junior title at the '95 U.S. Championships.

A quick look at Matthew Kessinger

Born: July 14, 1975 in
Louisville, Ky.

Ht: 5'6" **Wt:** 140 lbs.

Club: Indiana/World Skating
Academy FSC

Hometown: Louisville, Ky.

Training Town: Indianapolis,
Ind.

School: Indiana U./Purdue
U. at Indianapolis

Coach: Pieter Kollen

Choreographers: Brian
Wright

Kessinger

"I had gone through a really tough time in the past year. I was really getting burnt out and didn't know whether I wanted to compete anymore," Kessinger said. "I made some changes though and by the beginning of the competition season, I was ready to go again and it was fun competing ... (winning) the Championships was just a great finish to a long, hard battle."

The key to the improvement of his mindset, he says, came from his coach Pieter Kollen and a new twist on an old concept.

"My coach started me out in Quiet Time," Kessinger said. "It's where I'd come in early in the morning every day

and spend 30 minutes to two hours doing things like Moves in the Field, spins and stroking to just build my power and get my body going. Then I'd come back later in the day and start the major training.

"That was really helpful in getting my mind calm, rather than going out there and saying, 'Oh my God, I've got to get right into the triple Axel!'"

Kessinger finds the mental aspects of the sport so fascinating that he's studying to become a sports psychologist at the University of Indiana/Purdue University at Indianapolis.

"I do a lot of self-talk, too," Kessinger said. "I tend to get real uptight real easily, especially if a session's not going my way. Now, I can kind of stop myself and say, 'OK, it's not that big a deal.'"

Kessinger says he has run the gamut of emotions throughout his 12-year skating career that began soon after seeing his older sister bring home a medal from an ISIA competition. His strong family ties also are helpful, he says, in staying on an even mental keel.

"I have a great family. Everybody is right behind me and we're really close," he said. "I really consider it pretty rare." An example of Kessinger's commitment to family came in July when he was forced to turn down an invitation to the U.S. Olympic Festival when the dates conflicted with his sister's wedding.

Training three to four hours, six days a week and attending college, Kessinger has little time for other pursuits. But, he is thoroughly enjoying the opportunities that his skating is giving him now.

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The Young and the Restless

At ages 13 and 15 respectively, Jessica Joseph and Charles Butler were the youngest competitors in the Junior dance field at the 1994 U.S. Championships, but fortunately for the up-and-coming dance duo that has been skating together for more than four years, age was not an issue as they danced to the bronze medal in Providence, R.I.

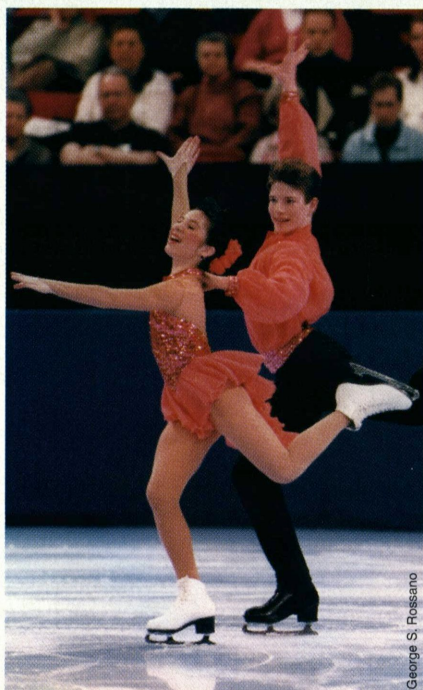
Butler's love for skating came from a family affair with the sport. His mother, who once skated for Ice Capades, had young Charles enrolled in dance, patch and freestyle lessons by age 4. By age 10, he was skating dance and pairs with his sister Erin and helping other girls with their dance tests since there weren't enough boys to go around.

Joseph began skating at age 5, after seeing an ice show. She concentrated on freestyle for the next few years, with some ice dance. Off the ice, her dance lessons included some ballroom, interpretive and jazz. Three and a half years ago, U.S. champion dancer Gorsha Sur saw Joseph skate and encouraged her to try ice dancing. When Sur left the club, Jessica began training with dance coach Igor Shpilband, who teamed her with Butler.

The couple's first performance was at an exhibition in Lansing, Mich. "People seemed to think they looked pretty good," Jessica's mother, Joyce, recalled. "They've been together ever since."

While staying together may be considered an accomplishment in itself, the team has proven as successful as it is stable.

Joseph and Butler were second as Intermediates two years ago and were Novice champions in 1994. They followed up their first national title with a



Joseph & Butler

silver medal performance at the '94 U.S. Olympic Festival. In their first international competition at Blue Swords Trophy, they finished eighth in the 15-couple field.

In their first trip to the World Junior Championships in 1995, the couple finished 17th out of 20 couples.

"The marks were all over the place," Shpilband says, adding that his pupils hope to finish in the Top 10 at this event in 1996.

Shpilband is quick to caution this young team not to expect success to come overnight.

"So many kids in this country want success right away," he says. "It takes years to get two to move as one."

Regardless of how long it takes them, Joseph and Butler are already exhibiting the qualities of champions.

"They've been growing pretty much together," Shpilband adds. "They have good personalities, both always smiling and getting along. You don't have to make this team skate, you have

to stop them."

The team's strength, he says, is their ability to dance and their physical strength. They do need polish, he adds, and to improve their ability to concentrate.

In addition to working on power, strength and speed, Butler says the couple will continue to work on skating closer together.

Butler says that Joseph is more of the romantic type of dancer — she likes the blues and slow dances. He prefers the faster dances, like the Cha Cha, and the "man dances" like the Paso Doble, where he gets to play the matador.

"We don't have the power," of some of the older teams, so we make our strength the expressions, the way we convey the dance," Butler said.

A special opportunity was extended to the team when the French skating federation extended them an invitation as the only non-French dance team to attend a one-week training camp last season. They trained for almost nine hours a day, spending one and a half hours on ballroom lessons, three hours on conditioning and four hours on the ice.

The team expects to remain Juniors for the next three years. Coach Shpilband feels that part of the reason American teams have not been more successful internationally as Seniors is because they did not, as Juniors, start building a reputation with the international judges. On the other hand, Shpilband says, it's important that dancers do not stay Juniors for too long. By the time some teams move up to Seniors, he says, they simply do not have enough time to move up the ladder.

"Everything should have the right timing," Shpilband concluded.

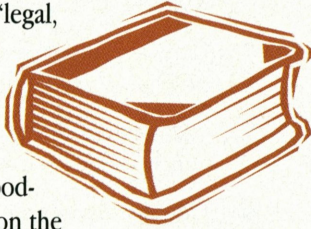
—Ellen Radin

LITTLE GIRLS IN PRETTY BOXES – THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF ELITE GYMNASTS AND FIGURE SKATERS

By Joan Ryan, Doubleday, N.Y., 1995 (214 pp.)

Reviewed by Angela D. Smith, M.D.
Chair, USFSA Sports Medicine Committee

Is figure skating training “legal, even celebrated, child abuse”? How many competitors and coaches have known that “in the dark troughs along the road to the Olympics lay the bodies of the girls who stumbled on the way, broken ...”?



Female figure skaters and gymnasts often feel pressure to be thin — both for performance and for the aesthetic “look” that many judges prefer. These pressures are real and must be dealt with constructively by education of athletes, coaches, parents and judges. Unfortunately, sportswriter Joan Ryan chooses to sensationalize the very real stresses and difficulties faced by young athletes in her new book, *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes — The Making and Breaking of Elite Gymnasts and Figure Skaters*.

While Ryan’s book does bring public attention to some of the real stresses surrounding athletic training and competition, one should not conclude that the problem is as widespread as Ryan would have you believe. The author gives the impression that she has talked to far more athletes than she has actually included in the book by restating dramatic points about a single athlete in several different chapters. Enough details are provided that it’s clear that the total number of athletes discussed is small and I found several significant medical inaccuracies in the galley proof copy I reviewed, so I question the reliability of other details.

Most competitive skaters, parents, coaches and officials in figure skating recognize that many young skaters — like young girls and women throughout North America — strive to attain their ideal image of body shape. Models with slim hips and long legs are considered heroines by many adolescents. Images of beautiful women with boyish figures parade across billboards and fill television screens. Sportswriters detail the costumes, hairstyles and weight changes of athletes. It’s no small wonder that eating disorders are a significant problem on college campuses and that young athletes also may suffer when they try to change their

bodies into shapes very different from the figures they inherited.

Ryan speaks for sportswriters and spectators when she says that “we want our athletes thin, graceful, deferential and cover-girl pretty.” Given this cultural mandate to athletes, it’s absurd to place the blame for any physical and emotional difficulties that athletes experience so squarely on the shoulders of parents, coaches and officials.

Nonetheless, I also have heard comments from coaches and judges in past years that agree with the quote from Susan Wynne in the book that “hair and weight are everything in this sport,” especially for ice dancers and pair skaters. Although sufficient difference in size and weight between partners is necessary for successful completion of lifts, judges’ education programs recently have emphasized the need for judges to put aside their subjective preferences (such as size, hairstyle and costume color) and simply judge the performance skated.

All of us involved in athletics must be aware of the seriousness of true eating disorders (discussed on the following page). We must be alert to physical or emotional problems in our children, friends or pupils. Anyone with an eating disorder should have medical help, since the risk of serious illness — even death — is high. The pressures toward thinness may also lead to disordered eating, a less serious problem, but a problem that often causes nutritional deficiencies that result in illness or injury.

Ryan’s conclusion to her opening chapter is that the situations illustrated in her interviews “warrant a serious evaluation of what we’re doing in this country to produce Olympic champions.” I agree that there is cause for concern. However, until the desires and expectations of the public — fueled by the media and the sportswriters — change, most skaters will do everything in their power to meet the physical and performance challenges required to reach the highest levels they can. All who skate and work with skaters need to recognize the inherent pressures of competitive sport and help each other control the outside pressures as much as possible, seeking professional help when necessary. Some may see their behaviors reflected in Ryan’s stories, and recognition of problems can lead to positive change.

U.S. figure skaters train toward World and Olympic standards, which continue to emphasize technically proficient performance and pleasing appearance. It’s unlikely that our society is going to decide to buy newspapers and watch television programs that showcase only champions from foreign countries anytime soon. Sensationalism won’t solve the problem. Education and awareness will. ■

WHEN DIETS BECOME DISORDERED

Recognizing and Understanding Eating Disorders in Sports

By Renée M. Parker, Ph.D.

Editor's Note: Following is the first of a two-part series of articles dealing with eating disorders among athletes. The second installment will be published in the October issue of Skating magazine. The Sports Medicine & Science column is provided by the USFSA Sports Medicine Committee — Dr. Angela D. Smith, chair and column editor.

EVEN ATHLETES DIET

Fat is out. The message is everywhere you turn: Don't eat it or you'll be it. Across sports, athletes have been advised to carry less weight for improved performance. Skating is no exception. If you're thinner then you can jump higher, be lifted easier, turn faster. Our sport, along with a few others, not only encourages lower body weight for increased performance, but it also requires a lean line to meet aesthetic demands. Your talent, your skills and your ability to perform under pressure are all undeniably on display. Also on display is a finely tuned body performing the most difficult moves with grace and deceptive ease. And to make it just a little bit more challenging, you're usually clad in a thin layer of lycra spandex.

Athleticism plus beauty are givens that have been accepted without question by the skating world. Developing and elite skaters alike feel the pressure to be thin in order to win the approval of coaches and judges as well as parents and peers. This pressure, combined with the value given thinness in society, can make for skaters who focus more on getting down to a single digit on their body fat measurement than on getting that third rotation on their Lutz.

The result? Athletes, both male and female, who find themselves caught up in harmful dieting techniques resembling anorexia and bulimia.

EATING DISORDER OR DISORDERED EATING?

Clinical Eating Disorders. You have undoubtedly heard of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. These are specific eating disorders which need to be diagnosed by a medical or mental health professional.

WARNING SIGNS OF EATING DISORDERS

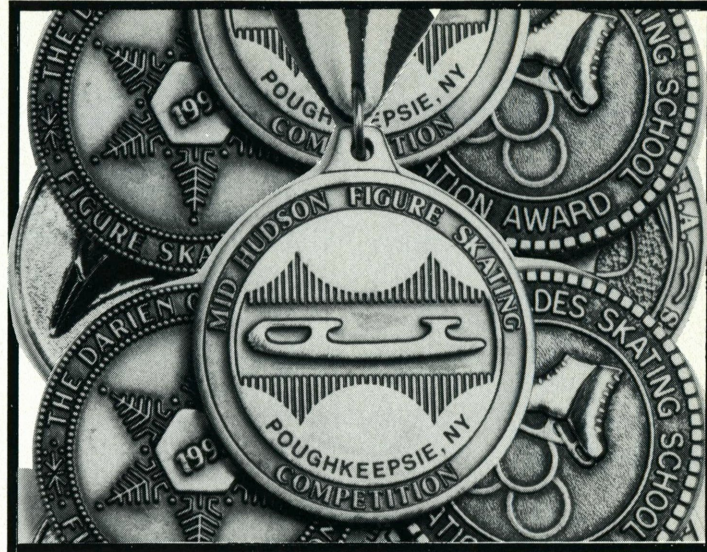
The following are some characteristics or behaviors which could indicate disordered eating and possibly a potential or ongoing eating disorder in a skater:

1. A skater who appears thin, but frequently expresses a concern about looking fat.
2. Fairly rapid fluctuations in weight.
3. Post-practice weigh-ins even though the coach has advised students against frequent weigh-ins.
4. Becoming emotional or withdrawn at weigh-ins or when body fat percentage is measured.
5. Additional exercise outside of practice and the coach's suggested training program.
6. Frequent discussion of the fat content in various foods, particularly with expression of disgust and strict avoidance of any dietary fat.
7. Avoidance of eating with others between sessions or after sessions.
8. Frequent bathroom visits after meals/odor of vomitus in bathroom or other areas.
9. Use of laxatives, diuretics, diet pills.
10. Thinking about food all of the time.
11. Hunger pains becoming a sign of strength and control.
12. Shame and guilt being associated with eating, even small amounts of certain foods such as one cookie.■

Typically, individuals diagnosed with anorexia nervosa are at least 15 percent below ideal body weight and are extremely afraid of gaining weight. In addition, they feel fat even though underweight, or are overly critical of their body shape and weight. Females with anorexia have missed at least three consecutive menstrual cycles. Anorexics maintain their low weight by eating very little and/or purging (particularly after bingeing).

Those diagnosed with bulimia nervosa do not have to be 15 percent below ideal weight or to have lost their menstrual periods. But, like the anorexic, they are overly critical of their body shape and weight. In addition, they binge (at least twice a week and have done so for a minimum of three months) by eating huge amounts of food in one sitting during which time they feel out of control and unable to stop. They also prevent weight gain by doing any combi-

Continued on page 42



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SOPHIE MONIOTTE & PASCAL

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

BY JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BERLOT

S

OPHIE MONIOTTE AND PASCAL LAVANCHY OF FRANCE WON A SURPRISING SILVER MEDAL IN ICE DANCING AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IN CHIBA, JAPAN. ONE YEAR LATER, THEY WON BRONZE IN BIRMINGHAM AND CONFIRMED THAT MEDALS ON THE PODIUM WOULD NEVER BE A SURPRISE AGAIN. THEY NOW AIM AT PLACING EVEN HIGHER...

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LAVANCHY

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ANCE TOOK A SUR-
THE 1994 WORLD
ER THEY TOOK THE
AKING THE WORLD
HEY NONETHELESS

When you meet a true pair, one can't help but be impressed by how much its members complement each other. One starts to express a thought and the other finishes it, once in a while they give the same answer at once and each one of them can talk of the other as well as oneself. The French ice dancing team of Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy are that kind of duo, even though they are partners only on the ice.

"Each one of us has a life of our own," Lavanchy says. "Still we take as much time together as possible," Moniotte added, "both on and off the ice, so that our thoughts and behavior are perfectly matched. This way there is no distance between the two of us ... which is a must in ice dancing!"

Moniotte and Lavanchy have had to be patient to build that unique relationship. As with any couple in life, they needed to take the time to understand each other. They also had to endure several drawbacks and overcome tough hurdles throughout the process.

Coming back from the European Championships in 1989, where they placed a creditable eighth, Moniotte experienced a terrible pain in her hip and had to stop skating. Tendinitis was soon diagnosed, but no treatment seemed to have any effect. They had to cancel exhibitions and withdraw from all competitions for more than a year.

"It was particularly difficult for us," Lavanchy recalls. "One day she could practice a bit and the next she could hardly walk. Some days she had to come off the rink after only a few minutes of practice. You can imagine how frustrating it was."

That year was really an ordeal, especially at a time when showing steady progress to the judges is important to keep improving in the international ice dancing ranks.

When asked if he ever considered changing partners, Lavanchy simply answered, "Not once, for I knew that I would never find a better partner than Sophie."

Lavanchy started skating in Morzine, a famous ski resort in the French Alps, where his parents still reside. At that time, his mother did not want him to play hockey, so she put him "on skates."

When asked about her son's career, Mrs. Lavanchy points out, "We were very sorry to see him choose sport rather than studies. He was extremely bright with his studies, and it was painful to see him stop. Also, we feared that skating would change him. Now we are reassured, for he is still the same — outgoing and friendly."

Indeed, Lavanchy is as open and outgoing as his friend and fellow countryman Philippe Candeloro, with whom he skates at the training center of Colombes, near Paris. A perfec-



"Unlike (skaters) in other countries, we can work with our coach for four hours without interruption ... We can go deeper in our work and that is absolutely crucial in ice dancing."

— Sophie Moniotte

tionist on the ice, Lavanchy compensates for his quiet nature by dabbling in sensational sports like motorcycling, car racing and paragliding.

Moniotte was born near Dijon, in the heart of Burgundy, where she started to skate. A pretty blonde, she is as quick to start laughing as Lavanchy is calm and serious. She enjoys all kinds of sports and apart from going out she has a passion for knitting. She even made a sweater for Lavanchy once.

She and Lavanchy met in 1985, at a summer skating session. They decided to keep training together and Moniotte followed him to Morzine. A tough

choice for the then 15-year-old girl, who had to start living on her own. Two years later, they had to face another tough situation when their coach left them without any notice. A few weeks later they found a solution when they were admitted into the regular school of their summer camp professor and one of France's most prominent coaches, Danièle Marotel.

Both had difficulty adapting to life in Paris. Fortunately, their move meant getting the best training available. Under Danièle Marotel's guidance they improved rapidly.

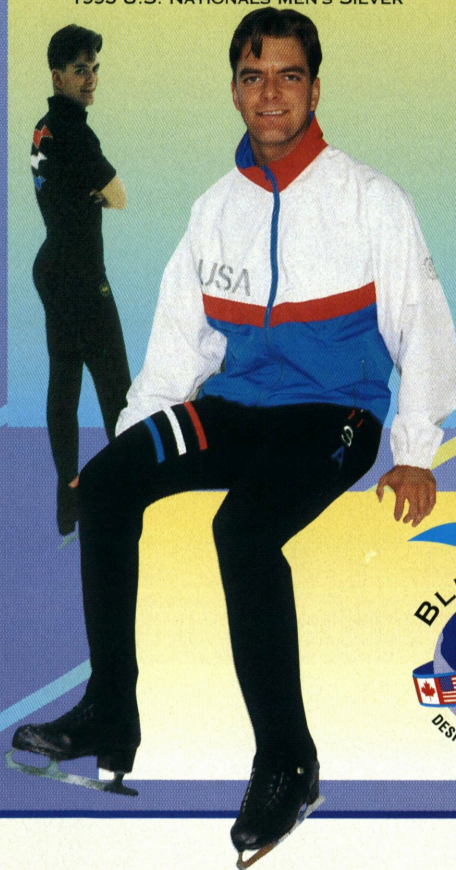
"One of our big advantages is to

have such a bright technician with us every day," Lavanchy said. "Unlike (skaters) in other countries, we can work with our coach for four hours without interruption," Moniotte added. "Lessons do not have to stop after 20 minutes. We can go deeper in our work and that is absolutely crucial in ice dancing."

They both insist on working on the basics of ice dancing. "No matter how brilliant and experienced you are, you always have to go back to the basics," Moniotte said. "Just to give an example ... every year, once the season is over, we take about a week for each of us to skate

SCOTT DAVIS

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individually and go back to the basics.”

Moniotte and Lavanchy have always tried to cultivate their compulsory dances and are now considered one of the leading dance couples in the world in that element. “Compulsory dances are the first sign of your ability to dance,” Moniotte said. “In a compulsory, you can always tell if a pair is good or not and what they can work at if they want to improve.” As Marotel puts it, “Few pairs in the world could go so fast with so complex steps as they do!” Their 1994 routine to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers themes would not have been so successful, had they not worked so much on their basics, she adds.

Compulsory dances are also a means for them to improve their unison on the ice.

“Compulsories are also a matter of temper,” Sophie said. “Pascal and I have the same temper. We like to think and analyze things. We have the same soft

touch to the ice, the same way of approaching it.”

“When we practice, we always try to feel very deeply what happens in our bodies — where true edges are and how we can build things upon them,” Lavanchy said. It was certainly no surprise that judges, trying to encourage stricter standards in ice dancing, started to reward the couple in 1992 for their work.

However difficult their transition to Paris, Moniotte and Lavanchy have learned to love the city. Their fame in the sport now provides them with many opportunities.

“This is the great thing about ice dancing,” Lavanchy said. “Through ice dancing you reach the arts, theatre, ballet, and fashion. No other sport provides you with such glamour.”

Moniotte experienced her new fame last June 5, when the mayor of her home village announced the opening of

a public park named after her. “It was so impressive,” she recalled. “After a few speeches, I was asked to uncover a stone plate and I was astounded to discover my name engraved in it, along with two skates. I will never forget it. It was such a thrill.”

Moniotte and Lavanchy recently have been selected to participate in a car race for stars. “We both love car racing,” Moniotte said before cutting a glance at Lavanchy. Adding, “We shall be in the same race, but this time we will not be competing together and we shall see who wins!” They both start laughing. They know that whatever the adventure, they can rely on each other. ■

Jean-Christophe Berlot is a Paris-based freelance writer and skating enthusiast.



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Sports Medicine & Science

Continued from page 34

nation of the following: vomiting; using laxatives, diuretics, or enemas; fasting; excessively exercising; or overusing a sauna.

Physical complications of eating disorders. Physical complications associated with the weight-control techniques used by anorexics and bulimics include loss of the menstrual cycle and related low bone density, low body temperature, low blood pressure, blood chemical imbalances, slowed heart rate, irregular heart rate, muscle weakness and sleep disturbances. Gastric system weaknesses and dental problems often result from bulimic behaviors. Many of these problems can last long after the eating disorder is cured. The most serious complication of anorexia or bulimia is death.

Psychological symptoms of eating disorders. The extreme dieting behaviors of anorexics and bulimics are related to their distorted perceptions regarding body image. Other perceptual disturbances involve body sensations such as denial of fatigue and an inability to detect whether their stomachs are full or empty. Psychologically, eating-disordered individuals are generally perfectionistic, achievement-oriented and control-seeking. However, even if accomplished, the eating-disordered individual often feels ineffective. Socially, the anorexic or bulimic is often insecure and finds it difficult to trust others.

DISORDERED EATING

It is extremely important to know that not everyone fits neatly into the categories of anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa yet may still have a problem with eating and body image. These people are often considered to have "disordered eating" rather than a clinical eating disorder. More often, athletes fit into this category. Research has shown that, on average, athletes, including figure skaters, frequently demonstrate disordered eating behaviors and an overconcern with weight and body image. However, psychologically, these same athletes appear healthy and resilient. Unfortunately, the demands for low weight and low body fat create an atmosphere where participants resort to extreme measures to achieve what normal training and sport participation alone does not accomplish.

The severe dieting and purging behaviors of athletes can be fueled by many of the same characteristics that drive the eating-disordered individual: perfectionism, achievement orientation, need for approval, obedience or coachability and tolerance of physical discomfort.

Physically, athletes can diet and exercise to such extremes that they develop the same symptoms seen in clinical eating disorder patients. In particular, female athletes are troubled by what is being called the "athletic triad": anorexia, amenorrhea and osteoporosis. Athletes are particularly affected by the loss of their menstrual flow and subsequent low bone density. This is a very serious condition that can lead to women in their 20s having bones that resemble women in their 70s.

We don't know exactly how the course of disordered eating differs from that of an eating disorder, so it is important to take any disturbance in eating and body image seriously. We do know that once an eating disorder is established it can be very difficult to treat. It is imperative to seek professional help from a physician, nutritionist and/or counselor as soon as a problem is suspected.

PREVENTION

The best way to address an eating disorder or disordered eating is through prevention. Education and an environment that emphasizes a healthy lifestyle and self confidence while de-emphasizing unrealistic weight and body fat goals are core elements of any prevention or treatment program geared toward athletes. Part II of this series will discuss both prevention and treatment. ■

Renée M. Parker, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist in Colorado Springs, Colo., specializing in sports psychology. Parker, who formerly competed in ladies' singles and dance, coached figure skating for 11 years in Delaware and California. She is a former Sports Psychology Fellow with the United States Olympic Committee.

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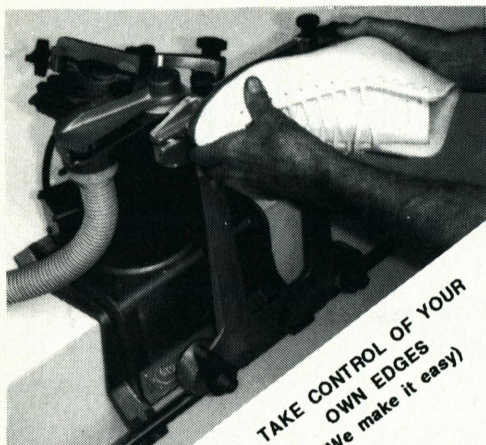
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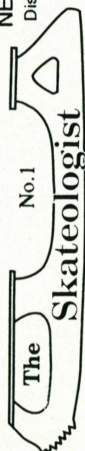


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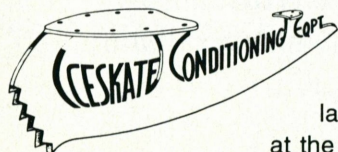
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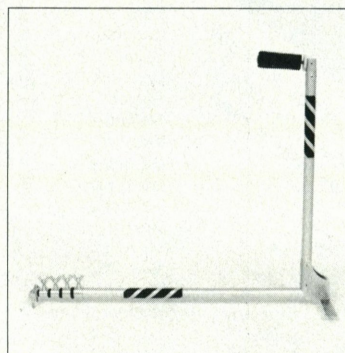
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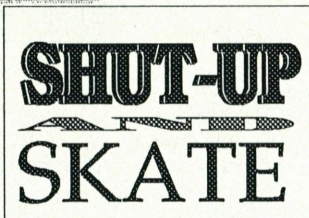
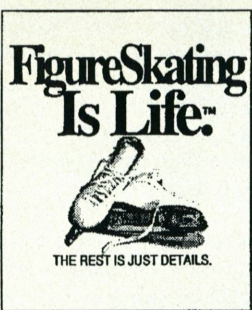
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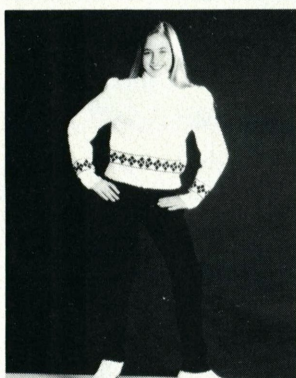
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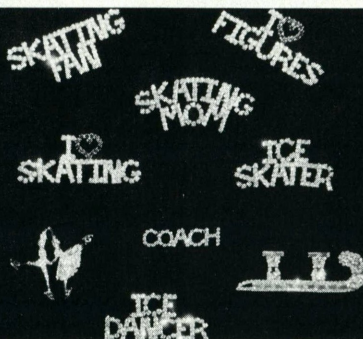
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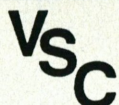
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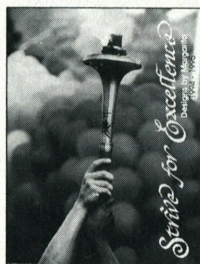
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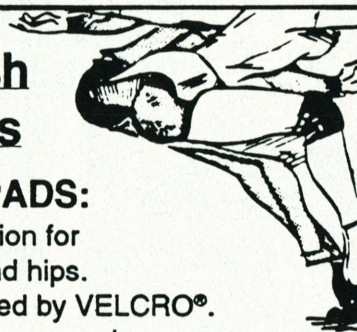
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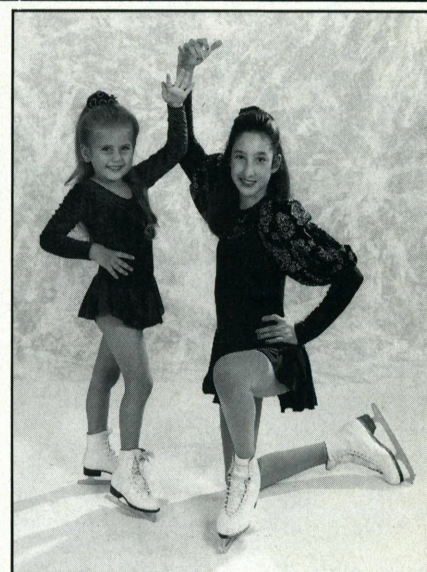
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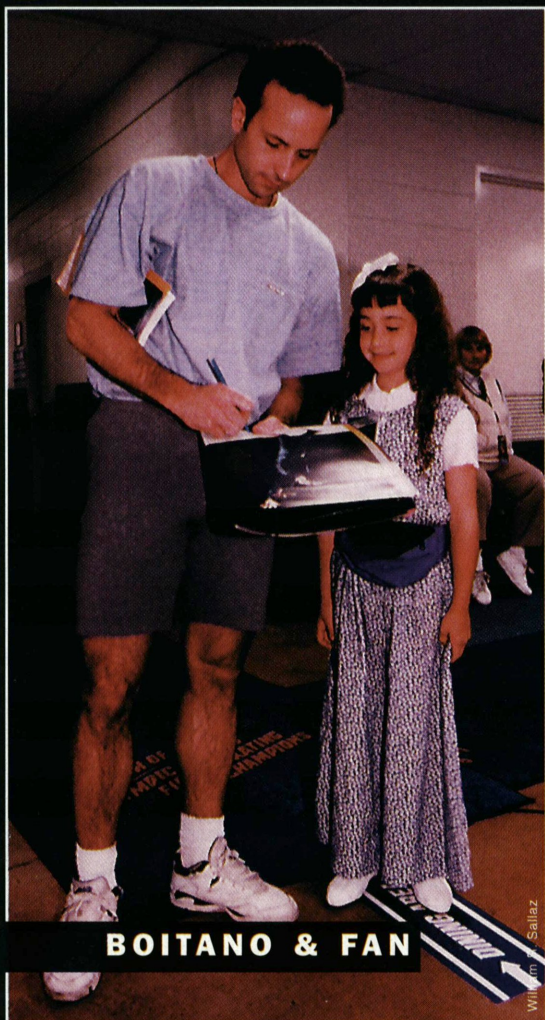
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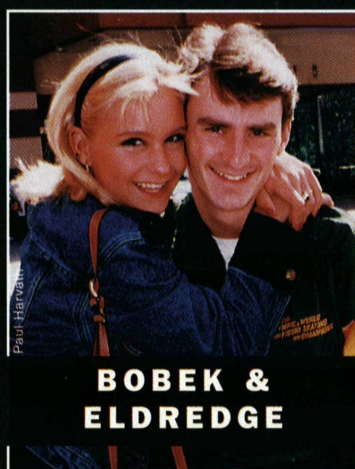
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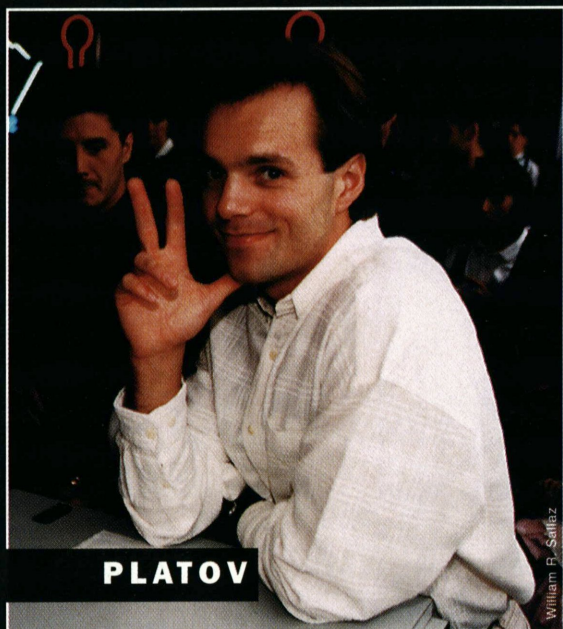
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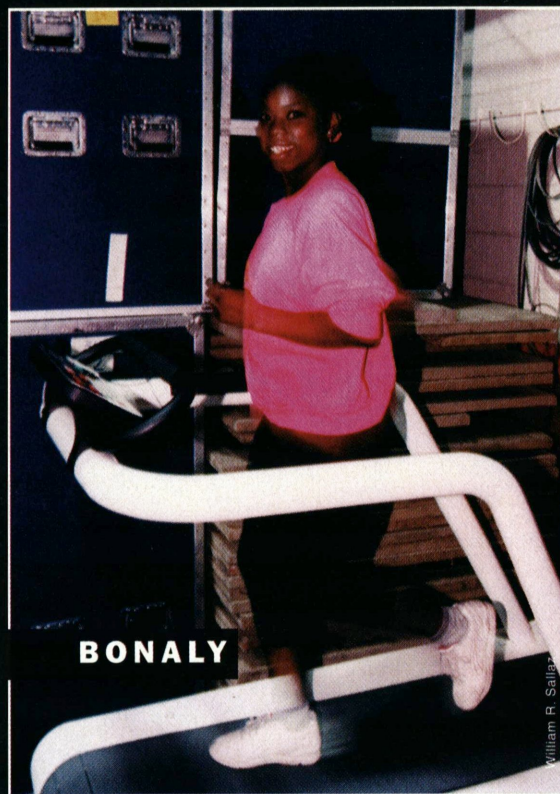
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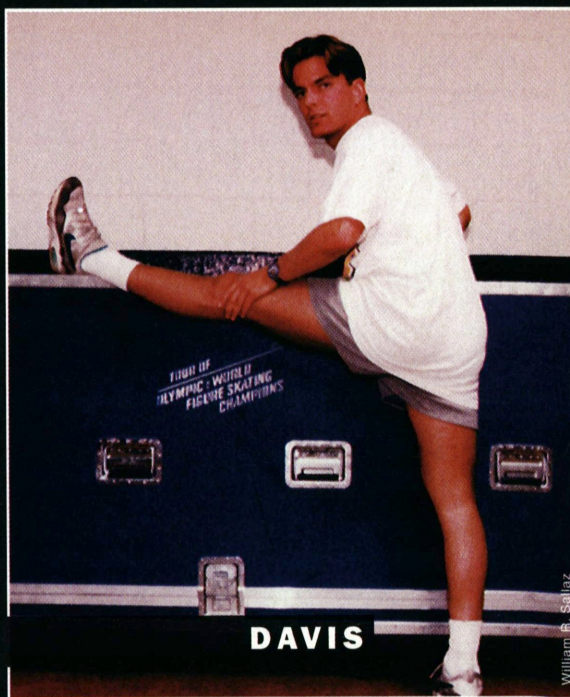
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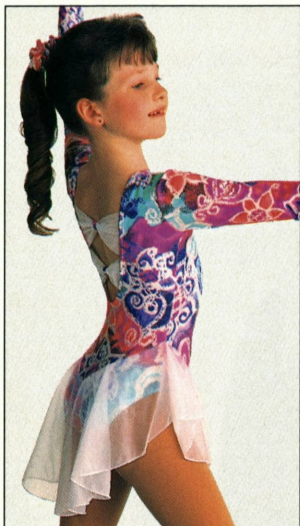
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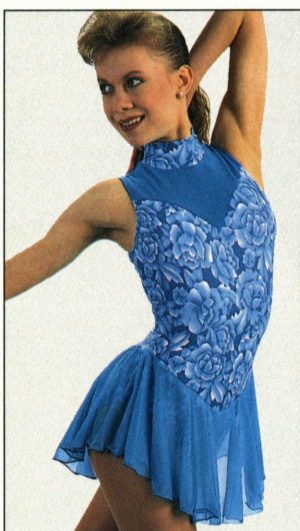
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