

DANIELLE O'BRIEN & GREG MERRIMAN
2-TIME SENIOR ICE DANCE NATIONAL
CHAMPIONS OF AUSTRALIA

CHELTZIE LEE
2008 JUNIOR LADIES'
NATIONAL CHAMPION
OF AUSTRALIA

VANCOUVER 2010 - THE ROAD TO THE OLYMPICS

FOLLOW TEAM AUSTRALIA IN PURSUIT OF WINTER GAMES GLORY

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auSSie SKATES

FIGURE SKATING DOWNUNDER

FEATURING

FOUR CONTINENTS OVERVIEW •
UNITED STATES NATIONALS • WORLDS
GOES TO LOS ANGELES • JUNIOR
WORLDS • CHELTZIE LEE - THE DREAM
BEGINS • MARK WEBSTER - SKATER ON
A MISSION • ICE DANCE - CATCHING
UP WITH DAPHNE BACKMAN • THE
HALL OF FAME • AUSSIE SKATES
CELEBRATES ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY

Spring 2009

CONTENTS

WELCOME	2
CHELTZIE LEE: THE DREAM BEGINS	3
2009 WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM PROFILES & RESULTS	8
CATCHING UP WITH DAPHNE BACKMAN	10
2009 UNITED STATES NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS OVERVIEW & RESULTS	13
MARK WEBSTER: SKATER ON A MISSION	15
2009 FOUR CONTINENTS TEAM PROFILES, RESULTS, OVERVIEW & IMAGE GALLERY	17
2009 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS, OVERVIEW & IMAGES	33
TEN YEARS OF AUSSIESKATES TIMELINE & IMAGE GALLERY	39
THE HALL OF FAME	44

Welcome

It seems only yesterday that the renowned sports photographer & journalist, Susan D. Russell, launched **aussieSKATES**. In this issue, we mark the site's tenth anniversary online. To celebrate, **aussieSKATES** is publishing some previously unseen images from the 1999 National Championships and the 2001 Goodwill Games. We also revisit some old photographic favourites as part of our first decade on the world wide web.

This has been quite the jam-packed year.

We catch up with two of our World Team representatives, singles' skaters, Cheltzie Lee and Mark Webster. An exciting season for the teenagers, both athletes made their respective debuts at the senior championship level in 2009.

As part of our international focus, **aussieSKATES** looks back at the recent U.S. National Championships from Cleveland, Ohio, then catches up with the co-founder and website coordinator of **www.ice-dance.com**, Daphne Backman.

aussieSKATES then visits Vancouver for the Four Continents Championships, site of next year's Olympic Winter Games in Canada. That event was particularly fruitful, as **aussieSKATES** earned a press pass backstage (see right).

It allowed us to not only attend conferences and the small medal presentations, but to also talk with members of the Australian team in the mixed zone once they'd stepped off the ice.

Access their interviews for download at:
www.aussieskates.com/interviews

(Special thanks must be made to Susan D. Russell from International Figure Skating magazine for letting us borrow her company's dictaphone.)

At the World Junior Championships in Bulgaria, Western Australia's Matthew Precious posted a personal best short program, allowing him entry into the free skating portion of the competition.

He finished the event ranked 24th.

Making her debut at this event, 13 year old Jaimee Nobbs, also from W.A., skated a clean short program. But, without a triple jump in either the combination or from linking steps, it wasn't enough for her to make the long program.

Big things however, were predicted for New Zealand's Allie Rout. After an encouraging fifth place finish at the JPG Merano Cup, a miss on the required double axel put her in 30th spot. Her team-mate, Cameron Hems, also struggled with the jump components, leaving him in 41st place.

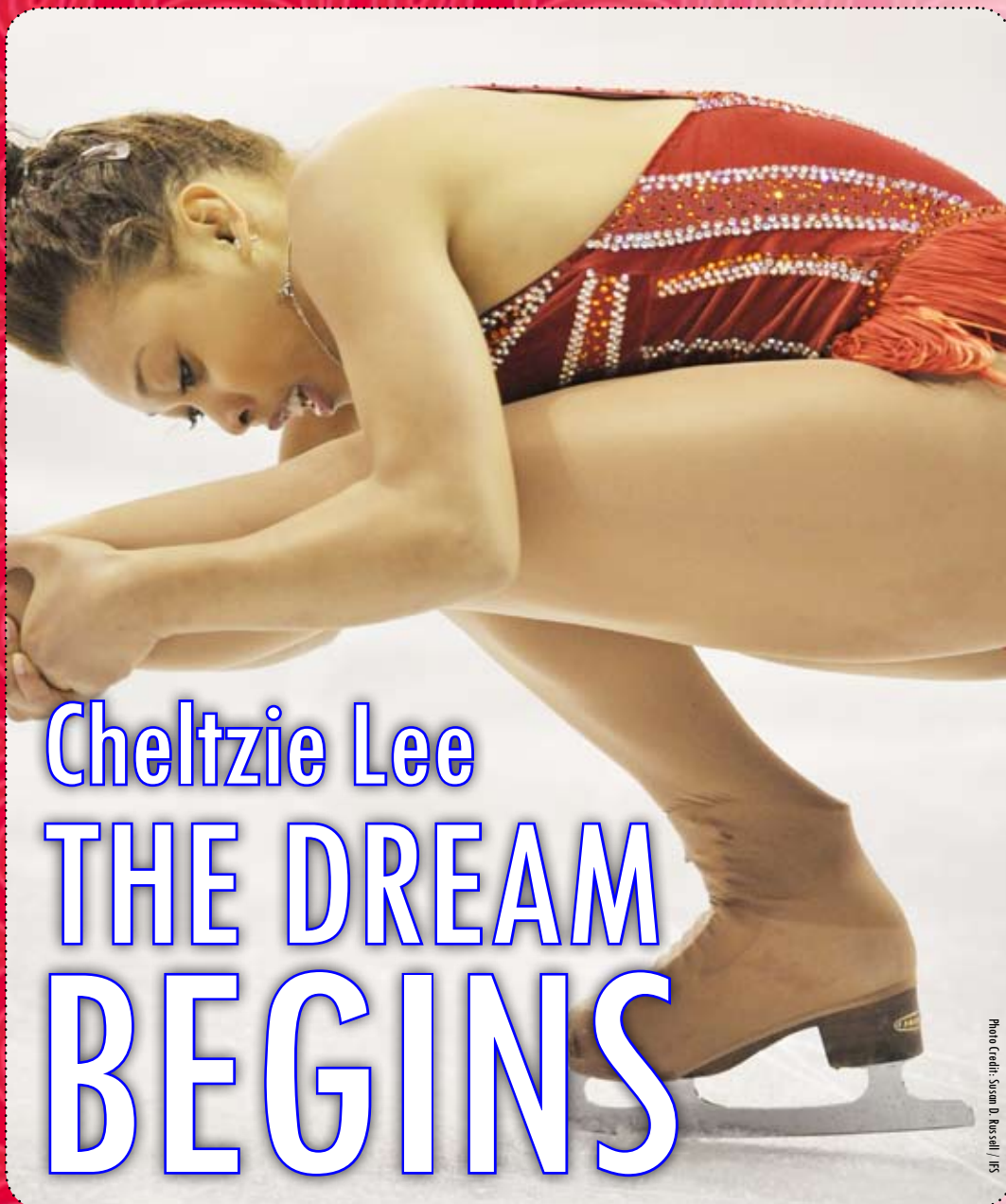
In the junior dance category, Jonathan Guerrero, (a former Australian novice

champion, recently relocated to Moscow with his parents,) paired with Ekaterina Riazanova. Skating for Russia, this young couple won the bronze medal.

Finally, we head back to the U.S. for the World titles from the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

aussieSKATES always welcomes your feedback. So why not contact us at: aussieskates@yahoo.com.au





It is rare for an elite skater to enter their first international senior championship event, before competing on the same level at home first. But, coming back from a debilitating car accident in the U.S.A. which almost cost Lee her career, that is exactly what the determined young athlete from suburban Sydney did.

Midway through the ladies' short program at the Four Continents Championships in Vancouver, Lee's speed, attack, as well as her infectious showmanship, woke up the capacity crowd. Not only did she catch the eye of the respected Canadian television commentator, PJ Kwong, the 4 - time World men's champion, Kurt Browning, actively sought Lee out to congratulate her in person.

We also catch up with Cheltzie's coach, Kylie Fennell, for her thoughts on Lee's progress, and what goals they are setting for the future. Meet the new team in Australian skating.

As Australia is considered a Summer country, when children take up a sport, it is usually swimming, tennis, or football. What initially drew you to ice skating, traditionally defined as a Winter sport?

Well, Dad loves sport also and loves trying new things so during school holidays Dad would allow me to try different sports to keep me busy. Mum's work took her all over Australia at the time so Dad and I spent quite a bit of time together.

I've done it all, tennis, swimming, gymnastics (artistic and rhythmic) at a national level, rock climbing, athletics, soccer and finally figure skating! Figure skating seemed to be the only sport that held my interest, so here I am.

How many years have you been skating? What are your first memories of it?

I've been skating for about ten years now. My first memory of skating was that it was a very hot day, and Dad said he wanted to take me somewhere special. That special place was Canterbury Ice Rink. I had so much fun!

At what point did you start setting yourself serious goals, and know that you wanted to skate at a competitive level?

Well to say I've been skating ten years is not really ten years. I started skating when I was almost six years old and skated every Saturday for an hour until I was about ten years old. It was at that time I started skating twice a week. It was a real struggle for Mum or Dad to get me

to the rink because of (their) work, so it had to do. I kind of plodded along with my first coach Sergei Shakhrai. Mum and Dad allowed me to choose my own coach. Can you believe it?

I chose Sergei because he laughed like Santa Claus. He was great and I had so much fun with him! He realised I loved to jump, and that's what he allowed me to do. Then Samantha Lind came on board and once again she was also a great coach, and lots of fun. Samantha helped my skating a lot, and felt I should skate more. I was about 11 years old and started skating three days a week.

Kylie Fennell also became part of the team when I was about 11. I would say this is when I matured as a skater, within myself, and in my skating. Kylie is a great coach and planner. My training regime changed and I started to skate six days a week for a total of 7½ hrs. So, from 2006 onwards it's been full steam ahead.

I never set out with the goal or dream in mind that I wanted to be an Olympian. I just wanted to skate and have fun. Never did I imagine my skating would head in a competitive direction. But, I'm glad it did!

Can you describe what a typical day training on and off - ice is like?

Well, really no two days are the same. Every day is different. I follow a weekly schedule that kind of helps me know where I'm going, and what I'm doing during the week. My days are so busy that a schedule helps to keep me on track.

For example, on Monday we travel to the rink in traffic for over an hour to skate a 45 minute session and a 15 minute spin lesson. I get off the ice, warm down and we travel for one hour home.

I go to school. Then travel 45 minutes to physio for a pilates session, the NSW Institute of Sport for a gym session, eat dinner in transit home, shower, stretch (whilst watching my favourite shows), finish off any additional homework and hopefully (be in) bed by 9:30pm to wake up at 4:50am.

That's just Monday.

I don't skate on Mondays afternoon because there isn't a session for me at my home rink.

What kind of mental preparation do you do, if any, leading up to a competitive performance?

Visualisation, and I listen to my iPod. Ah, what would we do without modern technology? I usually like to listen to music that kind of pumps me up. Sometimes, I may refer to my iPod to watch video footage of jumps I do well just to reinforce the technique.

What has the transition been like between junior and senior competition?

The transition from Junior to Senior has been huge, and so have the expectations! I can't believe I've been in competitions with skaters I've watched and admired on television for years. It's mind blowing. Sometimes, I have to remind myself I'm there to compete too.

I've always looked at junior as a stage of development, but now I'm competing Senior I find development in this sport is ongoing. I expect more from myself as a senior competitor. So, at this stage I still have a lot of developing to do. Mentally and physically, I'm prepared to do it. I've got a great team (helping me), and it's slowly coming together!

What did you do in preparation for your first Four Continents and senior World Championships?

Wow, these questions are making me have a good long look at everything, (and) the road I'm travelling to get to where I want to go. So it's all good!

Let's see, nothing special really. I think we focused on (the) consistency with what I could do. I was

fitter and more prepared going into the events. I trained well, and had the confidence that I had done my homework. So, what I could do would continue to come together. It sort of did at Four Continents.

Upon review of my performances I felt I had improved in so many areas; but made some minor mistakes that I don't normally do. I wanted to walk away from Four Continents with the focus on correcting those small mistakes that are so costly under the International Judging System (IJS).

(The) World Championship was mind blowing. It was such a great experience. I didn't realise I was the youngest competitor across all disciplines at the event.

Here again, I feel I was pretty prepared. I was fit, training well and just wanted to do my best. I tried. (However, I) made an error (on the spin combination) that I don't normally make but there again I'll learn and grow from the experience!

Canadian and American audiences seem very enthusiastic, encouraging and knowledgeable. What is it like to skate for them?

I think the fans of skating are great. When I've travelled to other countries the fans seem to receive all competitors well. It's so amazing how fans from children right through to adults want your autograph.

When in Vancouver for the Four Continents, I remember how well I was received for my short program and my long program. Especially after my long program, I was just so relieved to get through it and to know for sure I could do it. It was a great

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Cheltzie Lee: The Dream Begins

feeling! The applause of the crowd made me feel like, "Yes!" they knew I could do it too.

It was an amazing feeling.

Do you have any idols or role models within or even outside the sport?

Oh definitely, many.

But closer to me is my Dad. He is the greatest. He understands me and encourages me. He's kind, caring, gentle, (and) always finishes what he starts! I think I'm a lot like my dad.

He brings a great balance to my team of support. He's the calm. I feel in my life I'm surrounded by powerful women. When I say powerful I mean their beliefs, passion and how they live their lives.

My Mum, who is fearless and has always taught me to never be afraid; that I can do anything I put my mind to. But then again, my entire family has the same belief. Nothing worthwhile comes easy, Mum always says, and (my family) is with me every step of the way!

Then there is my coach, Kylie. She's tough and fair! We don't always see eye to eye, but it happens when you spend so much time together! We're a good team. It works, and I can't ask for more. She's a great coach!

Belinda Noonan keeps it real. She's funny, and a mediator amongst the team. Belinda, Kylie, Mum and Dad have vision and passion for everything they do in life. I aspire to do the same!

I feel there are so many role models within the sport in Australia. There are so many

people who must truly have a strong passion and love for the sport, otherwise we'd have no foundation for the sport here.

From the figure skating clubs who function on a voluntary basis, as do our State Associations and National Association, to the judges who judge our sport. and to people who continue along with us all to raise the profile of the sport.

Then there is **OzSkater** magazine and **aussieSKATES** (editor's note: we didn't pay Cheltzie to write that!), who not only help raise the profile of the sport within Australia, but also on an international stage. We wouldn't have Figure Skating in Australia without the passion and voluntary work of all these people.

So I suppose, I do have many role models. Because, I admire their passion and commitment to the sport, which makes me aspire to have the same passion and commitment to be the best possible person and skater I can be.

How difficult is it juggling skating and school at the same time?

Very difficult. Unbelievably difficult! Last year I tried distance education in order to train a couple more hours a week. That was the only way I could continue to stay in extension strands in my subjects. I find distance education accommodates the flexibility I need, but the work is twice as much as attending school.

I look forward to going back to the classroom in Year 12 which is next year. School is my main

priority, as I would like to become a Sports Scientist one day.

What has it been like to train overseas?

Training overseas is an awesome experience. It's so inspiring to train along side some of the best skaters in the world who have your same focus.

Where I choose to train has a pretty encouraging environment. When a skater lands a jump you hear all this yelling and screaming and banging on the barrier as acknowledgement of something well done. It sort of shocked me at first, but it was great and encouraging.

It's funny how one thing is so universal, and that is, an elite skater will practice hard in the 45 minute session. But once they leave the ice, skating is left there until they step on again. Skaters really don't talk about skating off the ice.

You can go and have a great time getting to know another skater without talking about something we spend most of our lives doing. It's nice when you have the opportunity to meet and make a friend.

How did this arrangement happen?

Training overseas is usually organised by my coach in agreement with my parents.

How different is training in the United States from Australia? For example, do you have more ice time or off - ice conditioning.

Let's see. (I have) access to more skating sessions. Perfect ice, a constant visual of what

Profile

Cheltzie and her coach, Kylie Fennell, embrace after a job well done in the short program at Four Continents in Vancouver.

Lee made her senior international debut at this competition.



Photo Credit: Steven D. Russell / ISS

other elite skaters are achieving in further development, which encourages you to work harder, and also a competitive yet encouraging environment amongst the skaters.

What are your favourite moves? Are you working towards anything new at the moment?

I like jumping best. Currently, I'm working on getting my triple flip and triple lutz more consistent, the triple - triple combination more consistent, and an arsenal of combination jumps. So, preparing for nationals should be good fun.

What is your most memorable competitive or skating moment to date?

Without a doubt, the 2007 Australian Youth Olympic festival. It was my very first international, only it was on home soil. Until then I had never witnessed so many supporters and fans of the sport in Australia, all in one venue.

I was so overwhelmed with the support of the skating community, it was absolutely awesome. The experience of simulating an Olympic Games, was one of many memories and experiences I will never forget! I get goose bumps just thinking about it; good fun and great memories.

What are your goals leading up to 2010 and beyond?

I'd truly like to focus on making my weaknesses strengths in the coming season. But, I suppose at the moment I just want to take one step at a time. I'm trying to catch up on my school work

after returning from Worlds. My team is really accommodating in letting me set small goals for myself. This is how I function really.

At the moment my focus is to start preparing for nationals, upon my return from break at the end of April. It is at that time my coach, parents and I will get together and plan the impending season.

What hobbies or interests do you have outside skating?

I like reading and shopping; I love spending time with my family. At the moment I'm missing all the little fun things we used to have time to do like picnicking, family sport games, beach trips, just a good old fashion board game or a movie in bed together.

But, when I had time for hobbies I use to surf quite a bit! I haven't surfed since my injury. But, (I'm) looking forward to catching some waves when I have a break!

For our readers unfamiliar with Cheltzie's coach, Kylie Fennell's background, we asked her if she was a competitive skater herself.

Yes, I started skating in December 1978 (at eleven). I competed in States and Nationals every year from

1981 through to 1986, where I finished second at the New South Wales (titles) and fourth at the Australian Championships in senior ladies. I was (also) a two - time senior ladies' Hollins Trophy winner in 1985 and 1986.

What was the attraction to coaching?

When I first started skating, I had always wanted to coach. I loved the idea

then and even now. I've always wanted to work with children, have the freedom to choose the hours I work, and be my own boss. I wanted to share my passion for the sport with others.

As a trainer, how many different hats do you wear?

Well, that's a hard question, and it sometimes varies.

But, other than coach, you could include, psychologist, costume designer, music editor, fitness and strength trainer, choreographer, guardian (when I travel with skaters without parents) and friend.

How challenging is it to create a program under the Code of Points IJS versus the 6.0 point structure?

In my eyes, it's much easier. Firstly, I set goals that I feel a skater can achieve, then work out what points

are needed to get there, and work backwards from that. I believe the system still has (its) faults, but is far better and fairer for the skater.

Cheltzie looks like a natural performer. Do you create programs that highlight her range. Do you choose all of her music or is this a process you work through together?

The ability to perform generally doesn't come easy for most skaters, and Cheltzie is no different. It is something that has been worked on, and will continue to develop as she matures within herself. Her programs are always enhanced in a way to showcase the best of Cheltzie. As far as music, I usually give a genre or theme to start with, and from there Cheltzie will bring in a stack of music for me to listen to. The final piece is generally something that is decided on together.

Do you set daily, weekly and monthly goals for your skaters?

Most definitely.

Depending on the commitment and the level of the skater, determines whether (their goals) are verbal or written (down). The skater is heavily involved in this process. I believe it is an absolute must to measure success.

I'd truly like to focus on making my weaknesses strengths in the coming season. But, I suppose at the moment I just want to take one step at a time. My team is really accommodating in letting me set small goals for myself. This is how I function really.

The U.S. Olympic champion, Tara Lipinski learned a triple loop / triple loop combination and put it into one of her programs the following week. What kind of time frame do you allow between a skater learning a new element and having them include it in actual competition?

Learning an element, and then consistently landing it are two very different things. A skater must be fairly consistent with the element outside the program before I would even consider including it a program. This sometimes can be weeks or months.

How different is it coaching a beginner and an elite level athlete?

Very!

Over the years I have taught all levels and ages and enjoy coaching at both ends.

With beginners, there is not a lot less pressure and most of the time is rosy. Everything is kept simple. You do however, spend a lot of time educating the parents about our sport.

With the elite skater everything is a lot more complicated, and so it should be. There is a lot done away from the rink.

Actually, I quite often say for every hour you spend with the skater at the rink, you spend that much time away from the rink if not more doing research, paper work, and planning. You also need to communicate with the sports physician, physiotherapist, psychologist, high

performance co-coordinators, administrators, etc, and all of this takes time.

In competition, how do you and your pupils approach the six minute warm-up, then the period between waiting and returning to the ice to compete?

The six minute warm-up is something that is worked on prior to competition, and it planned out well. My skaters never do more than two attempts at any element.

If they are having trouble with an element, it more than likely won't be corrected by doing four more. We always move on. My skaters always do each of their spins, spirals and footwork as they are just as important.

With this new system, once they leave the ice, the time spend off the ice waiting is longer. So, if they are 'skater one' to 'skater three', they move around in their skates. If they are 'skater four onwards', they take off their skates and put on runners to keep themselves warm and moving. This also is something that is rehearsed.

I try to keep them calm and relaxed by having a laugh with them.

This year, the National Championships will be run in Sydney from late August. From there, skaters will be selected for the official Olympic qualification event, Austria's Nebelhorn Trophy, to be staged in late September.



Cheltzie acknowledges her friends and family in the stands and on television from the 'kiss and cry' after her short program in Los Angeles.

2009 World Junior Figure Skating Championships

Team Profiles

Men's Singles
Cameron Hems
(New Zealand)



Photo Credit: Skate Today

Ladies' Singles
Jamie Nobbs
(Australia)



Photo Credit: WASA

Men's Singles
Matthew Precious
(Australia)



Photo Credit: WASA

Ladies' Singles
Allie Rout
(New Zealand)



Photo Credit: Skate Today

Cameron Hems

Date of birth:	October 4 th , 1990
Home town:	Auckland
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	soccer, cars, music
Coaches:	Viacheslav Kuznetsov , Liudmilla Timofeeva
Started Skating:	2002
Club:	Glenbain FSC
Choreographer:	Liudmilla Timofeeva
Personal Best Total Score:	
2008 JGP John Curry Memorial	90.64
Short Program:	
2008 JGP John Curry Memorial	30.66
Free Skating:	
2008 JGP John Curry Memorial	59.98

Jamie Nobbs

Date of birth:	March 10 th , 1995
Home town:	Perth, W.A.
Profession:	High School Student
Hobbies:	reading, music, beach
Coaches:	Irina Stavrovskaja, Valentin Kadzevitch
Started Skating:	2000
Club:	Cockburn Ice Arena
Choreographers:	Irina Stavrovskaja, Valentin Kadzevitch
Personal Best Total Score:	
2008 JGP Madrid Cup	87.32
Short Program:	
2008 JGP Madrid Cup	36.67
Free Skating:	
2008 JGP Madrid Cup	50.65

Matthew Precious

Date of birth:	September 14 th , 1992
Home town:	Perth, WA
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	playing the guitar, music, movies
Coaches:	Irina Stavrovskaja, Valentin Kadzevitch
Started Skating:	1998
Club:	West Australian Skating Association
Choreographers:	Irina Stavrovskaja, Valentin Kadzevitch
Personal Best Total Score:	
2008 JGP Madrid Cup	126.71
Short Program:	
2009 World Junior Championships	47.04
Free Skating:	
2008 JGP Madrid Cup	82.63

Allie Rout

Date of birth:	August 6 th , 1993
Home town:	Auckland
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	reading, water skiing, snowboarding, squash
Coaches:	Mike Aldred, Marina Kudriavtseva
Started Skating:	1999
Club:	Auckland FSC
Choreographers:	Marina Kudriavtseva, Alla Kapranova
Personal Best Total Score:	
2008 JGP Merano Cup	116.97
Short Program:	
2008 JGP Merano Cup	43.16
Free Skating:	
2008 JGP Merano Cup	73.81

2009 World Junior Figure Skating Championships

Results

Pairs' Champions
Lubov Iliushechkina &
Nodari Maisuradze
(Russia)

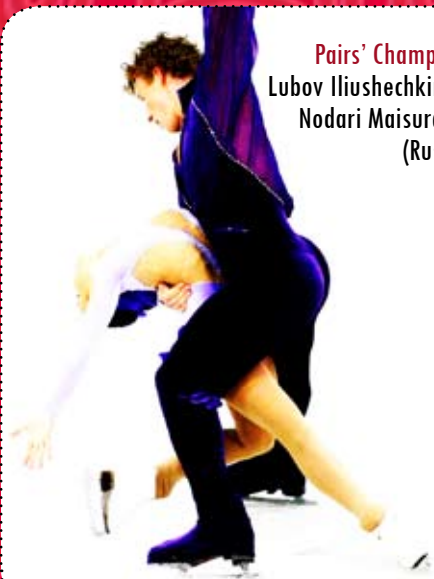


Photo Credit: ISU

Ladies' Champion
Alena Leonova
(Russia)



Photo Credit: ISU

Men's Champion
Adam Rippon
(U.S.A.)



Photo Credit: ISU

Dance Champions
Madison Chock &
Greg Zuerlein
(U.S.A.)

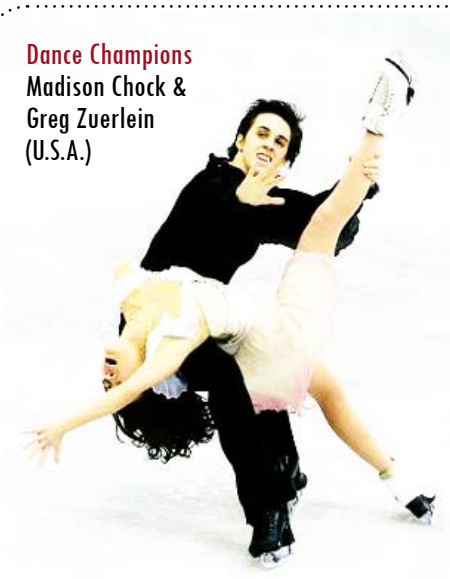


Photo Credit: ISU

Pairs' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Lubov Iliushechkina & Nodari Maisuradze	RUS	55.12	89.20	144.32
02 Anastasia Martiusheva & Alexei Rogonov	RUS	44.60	93.99	138.59
03 Marissa Castelli & Simon Shnapir	USA	49.10	88.37	137.47
04 Paige Lawrence & Rudi Swiegers	CAN	48.64	88.43	137.07
05 Ekaterina Sheremetieva & Mikhail Kuznetsov	RUS	48.84	85.96	134.80
06 Maddison Bird & Raymond Schultz	CAN	46.60	81.03	127.63
07 Narumi Takahashi & Mervin Tran	JPN	45.98	80.66	126.64
08 Yue Zhang & Lei Wang	CHN	45.98	79.32	125.30
09 Brynn Carman & Chris Knierim	USA	45.94	78.99	124.93
10 Anais Morand & Antoine Dorsaz	SUI	47.28	76.32	123.60
11 Duo Cheng & Yu Gao	CHN	44.94	74.79	119.73
12 Maria Sergejeva & Ilja Glebov	EST	44.36	72.02	116.38
13 Krystyna Klimczak & Janusz Karweta	POL	40.58	67.23	107.81
14 Camille Foucher & Bruno Massot	FRA	40.98	63.28	104.26
15 Carolina Gillespe & Daniel Aggiano	ITA	37.94	63.49	101.43

Top 15 results. 21 teams skated the event. 20 teams made the final.

Ladies' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Alena Leonova	RUS	55.50	101.68	157.18
02 Caroline Zhang	USA	47.64	107.03	154.67
03 Ashley Wagner	USA	57.50	96.07	153.57
04 Joshi Helgesson	SWE	55.14	84.75	139.89
05 Katrina Hacker	USA	51.06	88.62	139.68
06 Elene Gedevanishvili	GEO	60.32	78.00	138.32
07 Sarah Hecken	GER	48.14	87.69	135.83
08 Ivana Reitmayerova	SVK	48.34	81.06	129.40
09 Oksana Gozeva	RUS	44.54	82.16	126.70
10 Isabel Drescher	GER	48.16	78.49	126.65
11 Francesca Rio	ITA	48.24	74.46	122.70
12 Mae Berenice Meite	FRA	43.98	78.55	122.53
13 Diane Szmiott	CAN	47.48	71.61	119.09
14 Miriam Ziegler	AUT	42.92	73.28	116.20
15 Svetlana Issakova	EST	43.38	71.76	115.14
16 Haruka Imai	JPN	43.58	69.66	113.24
17 Chaochih Liu	TPE	46.82	65.67	112.49
18 Bingwa Geng	CHN	47.54	64.17	111.71
19 Eleonora Vinnichenko	UKR	42.42	68.24	110.66
20 Sonia Lafuente	ESP	46.16	63.11	109.27
21 Kathryn Kang	CAN	40.38	64.44	104.82
22 Min-Jung Kwak	KOR	38.94	64.75	103.69
23 Karly Robertson	GBR	40.58	61.95	102.53
24 Katsiarina Pakhamovich	BLR	41.18	47.32	88.50
25 Stefanie Pechlaner	BUL	28.82	47.63	76.45
31 Alexandra Rout	NZL	36.56	-	FNR
39 Jamiee Nobbs	AUS	32.02	-	FNR

54 ladies skated the event.
25 ladies (including host nation Bulgaria) made the final.

Men's Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Adam Rippon	USA	74.30	147.70	222.00
02 Michael Brezina	CZE	69.55	135.33	204.88
03 Artem Grigoriev	RUS	65.11	119.29	184.40
04 Denis Ten	KAZ	64.80	118.97	183.77
05 Curran Oi	USA	69.40	113.49	182.89
06 Chao Yang	CHN	62.25	115.61	177.86
07 Nan Song	CHN	58.70	116.74	175.44
08 Elladj Balde	CAN	60.63	110.13	170.76
09 Kevin Reynolds	CAN	63.81	105.55	169.36
10 Ross Miner	USA	59.15	105.65	164.80
11 Nikolai Bondar	UKR	57.75	104.18	161.93
12 Yuzuru Hanyu	JPN	58.18	103.59	161.77
13 Alexander Majorov	SWE	58.15	95.91	154.06
14 Denis Wiczorek	GER	54.20	99.53	153.73
15 Florent Amodio	FRA	49.80	103.90	153.70
16 Stanislav Kovalev	RUS	50.26	101.67	151.93
17 Peter Reitmayer	SVK	55.65	95.20	150.85
18 Mark Vaillant	FRA	52.59	93.31	145.90
19 Javier Raya	ESP	50.50	93.69	144.19
20 Petr Coufal	CZE	48.40	95.05	143.45
21 Ruben Errampalli	ITA	45.93	87.10	133.03
22 Min-Seok Kim	ROK	46.73	83.14	129.87
23 Viktor Romanenkov	EST	49.11	74.98	124.09
24 Matthew Precious	AUS	47.04	74.89	121.93
25 Pavel Petrov Savinov	BUL	30.84	57.75	88.59
41 Cameron Hems	NZL	25.91	-	FNR

41 men skated the event.
25 men (including host nation Bulgaria) made the final.

Dance Event	Nation	CD	OD	FD	Final
01 Madison Chock & Greg Zuerlein	USA	33.15	57.29	82.11	172.55
02 Maia Shibutani & Alex Shibutani	USA	29.71	52.10	80.34	162.15
03 Ekaterina Riazanova & Jonathan Guerreiro	RUS	29.02	53.80	78.98	161.80
04 Madison Hubbell & Keiffer Hubbell	USA	31.39	53.44	76.51	161.34
05 Kharis Ralph & Asher Hill	CAN	30.09	49.58	73.09	152.76
06 Ekaterina Pushkash & Dmitri Kiselev	RUS	30.44	50.30	69.47	150.21
07 Karen Rauthier & Eric Saucke-Lacelle	CAN	29.24	48.06	72.20	149.50
08 Lucie Mysliveckova & Matej Novak	CZE	27.80	49.18	69.06	146.04
09 Lorenza Alessandrini & Simone Vaturi	ITA	27.81	47.67	70.13	145.61
10 Terra Findlay & Benoit Richaud	FRA	26.82	47.11	71.24	145.17
11 Marina Antipova & Artem Kudashov	RUS	28.57	45.00	65.29	138.86
12 Tarrah Harvey & Keith Gagnon	CAN	27.53	45.33	65.52	138.38
13 Alisa Agafonova & Dmitri Dun	UKR	27.92	45.55	61.39	134.86
14 Xueling Guan & Meng Wang	CHN	25.37	36.16	62.79	124.32
15 Nikki Georgiadis & Graham Hockley	GRE	23.21	39.52	58.59	121.32

Top 15 results. 33 teams skated the event. 24 teams made the final.

In this issue, we profile Daphne Backman, the web administrator for **Ice-Dance.com**.

An extensive resource for ice dancing information, the website is the official online home to many of the world's leading ice dancing teams.

In addition to **Ice-Dance.com**, Daphne is also a web designer at **FigureSkatersOnline.com**, a freelance photographer and journalist.

Catching up with DAPHNE BACKMAN

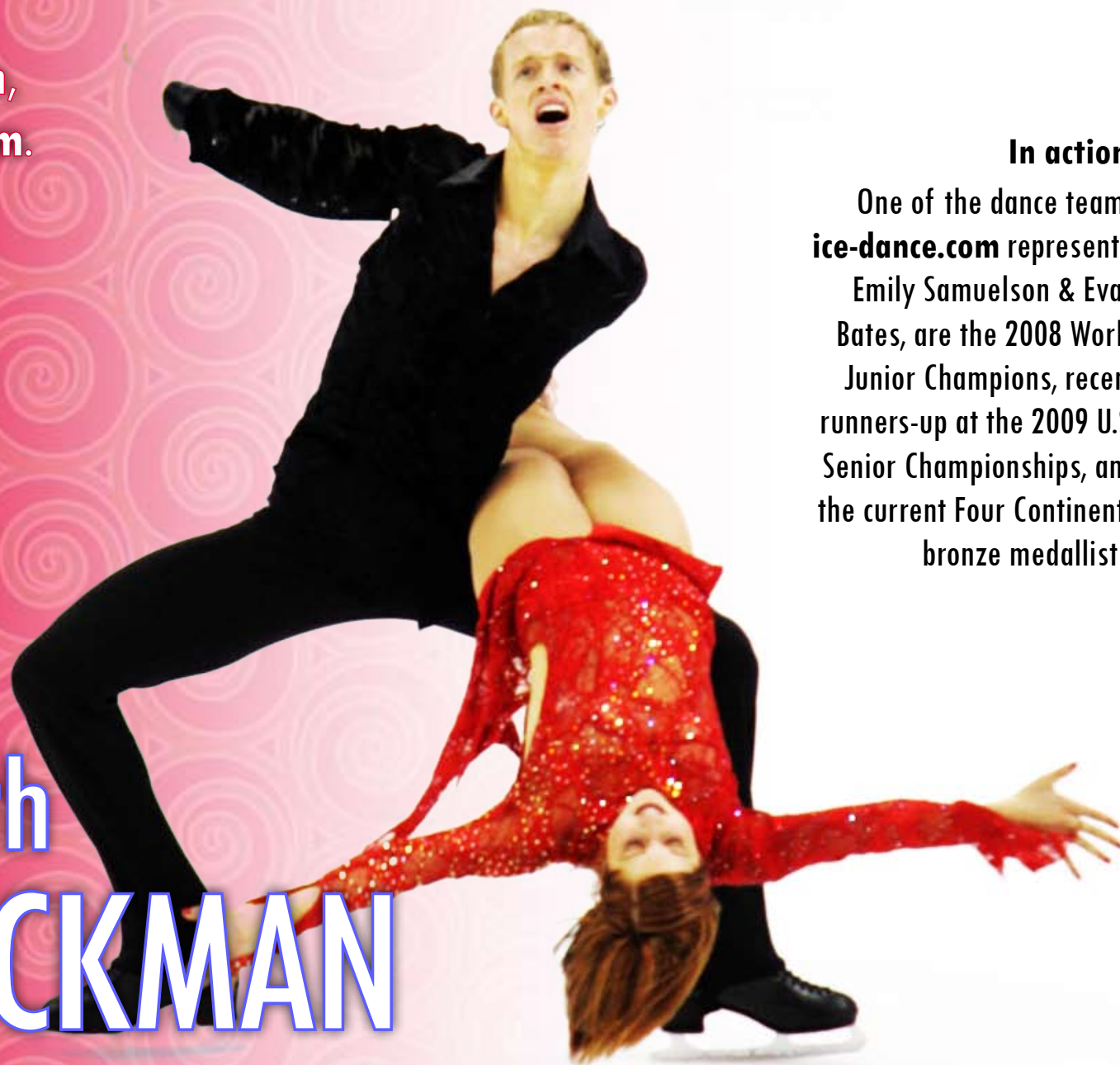


Photo Credit: Michelle Weipha

In action:

One of the dance teams **ice-dance.com** represents, Emily Samuelson & Evan Bates, are the 2008 World Junior Champions, recent runners-up at the 2009 U.S. Senior Championships, and the current Four Continents bronze medallists.

What is your first memory of ice skating?

While growing up, my mom always watched figure skating on television, so that's how my interest in skating developed. My earliest memory was watching the 1982 World Championships on television and seeing Elaine Zayak win the gold medal.

Do you skate / compete yourself? What other hobbies do you have outside skating?

As a teenager in Maine, I skated on frozen ponds for fun. A few years ago, I went to a local rink to try it out again and failed miserably. I think I'll leave the on ice theatrics to the professionals. Outside of working on Ice-Dance.com and other websites, I am very busy with my regular job and I like spending time with my boyfriend and friends. I am a huge movie buff and go several times per month. I am also active in the Ferret Rescue of Maine and own two ferrets named Ares and Athena.

What was the initial and ongoing motivation behind creating a website portal for ice dancers? Why dance, in particular and not one of the other three disciplines?

Emma Abraham and I created Ice-Dance.com nearly ten years ago. We were both fans of ice dancing and found that it was difficult to find information online without going to numerous resource sites. We wanted to create a portal that would have all the ice dancing information in one place.

At the time, so many wonderful sites for skating as a whole or the other disciplines existed. It's

been said that ice dancing is the renegade of the four disciplines, not really fitting in with the mold with the other three, but I've always felt it was the most exciting.

Do skaters approach you to build them a website, or do you approach them? How involved are the skaters in creating and maintaining their websites?

In the beginning, I did approach teams regarding websites, but more recently, I have been working only on websites for athletes who submit a request. Because IDC has grown considerably in the past several years, the number of websites requested has also grown.

The athletes' participation in their website varies depending on the amount of time they would like to spend on it. Some athletes prefer to have more input into their designs and content, while others leave the design scheme and choices up to me. I try to match the design of the site with the on- and off-ice personalities of the skaters.

When it comes to updating information, the parents send updates in some cases, while in others, the athletes take more responsibility. I leave it up to the athletes to decide how involved they want to be.

When attending competitions like US Nationals, how many hats do you wear?

I have been credentialed as a journalist at the past four U.S. Championships, working for U.S. Figure Skating as a reporter and backstage photographer in 2006 and 2007.

In 2008 and 2009, I wrote event reports and multiple blog entries, pulled and edited photos and photographed some of the events. Canadian Nationals and the European Championships often overlap with the beginning or end of U.S. Nationals, so while events are in full swing in the U.S., they're also either starting or winding down in others, meaning we're often multi-tasking to make sure all the coverage gets online.

While at Nationals, I don't often have an opportunity to catch up with anyone other than those who are in the media area. At the Lake Placid event, I have more opportunities to catch up with athletes and parents and discuss plans for their websites for the following year.

What are your behind the scenes responsibilities to both the skaters and the fans who read ice-dance.com?

I have a fantastic team working with me to make Ice-Dance.com the best site that it can be. Michelle, Melanie (Hoyt) and Katie (Weigel) and I take a team approach to event coverage. We feel a responsibility to present the best possible photos of an athlete, which means more work for us as we comb through hundreds of photos looking for the right one.

IDC tries to include the voices and photos of various people in the sport, which is why we have more than just U.S.-based writers/photographers covering events. Athlete reviews and blogs, parent blogs, video interviews, etc. all flesh out the whole ice

dance world, rather than just the world medalists that you see on TV (when it gets shown!)

IDC provides a forum for the skaters, especially the Junior Grand Prix athletes, to share their photos so that everyone can see them, not just their Facebook friends. We have had wonderful bloggers this past season from the GP, etc. circuit who have provided unique perspectives and images on the competitions.

IDC does event previews for most of the major competitions during the season. These are usually written by at least two IDC staffers, and frequently four people have input on the content and which aspects to highlight. We want to give the fans insight into what to look for, especially with teams that are new or previously under the radar.

We don't make a list of predictions, but in our post-event analysis of our preview articles, we usually are pretty good about nailing what were the key moments and players in the competition.

IDC also offers the opportunity for writers, bloggers, and photographers to gain experience covering the sport of figure skating. It is incredibly rewarding to take someone who has never written for publication and help guide them into expressing their personal stories while informing and entertaining IDC's readers. Skaters are incredibly coachable, not just on the ice, and make excellent bloggers!

IDC also feels a responsibility to provide an opportunity for fans of the sport to get to know the participants at all levels of ice dance. We run

interviews from the younger teams on up to world class competitors. If you are interested in ice dance in any capacity, we would love to work with you. IDC relies on its ever-growing network of ice dance people - whether athletes, families, or media -- to help us to literally cover the world.

What has been your favourite dance memory, either nationally or internationally?

I have far too many favorite memories to name just one. The majority of them have occurred in Lake Placid, but two other events were also memorable to me. One was the 2005 World Junior Championships in Kitchener, Ontario.

This was my first event as a credentialed member of the media. Another would be the 2007 U.S. National Championships in Spokane, Washington. Seeing the stands full for the novice compulsory dances was amazing. It was also the first time that the novice teams skated their free dance in the main arena.

Do you have to think on your feet and go with the flow of an interview? By this, do you have to change which questions you've prepared to ask a skater or team?

In interviews, the reporter needs to be prepared to adjust. You may go into the interview expecting to focus on one topic and the story ends up being something completely different. Our goal at IDC is to present the athlete in the best possible light, even when discussing more sensitive topics. Many

of the interviews at IDC are conducted via email or chat, which gives both the interviewer and the subject an opportunity to ask additional questions or clarify an answer. Often times, we will hold an interview from publication until it's been reviewed by two IDC staff members, just to make sure it makes sense and that the information is correct.

Tell our readers a little bit about the Lake Placid Ice Dance event.

The Lake Placid Ice Dance Championships started many years ago and has been chaired by Ann Greenthal for the past twenty years. A friend of mine attended the event in 2002 and recommended it, so Michelle (Wojdyla) and I attended in 2003 and IDC has been covering it ever since.

The first year, we didn't go for the whole week, because we didn't know what to expect. Basically, we took a few photos. Each year we try to top the coverage from the previous year, which is getting difficult now because we've expanded it so much! We're really excited to be going for our seventh time this August.

LPIDC is sanctioned by Skate Canada and U.S. Figure Skating and hosted by Skating Club of Lake Placid and the New York State Olympic Regional Development Authority. For those who've never gone, basically it means being at the arena from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m., for six days straight and watching nothing but ice dance non-stop. It means hearing the Paso Doble 745 times over the course of the week.

We take over section 8 of the 1980 arena and have photographers shooting in both the '32 and '80 arenas. We have people pulling photos and editing them round the clock. Sit-down meals don't usually happen. Some people might think it sounds like their worst nightmare, but for ice dance fans, it's heaven.

How was it started and developed? How many days does it run for? How many competitors are there? What ages and skill levels are represented?

Originally, LPIDC was a half-day event, but it now spans four to five days. Though I'm not sure of how it was developed, I think it's become a standard part of summer preparation. The athletes and coaches can obtain valuable feedback from judges prior to the season's events. Some skating associations assign international events based on placements, so it's very competitive, although the atmosphere is not nearly as intense as at the National Championships.

In addition to events for the teams from the pre-junior through senior levels, LPIDC also includes solo dance competitions for novice through senior. Several years ago, the organizers introduced an original dance phase for the solo dancers, which has given them an opportunity to showcase their skating skills in a more creative way than with the general compulsory dances. There are also events for adult ice dancers and a special event called shadow dancing.

How different is ice dance under the code of points versus the 6.0 system. Is it fairer and make for more interesting programs?

2009 is the 25th anniversary of Torvill and Dean's Bolero and Olympic gold in Sarajevo, and if you look back at performances throughout the past quarter century you'll notice very visible changes at various points in time. Even comparing programs five to six years ago to what we see now is a big difference, though from year to year the transition seems more gradual.

I think the International Judging System (IJS) has brought some teams onto the same page technically, but it needs additional time to develop. I also hope that they'll adjust the required elements to allow for more creativity within the program choreography. There still seems to be controversy regarding 'block-judging', but unless the ISU hires and pays the judges an annual salary, the system will probably be open to that type of scrutiny. I've also noticed an increase in former competitors making the step to work as technical specialists, and I think that can only help as well.

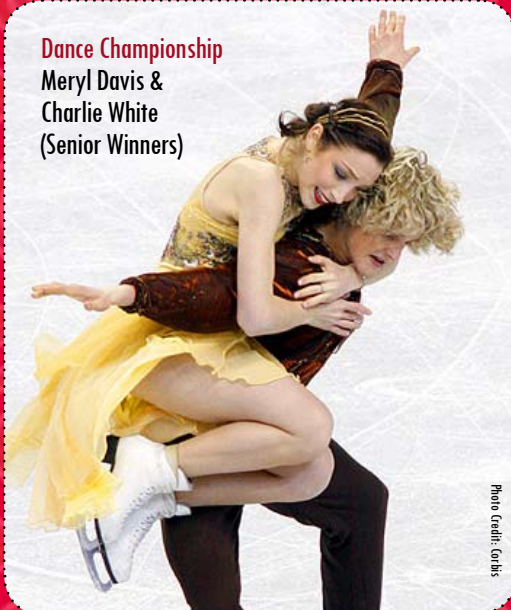
The U.S. has been much more successful as technical difficulty and skills are being rewarded under the new system which can translate to teams no longer have to wait their turn as long as they used to. Strangely enough, if you look at the placements of the U.S. teams at worlds in L.A., ice dance was the most successful of the four disciplines!

To learn more, visit IDC at www.ice-dance.com. Also, if you would like to become a volunteer, simply follow the links to their contact page.

2009 United States Figure Skating Championships

Event Overview

Dance Championship
Meryl Davis &
Charlie White
(Senior Winners)

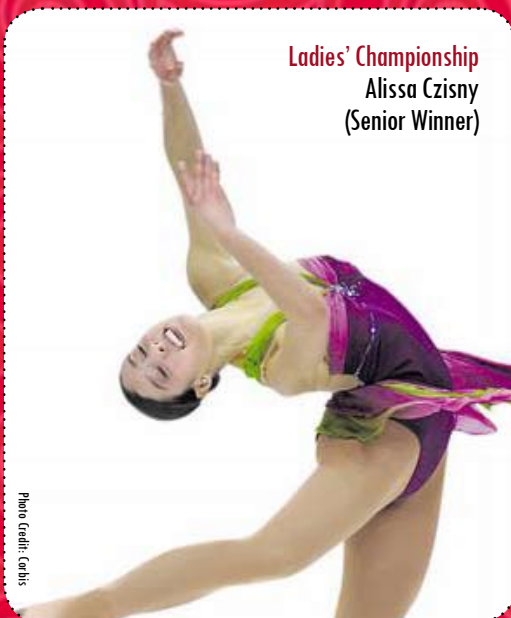


In January, the city of Cleveland hosted the country's most prestigious annual figure skating competition.

When the United States Championships were last held in Ohio nine years ago, Michelle Kwan took the ladies' crown, Michael Weiss, the men's title, Kyoko Ina and John Zimmerman won the pairs' event, and Naomi Lang and Peter Tchernychev struck gold in dance.

For seven straight days, more than 200 skaters converged on the city, contesting titles in all four categories across the novice, junior and senior divisions.

Ladies' Championship
Alissa Czisny
(Senior Winner)



Highlights from the novice events included Kiri Baga's win in the ladies event, and Joshua Farris' victory for the men.

An indication as to how much U.S. skating has advanced, 20 years ago jump-wise, Baga's and Farris' performances would have been challenging for the podium in their respective senior categories.

Barely 14, Farris was a pocket dynamo, winning the event by a 30 point margin. Popping off seven triple jumps in his free skate (including a strong triple lutz / triple toe loop combination), he had the presence of another Paul Wylie. Other skaters to impress were Steven Evans and Jason Brown, the eventual silver and bronze medallists.

Making up for talent what she lacked in height, the diminutive Baga whipped through a program jam-

packed with content, holding off equally tiny Mary Beth Marley for the title.

The junior ladies' competition was a two-way showdown between DeeDee Leng and Ellie Kawamura. Leng prevailed, after Kawamura made an uncharacteristic error on the double axel in the short program. Both skaters will be joining the junior international grand prix circuit for the 2009/2010 season.

In junior men, remember the name Keegan Messing. With showmanship similar to Kurt Browning and the jumping ability to match, the silver medallist was popping off triple jumps like they were nothing.

Junior dance was won by Michelle Kwan look-a-like, Madison Chock. With partner, Greg Zuerlein, this young couple fresh from gold at the Junior Grand Prix final, shone in all three phases of the competition. The brother and sister combination of Maia and Alex Shibutani, won silver.

In senior ladies, competition was preceded with the announcement that the 2007 gold and silver medallists had to withdraw due to injury. In their absence, Kimmie Meissner, also the 2006 World Champion, and Emily Hughes, younger sister of the 2002 Olympic Champion, Sarah Hughes, left the event wide open for others to step up to the title. The 2007 bronze medallist did just that.

Skating an exquisite short program to **The Swan** by Saint-Saëns, Alissa Czisny spent the past year working with Brian Boitano correcting her jumping technique. It paid off in spades, allowing her to win that portion of the event by almost six points.

Feeling pressure in the long program, only three of her five triple jumps were successful. However, combined with

the short, it was enough to give Czisny her first senior title. Rachael Flatt took silver, and Caroline Zhang won the bronze.

Following a successful international season, Jeremy Abbott continued that streak with a win over the defending champion, Evan Lysacek. With superior artistry, Abbott, along with training mates Brandon Mroz and Ryan Bradley, made up three of the four tiers on the men's podium. The biggest surprise was Johnny Weir's drop to fifth, effectively destroying his chances of defending the 2008 World bronze medal.

Pairs provided several surprises, none more so than newcomers, Caydee Denney and Jeremy Barrett, winning the short program. By the slimmest of margins, they beat the 2008 Champions, Keana McLaughlin and Rockne Brubaker with Rene Inoue and John Baldwin tied for second. Skating a powerful interpretation to **Spartacus** for their free skate, the 15 year old Denney and her 25 year old partner, were pipped by decimal points for the title by McLaughlin and Brubaker. They will, however, be a force to be recognised in competitions to come.

Due to the absence of five time winners, Tanith Belbin and Ben Agosto, from injury, Meryl Davis and Charlie White, took command of the event early. With fantastic speed and intricate choreography, they won the event by 20 points over their nearest rivals, the 2008 World Junior Champions, Emily Samuelson and Evan Bates. Last year's bronze medallists, Kimberly Navarro & Brent Bommertre, again placed third.

Many of the skaters' performances from these championships may be found at www.youtube.com

2009 United States Figure Skating Championships

Results

Ladies' Events

Senior Championship	Points
01 Alissa Czisny	178.06
02 Rachael Flatt	173.78
03 Caroline Zhang	171.08
04 Ashley Wagner	165.33
05 Mirai Nagasu	159.99
06 Katrina Hacker	156.28
07 Brittney Rizo	151.23
08 Angela Maxwell	151.22
09 Alexe Gilles	151.20
10 Laney Diggs	147.48
11 Kristine Musademba	147.48
12 Joelle Forte	145.33
13 Taylor Firth	139.49
14 Beatrisa Liang	135.15
15 Molly Oberstar	130.71
16 Chrissy Hughes	128.32
17 Tenille Victorson	126.74
18 Becky Bereswill	124.57
19 Karen Zhou	120.05
20 Melissa Telecky	106.96
21 Blake Rosenthal	101.39
22 Brittney Westdorp	88.70
23 Tatyana Khazova	86.03

Junior Championship	Points
01 DeeDee Leng	132.49
02 Ellie Kawamura	131.25
03 Christina Gao	128.69
04 Kristiene Gong	126.17
05 Kendall Wyckoff	123.88
06 Samantha Cesario	120.90
07 Amanda Dobbs	116.52
08 Carolyn-Ann Alba	112.35
09 Vanessa Lam	111.68
10 Keli Zhou	110.87
11 Gretchen Donlan	106.60
12 Marissa Secundy	105.16
13 Kirsten Olson	95.57

Novice Championship	Points
01 Kiri Baga	120.16
02 Mary Beth Marley	116.53
03 Angela Wang	114.55
04 Nina Jiang	112.81
05 Yasmin Siraj	109.42
06 Lauren Dinh	101.09
07 Katlynn McNab	100.37
08 Keilani-Lyn Rudderham	94.64
09 Lindsay Davis	90.85
10 Viviana Mathis	90.26
11 Christine Mozer	79.80
12 Kelly Nguyen	72.73

Men's Events

Senior Championship	Points
01 Jeremy Abbott	241.89
02 Brandon Mroz	229.70
03 Evan Lysacek	229.10
04 Ryan Bradley	221.40
05 Johnny Weir	203.99
06 Curran Oi	194.03
07 Adam Rippon	193.76
08 Parker Pennington	192.48
09 Stephen Carriere	185.31
10 Tommy Steenberg	184.99
11 Dennis Phan	183.25
12 Shaun Rogers	175.72
13 Eliot Halverson	171.14
14 Douglas Razzano	164.14
15 William Brewster	152.80
16 Jonathan Cassar	151.10
17 Jason Wong	140.73
WD Nicholas LaRoche	
WD Scott Smith	

Junior Championship	Points
01 Ross Miner	183.80
02 Keegan Messing	176.94
03 Alexander Johnson	171.08
04 Grant Hochstein	162.15
05 Austin Kanallakan	160.30
06 Armin Mahbanoozadeh	159.12
07 Alexander Aiken	157.99
08 Andrew Gonzales	153.19
09 Michael Chau	145.78
10 Daniel O'Shea	145.04
11 Juran Yang	142.75
12 Peter Max Dion	141.22
13 David Wang	117.34
14 Pine Kopka-Ross	99.98
WD Richard Dornbush	

Novice Championship	Points
01 Joshua Farris	161.05
02 Steven Evans	133.60
03 Jason Brown	132.84
04 Jay Yostanto	124.16
05 Austin Wagner	122.15
06 Jason Thomas	117.81
07 Christopher Fernandes	116.89
08 Colin Grafton	114.21
09 Edward Tea	111.62
10 Allen Gaghinjian	102.97
11 Joshua Santillan	99.85
12 John McKenna	79.77

Pairs' Events

Senior Championship	Points
01 Keauna McLaughlin & Rockne Brubaker	178.76
02 Caydee Denney & Jeremy Barrett	176.27
03 Rena Inoue & John Baldwin	171.08
04 Amanda Evora & Mark Ladwig	159.95
05 Brooke Castile & Benjamin Okolski	157.01
06 Chloe Katz & Joseph Lynch	156.15
07 Caitlin Yankowskas & John Coughlin	153.67
08 Tiffany Vise & Derek Trent	148.91
09 Laura Lepzinski & Ethan Burgess	141.21
10 Jessica Rose Paetsch & Drew Meekins	130.87
11 MeeRan Trombley & Laureano Ibarra	129.61
12 Lindsay Davis & Alexander Merritt	125.33
13 Bianca Butler & Joseph Jacobsen	124.46
14 Stephanie Kuban & Steven Elefante	123.21
15 Lisa Moore & Justin Gaumond	112.57
16 Andrea Best & Trevor Young	112.15
17 Chelsi Guillen & Danny Curzon	108.06
18 Jennifer Brunn & Don Baldwin	105.99
19 Kendra Moyle & Steven Pottenger	105.43

Junior Championship	Points
01 Tracy Tanovich & Michael Chau	135.50
02 Brynn Carman & Christopher Knierim	134.92
03 Marissa Castelli & Simon Shnafir	129.87
04 Britney Simpson & Nathan Miller	122.44
05 Molly Aaron & Daniyel Cohen	118.16
06 Brittany Chase & Andrew Speroff	115.82
07 Lauren Farr & Mac Kern	115.79
08 Ameena Sheikh & Aaron VanCleave	113.44
09 Kloe Bautista & Galvani Hopson	109.70
10 Megan Gueli & Grant Marron	108.42
11 Erika Smith & Nathan Bartholomay	101.00
12 Rachel DeRita & Brandon Accardi	97.98
13 Emily Glassberg & Gabe Woodruff	89.05

Novice Championship	Points
01 Cassie Andrews & Nicholas Anderson	116.20
02 Haven Denney & Daniel Raad	115.09
03 Olivia Gibbons & Tyler Harris	110.35
04 Lauren Gifford & Carson Bodnarek	106.67
05 Tori Vollmer & Zack Sidhu	99.16
06 Ashley Cain & Sergey Sidorov	98.62
07 Cali Fujimoto & Nicholas Barsi-Rhyne	90.44
08 Meredith Pipkin & Brett Dunie Neustadt	89.76
09 Kylie Duarte & Colin Grafton	87.01
10 Rachel Cole & Collin Glabinski	82.32
11 Morgan Agster & Adam Civiello	80.33
12 Marissa Spector & Christopher Nolan	71.99

Dance Events

Senior Championship	Points
01 Meryl Davis & Charlie White	201.68
02 Emily Samuelson & Evan Bates	181.64
03 Kimberly Navarro & Brent Bommentre	176.30
04 Madison Hubbell & Keiffer Hubbell	171.51
05 Morgan Matthews & Leif Gislason	169.62
06 Jane Summersett & Todd Gilles	169.35
07 Trina Pratt & Chris Obzansky	165.71
08 Lynn Kriengkrairut & Logan Giulietti-Schmitt	151.59
09 Charlotte Maxwell & Nick Traxler	143.60
10 Clare Farrell & Charles Fishpaw	135.30
11 Jessica Perino & William Avila	127.35
12 Lauren Corry & Alexander Lorello	121.62
13 Kellene Ratko & Jonathan Harris	107.58
14 Emma Cyders & Ievgenii Krasniak	107.29
WD Jennifer Wester & Daniil Barantsev	

Junior Championship	Points
01 Madison Chock & Greg Zuerlein	167.81
02 Maia Shibutani & Alex Shibutani	161.03
03 Piper Gilles & Zachary Donohue	151.10
04 Shannon Wingle & Timothy McKernan	145.05
05 Isabella Cannuscio & Ian Lorello	144.80
06 Rachel Tibbetts & Collin Brubaker	143.20
07 Sara Bailey & Kyle Herring	136.18
08 Chloe Wolf & Rhys Ainsworth	134.19
09 Charlotte Lichtman & Dean Copely	133.27
10 Anastasia Cannuscio & Colin McManus	132.52
11 Elyse Matsumoto & Patrick Mays	128.74
12 Katie Wyble & Justin Morrow	116.82
13 Alison Carey & Daniel Donigan	102.58
WD Brittany Marshall & Ashley Deavers	

Novice Championship	Points
01 Lauri Bonacorsi & Travis Mager	105.80
02 Anastasia Olson & Jordan Cowan	101.78
03 Moriah Tabon & Matt Kleffman	96.76
04 Gabrielle Friedenberg & Benjamin Nykiel	94.19
05 Grace Lee Sells & Robert Cuthbertson	93.42
06 Una Donegan & Andrew Korda	93.29
07 Joylyn Yang & Jean-Luc Baker	90.32
08 MacKenzie Reid & Adam Munday	89.04
09 Katharine Zeigler & Samuel Rashba	86.76
10 Sameena Sheikh & Daniel Eaton	86.14
11 Natalie Wojton & Michael Soyfer	80.28
12 Julia Leix & Thomas Zebrasky	77.11

WD = withdrawn due to injury



Pairs' Championship
Keauna McLaughlin & Rockne Brubaker
(Senior Winners)



Men's Championship
Jeremy Abbott
(Senior Winner)

Photo Credit: Mark Webster



SKATER ON A MISSION

Mark Webster

When aussieSKATES first spoke to the current senior men's national silver medalist, it was in the mixed zone after his free program at the Four Continents event in Vancouver. What that event showed us, was his determination and resolve. The reason being, he did a full program with four triple jumps, meanwhile suffering from a heavy bout of the flu.

Perceived as a Summer country, if kids take up a sport in Australia, it is usually something outdoors like swimming, tennis, or football. So when men's singles skater, Mark Webster, got into ice skating, aussieSKATES wanted to find out what drew him rinkside.

His story is similar to others here we have talked to. Accompanying his family to the local rink, Mark found that he really enjoyed it, asking afterwards for lessons so he that could improve. In fact, his first memories were of the half hour drive to the arena, counting down the minutes to get out onto the ice.

From there, Mark started to climb his way up the various levels of the Aussie Skate program at local Blacktown Arena, advancing all the way through to senior. This has been his routine for the past 11 years, and for Mark, serious goals fell

into place once he reached the pre-primary level.

On a typical day during the skating season, Mark will skate a morning session, go to university, come home, then go back to the rink for another practice in the afternoon. After that, he does core work and strength training in the evening.

We asked Mark what kind of mental preparation he does, if any, leading up to a skate. He stressed that once each program is consistent, staying calm is the key. Then, there isn't too much to worry about.

Aiming to make the World team in Los Angeles, Mark's goals at the recent Four Continents event in Vancouver were to achieve clean skates in both the short and long programs. This meant including only his most consistent jumps, and getting high values for his spins and footwork. How you do in competition, he emphasizes, is all in the training. Just do the programs and make them consistent.

Happy with how he skated in Canada, Mark gained invaluable experience, and really enjoyed the whole event. Skating on the international stage, it also allowed him some insight into what was ahead at the World Championships. The Canadian audience was very supportive, particularly, Mark adds, that he drew first to skate in the short program.

One of Webster's idols is the Canadian, Kurt Browning. Exclaiming that Browning has got it all, Mark was fortunate enough to meet the 4 - time World Champion in person. He also got a photo of himself with the skater at Four Continents as a souvenir.

Learning this, it is not surprising Mark chose to train in Canada.

After finishing high school, Webster decided that he wanted to dedicate the next year to skating. So, deferring from university, Mark chose Doug Leigh's renowned Mariposa School in Barrie, Ontario.

Mark's selection was guided not only by his appreciation of the Canadian style, but because he is also a huge fan of the 2008 World Champion, Jeffrey Buttle, and Chris Maybee, the 2007 National silver medallist.

His first time away from home alone, training overseas, Mark was in Canada for a total period of nine months.

Skating at the Mariposa Club has been like a second home. Surrounded by so many other talented athletes, Mark is pleased that even as competitors, they can still offer each other support. For example, if one of them lands a difficult jump in practice, everyone else will applaud briefly or slap the barrier in encouragement. Mark was also aware of the big contrast between training facilities in Canada and at home in Australia. For example, overseas, there are no other obligations other than to skating. That, and each coach is highly specialized, dedicated only to individual components such as spins, jumps, or footwork. There is never a struggle for ice time. So, one's day can be structured around skating or off-ice conditioning. Another advantage is training

alongside high profile skaters who are not only easy to approach, but keen to talk as well.

For Mark, juggling both skating and study is a constant challenge. During high school, he had no choice but to fit skating in around his education. So far with university, however, he has been able to structure higher learning around the sport. Although, he adds, "the workload is tiresome and mentally draining."

After skating and school, Mark's free time is limited. However, his hobbies away from the sport include hanging out with friends, watching episodes from his favourite TV shows, and playing video games.

To date, he has three favourite skating moments. The first was his short program skate at the 2007 Australian Youth Olympic Festival in Sydney. Second, were his combined performances at Four Continents, which third, gained him entry to the World Championships in Los Angeles.

With the Vancouver Olympics looming, Mark's plans for 2010 are straightforward. He is aiming to put harder jumps into his programs, meanwhile keeping up his consistency. If he achieves those two goals, Mark would like to achieve good performances at the National Championships, as well as any international assignments he is given. Ideally, he would like to attend another Four Continents as well as the Nebelhorn Trophy, the official Olympic qualification event.



Mark skates his short program at the World Championships in Los Angeles.

Photo Credit: Mark Webster

2009 Four Continents & World Figure Skating Championships

Team Profiles

Ice Dance
Maria Borounov &
Evgeni Borounov



Photo Credit: Jay Adelf Photography

Men's Singles
Nicholas Fernandez

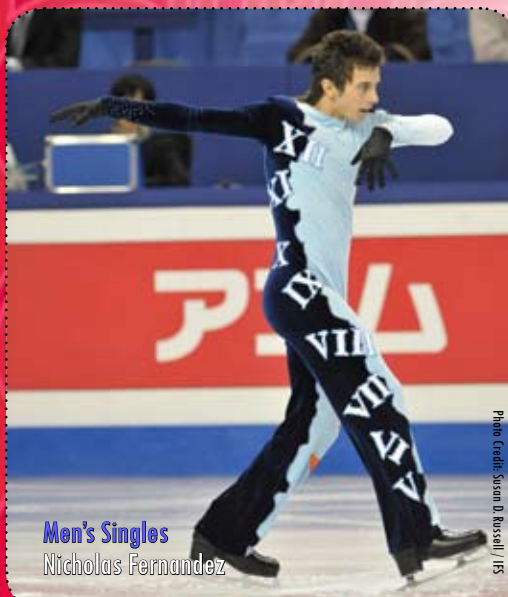


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Ladies' Singles
Jessica Kurzawski



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Ladies' Singles
Cheltzie Lee

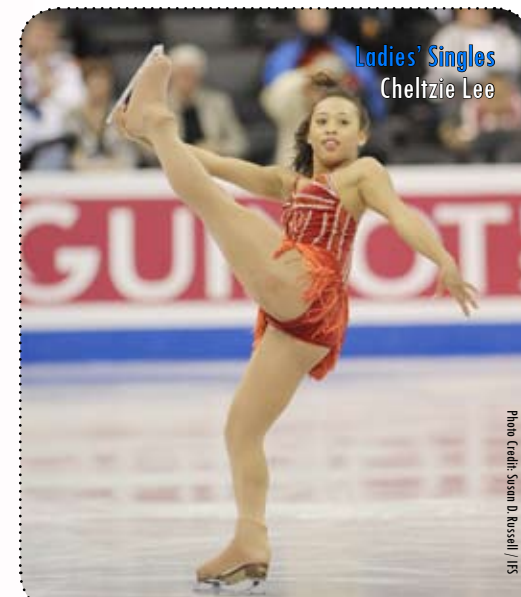


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Maria Borounov & Evgeni Borounov

Date of birth: May 14th, 1982 / June 10th, 1979
Home town: Perth, W.A.
Profession: Full-time athletes
Hobbies: reading, movies / music, computers
Coaches: Elena Kustarova, Svetlana Alexeeva
Started Skating: 1993 / 1984
Club: Cockburn Ice Arena
Choreographers: Elena Kustarova
Personal Best Total Score: 107.52
2008 Four Continents Compulsory Dance: 18.18
Original Dance: 34.93
Free Dance: 54.81
2008 Four Continents

Nicholas Fernandez

Date of birth: May 8th, 1990
Home town: Sydney, N.S.W.
Profession: Student
Hobbies: gym, computer
Coach: Sharryn Hollins
Started Skating: 1998
Club: Slav Baboshyn
Choreographers: Slav Baboshyn
Personal Best Total Score: 109.77
2008 Four Continents 41.14
Short Program: 41.14
2008 Four Continents 68.63
Free Skating: 68.63
2008 Four Continents

Jessica Kurzawski

Date of birth: August 7th, 1990
Home town: Liverpool, N.S.W.
Profession: Student
Hobbies: skating, the beach, snorkelling
Coach: George Galanis, Andrei Pachin
Started Skating: 1999
Club: Liverpool FSC
Choreographers: George Galanis, Andrei Pachin
Personal Best Total Score: 86.19
2008 JGP Golden Lynx 33.69
Short Program: 33.69
2008 JGP Golden Lynx 33.69
Free Skating: 33.69
2008 JGP Golden Lynx

Cheltzie Lee

Date of birth: April 21st, 1993
Home town: St. Andrews, N.S.W.
Profession: Student
Hobbies: surfing, shopping, reading, chatting with friends, music
Coach: Kylie Fennell, Kathy Casey
Started Skating: 1999
Club: Sydney FSC
Choreographers: Kylie Fennell, Catarina Lindgren
Personal Best Total Score: 123.88
2009 Four Continents 43.96
Short Program: 43.96
2009 Four Continents 79.92
Free Skating: 79.92
2009 Four Continents

2009 Four Continents & World Figure Skating Championships

Team Profiles

Men's Singles
Robert McNamara

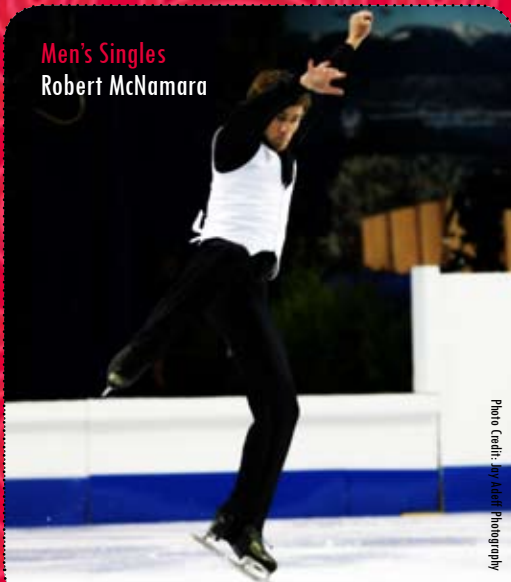


Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Ice Dance
Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman

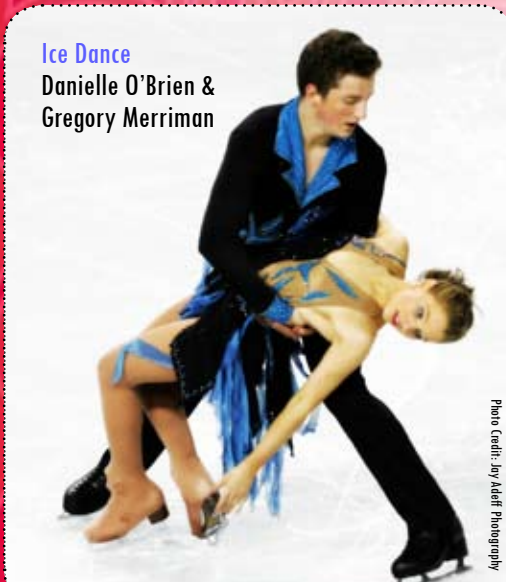


Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Ladies' Singles
Tina Wang

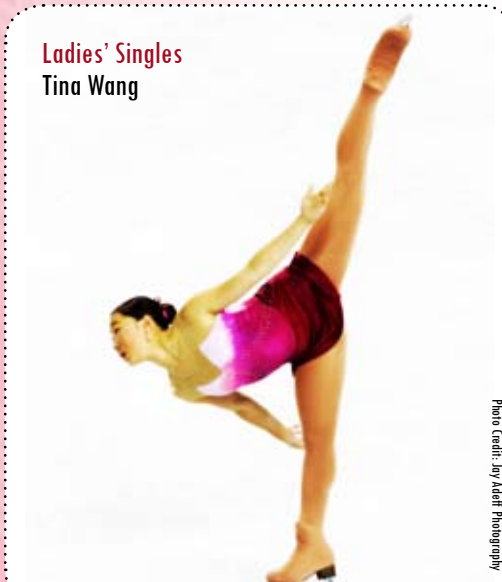


Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Men's Singles
Mark Webster



Photo Credit: Mark Webster

Robert McNamara

Date of birth:	August 18 th , 1987
Home town:	Pimpama
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	Figure skating
Coach:	Ekaterina Borodotova
Started Skating:	1993
Club:	Iceworld FSC
Choreographer:	Ekaterina Borodotova
Personal Best Total Score:	
2009 Four Continents	116.47
Short Program:	
2009 Four Continents	41.59
Free Skating:	
2009 Four Continents	74.88

Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman

Dates of birth:	February 2 nd , 1990 / October 3 rd , 1988
Home town:	Sydney, N.S.W.
Profession:	Students
Hobbies:	swimming, scuba diving, music, being with friends / sport, motor sport, drifting, beach
Coaches:	Monica MacDonald, Andrei Filippov
Started Skating:	1997 / 1992
Club:	Sydney FSC
Choreographers:	Monica MacDonald
Personal Best Total Score:	
2008 Four Continents	121.86
Compulsory Dance:	
2006 JGP Chinese Taipei Cup	21.73
Original Dance:	
2008 World Championships	39.88
Free Dance:	
2008 Four Continents	63.16

Tina Wang

Date of birth:	December 13 th 1991
Home town:	Brisbane, QLD
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	reading, being with friends, travelling
Coach:	Chang Yuan Wang, Hui Ma
Started Skating:	1998
Club:	Iceworld Figure Skating Club
Choreographers:	Hui Ma, Tina Wang
Personal Best Total Score:	
2009 Four Continents	108.02
Short Program:	
2009 Four Continents	37.64
Free Skating:	
2009 Four Continents	70.38

Mark Webster

Date of birth:	February 21, 1990
Home town:	Penrith, N.S.W.
Profession:	Student
Hobbies:	computer games, movies, going out with friends
Coach:	Shawn Renshaw, Robert Tebby, Doug Leigh
Started Skating:	1998
Club:	Penrith Valley FSC
Choreographers:	Cameron Medhurst, Paige Aistrop
Personal Best Total Score:	
2009 Four Continents	123.08
Short Program:	
2009 Four Continents	43.93
Free Skating:	
2009 Four Continents	79.15

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Event Overview

Fresh from a victory at the Grand Prix Final and U.S. Nationals, Jeremy Abbott was one of the favourites heading into this event. Admitting exhaustion from a 2008/09 marathon competitive season, he nevertheless finished a respectable fifth.

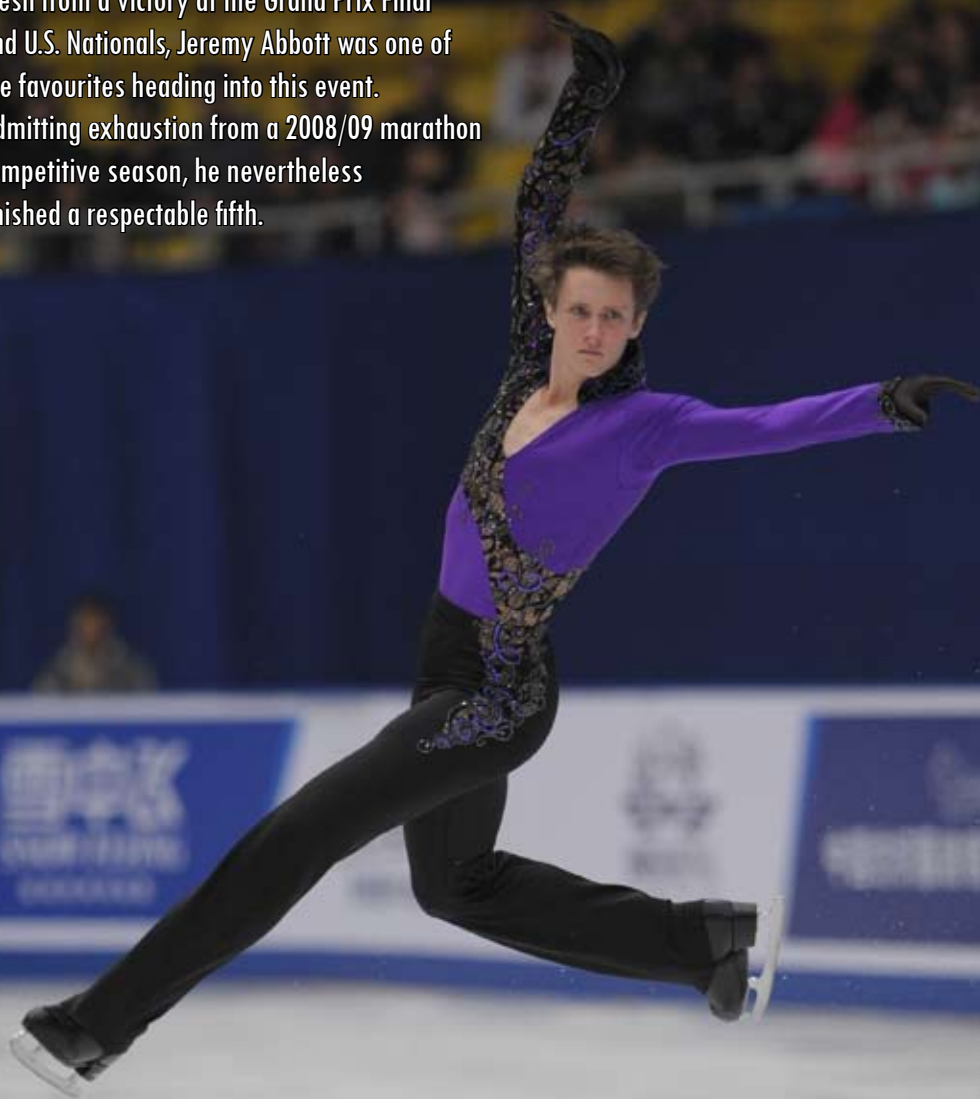


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / ISU

Now in its eleventh year, from February 4 - 9, the Pacific Colliseum in Vancouver played host to the 2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships. More than 100 athletes from 15 nations contested medals in pairs, dance, men's and ladies' singles competition.

Three of the four titles were defended, with only Japan's Daisuke Takahashi away due to leg fracture complications.

It must be noted that this event was chosen as the official test run for the figure skating segments at next year's Olympic Winter Games. Hence, the ISU specified that it would be advantageous for each nation to turn up with their A Teams and A Games. Thanks also to the support from the Canadian crowds, few of the skaters disappointed.

Australia sent a team of three ladies, three men and two dance teams, with this competition acting as qualification to the World Championships in Los Angeles. New Zealand would be represented by Mathieu Wilson, who announced his retirement following Four Continents.

The Dance Championship

Fresh from their victory at the recent U.S. national championships, Meryl Davis and Charlie White continued that momentum here. With second place results in both the compulsory and original dance rounds in Vancouver, the duo's biggest rivals were also their training partners, Canada's Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir.

But, skating to dramatic selections from the **Polovtsian Dances** by Borodin for their free dance, the young American couple used speed and dazzling footwork to their advantage and took the title. In their first year at senior level, the 2008 World Junior Champions, Emily Samuelson and Evan Bates, also from the United States, won bronze.

The compulsory dance chosen for this competition was the Finnstep. Invented by Suzanna Rahkamo and Petri Kokko (of Finland, naturally), the dance proved a significant challenge for all of the skaters.

Australia's Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merriman, admitted to learning the dance only from watching the official ISU recording on DVD. Still, they led their team mates, Maria and Evgeni Borounov for all three phases of the event.

Coached by Viktor Kraatz in the lead - up to this competition, O'Brien and Merriman earned themselves the lone berth on the World Team. It must be noted that as part of their 2010 plan, the young Sydney - based couple will keep and continue to develop their free dance, skated to selections by Ludwig Von Beethoven.

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Event Overview

Vancouver's Pacific Coliseum is the official figure skating venue for next year's Olympic Winter Games.



Photo Credit: Vancouver Sun

Comeback queen, Cynthia Phaneuf (CAN) placed third in the short program.

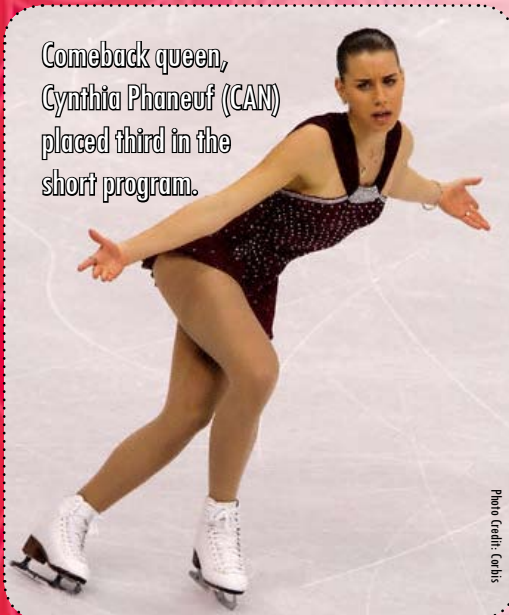


Photo Credit: Corbis

Joanne Rochette (CAN) in action during the ladies' short program.



Photo Credit: Corbis

The Ladies' Championship

Canada's Joannie Rochette was a different skater all season. For whatever reason, this year she was free from the self-doubting performance nerves that have cost her medals in the past. Rochette's new determination was particularly highlighted in the free program, when she refused to back down from a triple salchow at the end of her triple toe loop jump sequence. She could be the dark horse come February 2010.

As the defending Four Continents champion, current World title holder and recent winner of the Grand Prix Final, it was expected that Japan's Mao Asada would romp to victory. However, significant problems with the triple lutz all week resulting in a sixth place finish after the short program, more than likely lost her the title. Despite winning the free skate, Mao wound up with the bronze medal.

Conversely, Korea's YuNa Kim, making her debut at this event, won the short program also under immense pressure. With a huge Canadian-Korean audience wilding applauding her every move, Kim earned 72.24 points, a new personal best and the highest ever score for a ladies' short program. Though she finished a close third in the free skate, combined with her short program total, it was enough for gold.

The 2009 Four Continents event would be a huge test for Cheltzie Lee. Debuting at the senior level, as one of the youngest skaters in the competition, how she would fare against more experienced skaters was a great unknown. Her big triple jumps, coupled with fast spins, and tremendous speed, however, earned Lee a place on the World team, over Tina Wang and Jessica Kurzawski.

The Men's Championship

The men's championship was expected to be a showdown between the new U.S. Champion, Jeremy Abbott, and the return of Nobunari Oda from Japan. However, Canada's Patrick Chan, back from the disappointment of the Grand Prix Final, took command in the short program with a whopping 88.90 points. He followed that with a whopping 160.29 point score in the free skate, taking the title over Evan Lysacek from the U.S.A. and Japan's Takahiko Kozuka.

Like dance and ladies, the top Australian man here would continue forward to the World Championships in Los Angeles. It was expected to be a battle between the 2009 National Champion, Nicholas Fernandez and Queensland's Robert McNamara. However, Mark Webster was selected, not only for a clearer strategy over the other two, but extended training time in Canada with the famed Mariposa School must have surely helped.

The Pairs' Championship

As expected, Chinese veterans Qin Pang and Jian Tong, competing in every Four Continents since it began in 1999, took the title against the Canadians, Jessica Dube and Bryce Davison, and team mates, Dan Zhang and Hao Zhang. Their mature free program presentation was to a tango, giving them victory almost 10 points over the North Americans.

No Australian team was entered in the pairs' event.

All of our team's skating performances from Vancouver may be viewed at:
www.youtube.com/aussieskates

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Results

Pairs' Champions
Qin Pang &
Jian Tong
(China)



Photo Credit: Melanie Hoyl

Ladies' Champion
Yu-Na Kim
(Korea)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Men's Champion
Patrick Chan
(Canada)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Dance Champions
Meryl Davis &
Charlie White
(U.S.A.)

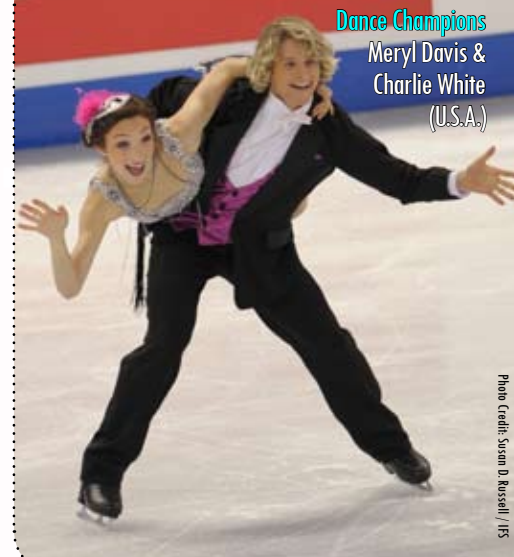


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Pairs' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Qing Pang & Jian Tong	CHN	65.60	129.34	194.94
02 Jessica Dube & Bryce Davison	CAN	64.36	121.26	185.62
03 Dan Zhang & Hao Zhang	CHN	63.20	111.78	174.98
04 Meagan Duhamel & Craig Buntin	CAN	62.08	106.35	168.43
05 Keana McLaughlin & Rockne Brubaker	USA	54.16	109.85	164.01
06 Caydee Denney & Jeremy Barrett	USA	53.60	108.09	161.69
07 Rene Inoue & John Baldwin	USA	56.78	100.60	157.38
08 Mylene Brodeur & John Mattatall	CAN	55.16	94.69	149.85
09 Huibo Dong & Yiming Wu	CHN	52.40	90.93	143.33
10 Amanda Sonyoto-Yang & Darryll Sulindro-Yang	TPE	43.38	83.35	126.73
11 Marina Aganina & Dmitri Zdobin	UZB	36.88	65.64	102.52

Ladies' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 YuNa Kim	KOR	72.24	116.83	189.07
02 Joannie Rochette	CAN	66.90	117.01	183.91
03 Mao Asada	JPN	57.86	118.66	176.52
04 Caroline Zhang	USA	58.16	113.06	171.22
05 Cynthia Phaneuf	CAN	60.98	108.43	169.41
06 Fumie Suguri	JPN	60.18	107.56	167.74
07 Rachael Flatt	USA	55.44	107.39	162.83
08 Akiko Suzuki	JPN	55.40	104.96	160.36
09 Alissa Czisny	USA	55.62	104.19	159.81
10 Amelie Lacoste	CAN	49.78	96.40	146.18
11 Yan Liu	CHN	47.60	91.90	139.50
12 Anastasia Gimeztadinova	UZB	46.22	79.17	125.39
13 Cheltzie Lee	AUS	43.96	79.92	123.88
14 Hyeon-Jung Kim	KOR	41.64	80.00	121.64
15 Binshu Xu	CHN	48.38	72.62	121.00
16 Na-Young Kim	KOR	43.94	76.34	120.28
17 Ana Cecilia Cantu	MEX	44.82	63.93	108.75
18 Tina Wang	AUS	37.64	70.38	108.02
19 Chaochih Liu	TPE	37.20	60.31	97.51
20 Tamami Ono	HKG	33.80	58.09	91.89
21 Michele Cantu	MEX	37.16	52.92	90.08
22 Loretta Hamui	MEX	33.84	53.80	87.64
23 Yueren Wang	CHN	34.38	50.66	85.04
24 Gracielle Jeanne Tan	PHI	34.02	46.35	80.37

30 Jessica Kurzawski AUS 28.94 - FNR

35 ladies skated the event. 24 ladies made the final.

Men's Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Patrick Chan	CAN	88.90	160.29	249.19
02 Evan Lysacek	USA	81.65	155.50	237.15
03 Takahiko Kozuka	JPN	76.61	145.15	221.76
04 Nobunari Oda	JPN	75.04	145.22	220.26
05 Jeremy Abbott	USA	75.67	141.27	216.94
06 Vaughn Chipeur	CAN	68.00	144.81	212.81
07 Jeremy Ten	CAN	66.60	140.67	207.27
08 Brandon Mroz	USA	75.05	121.73	196.78
09 Denis Ten	KAZ	61.32	123.50	184.82
10 Jialiang Wu	CHN	67.75	115.17	182.92
11 Chenjiang Li	CHN	59.22	119.72	178.94
12 Yasuharu Nanri	JPN	59.44	98.47	157.91
13 Song Gao	CHN	58.74	96.71	155.45
14 Abzal Rakimgaliev	KAZ	53.65	99.02	152.67
15 Mark Webster	AUS	43.93	79.15	123.08
16 Kevin Alves	BRA	43.97	78.00	121.97
17 Luis Hernandez	MEX	44.66	74.04	118.70
18 Robert McNamara	AUS	41.59	74.88	116.47
19 Min-Seok Kim	KOR	41.04	67.71	108.75
20 Justin Pieterse	RSA	34.48	71.78	106.26
21 Nicholas Fernandez	AUS	37.64	67.90	105.54
22 Charles Shou-San Pao	TPE	34.45	61.92	96.37
23 Humberto Contreras	MEX	39.87	56.23	96.10
24 Wun-Chang Shih	TPE	31.52	64.52	96.04

25 Mathieu Wilson NZL 31.15 - FNR

26 men skated the event. 24 men made the final.

Dance Event	Nation	CD	OD	FD	Final
01 Meryl Davis & Charlie White	USA	35.23	60.42	96.74	192.39
02 Tessa Virtue & Scott Moir	CAN	36.40	60.90	94.51	191.81
03 Emily Samuelson & Evan Bates	USA	31.41	59.48	89.90	180.79
04 Vanessa Crone & Paul Poirier	CAN	32.43	56.36	88.03	176.82
05 Kaitlyn Weaver & Andrew Poje	CAN	30.62	53.33	84.81	168.76
06 Kimberly Navarro & Brent Bonhomme	USA	30.59	47.59	73.64	151.82
07 Xintong Huang & Xun Zheng	CHN	27.56	46.95	67.79	142.30
08 Xiaoyang Yu & Chen Wang	CHN	24.65	42.12	71.13	137.90
09 Jiayue Wang & Chongbo Gao	CHN	23.31	41.74	67.48	132.53
10 Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman	AUS	19.70	36.13	57.10	112.93
11 Maria Borounov & Evgeni Borounov	AUS	17.51	31.15	52.69	101.35
WD Cathy Reed & Chris Reed	JPN				

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery

Maria & Evgeni Boronov



Robert McNamara



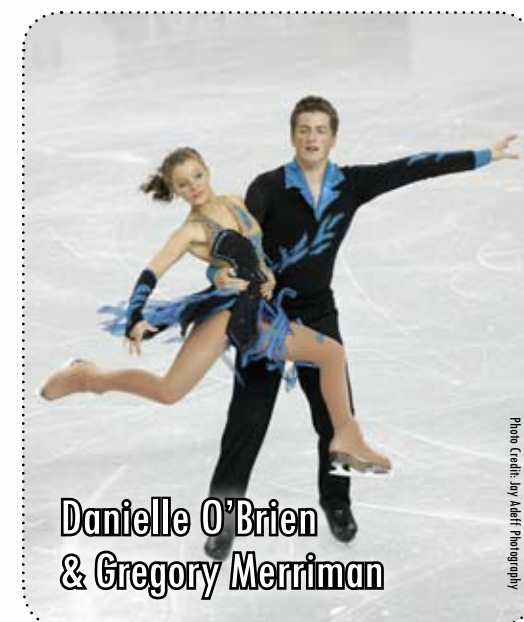
Danielle O'Brien
& Greg Merriman

Tina Wang



2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery



Chelizie Lee



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Nicholas Fernandez

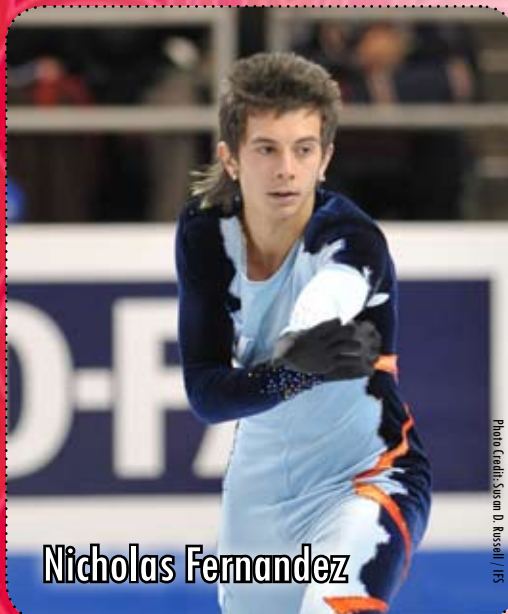


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Danielle O'Brien
& Gregory Merriman



Photo Credit: Jay Adelf Photography

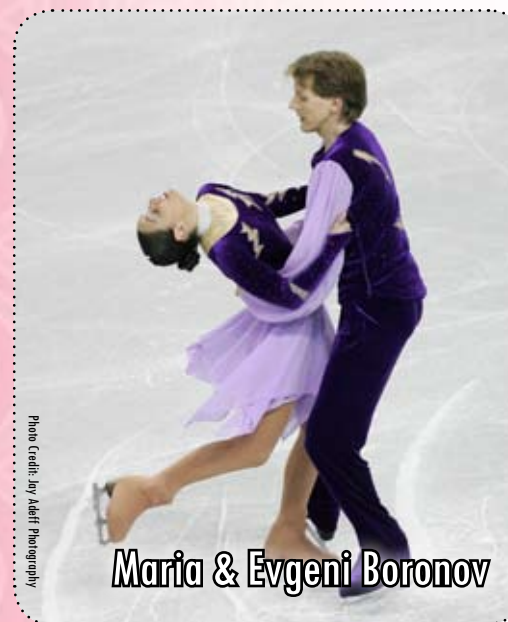
Maria & Evgeni Boronov

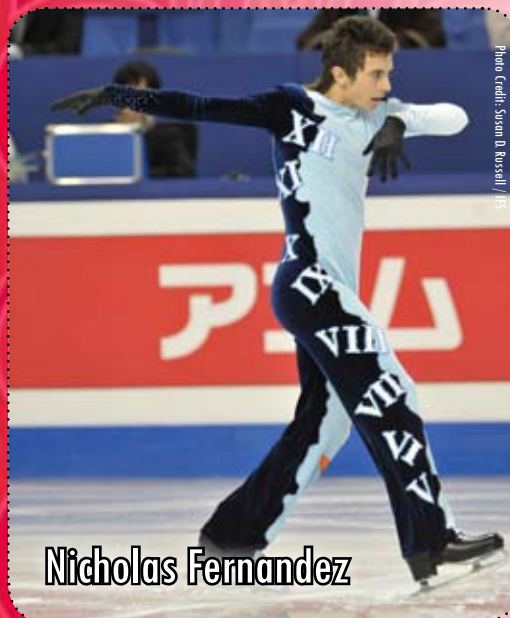
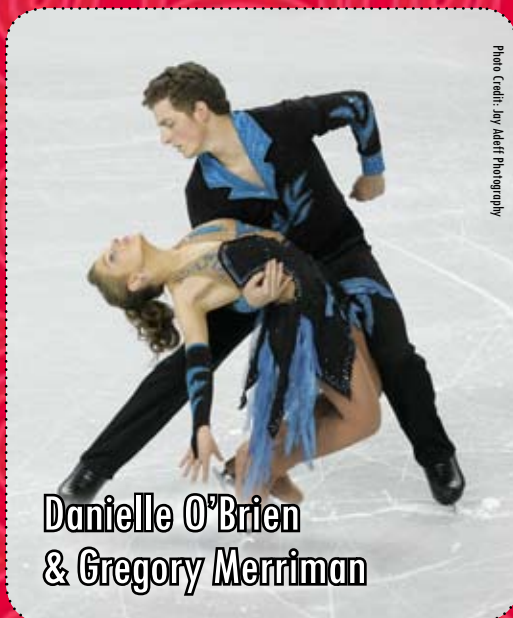


Photo Credit: Jay Adelf Photography

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery





2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Tina Wang



Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Robert McNamara



Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Maria & Evgeni Boronov



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Maria & Evgeni Boronov

Chelizie Lee



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery

Maria & Evgeni Boronov



Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Tina Wang



Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Robert McNamara

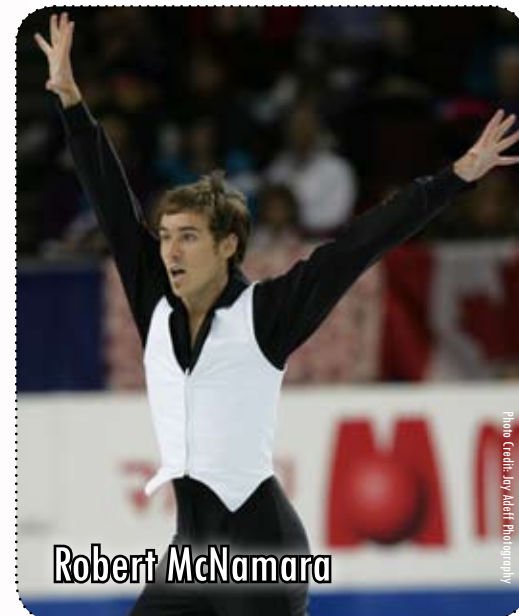


Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

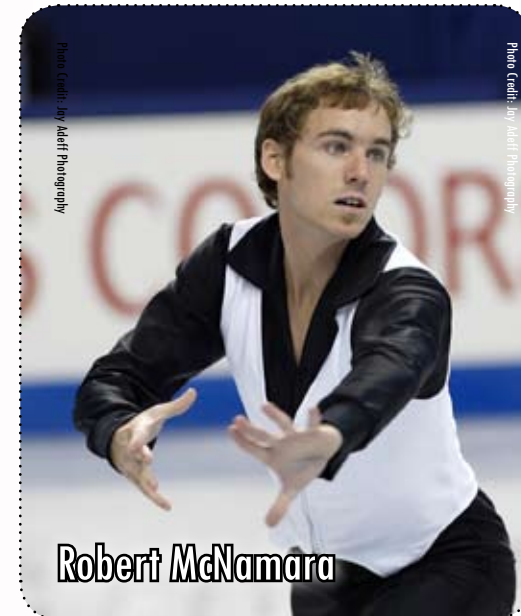
Danielle O'Brien
& Gregory Merriman

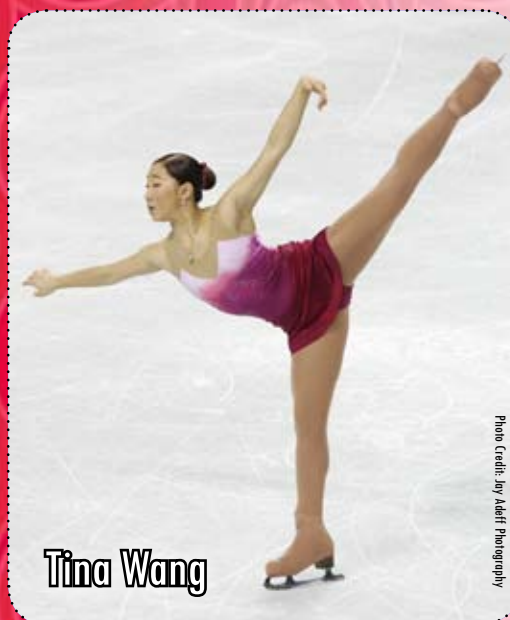
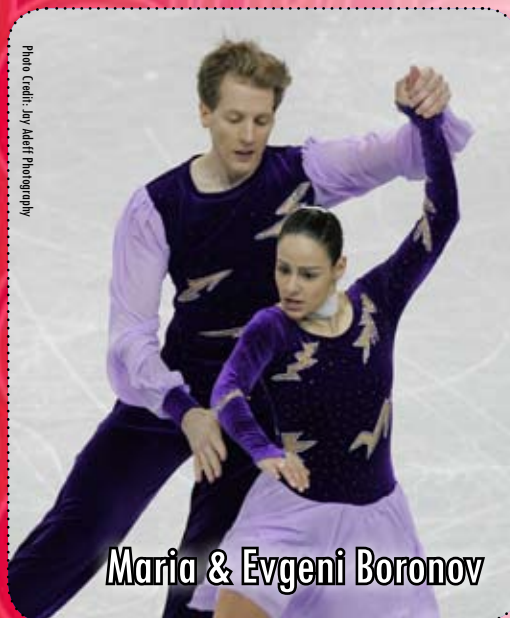


Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery





2009 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Maria & Evgeni Boronov



Photo Credit: Jay Adair Photography

Cheltzie Lee

**Danielle O'Brien
& Gregory Merriman**



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Robert McNamara

Tina Wang



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Chelizie Lee



Photo Credit: Jay Adelf Photography

Danielle O'Brien
& Gregory Merriman



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / ISF

Jessica Kurzawski



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / ISF



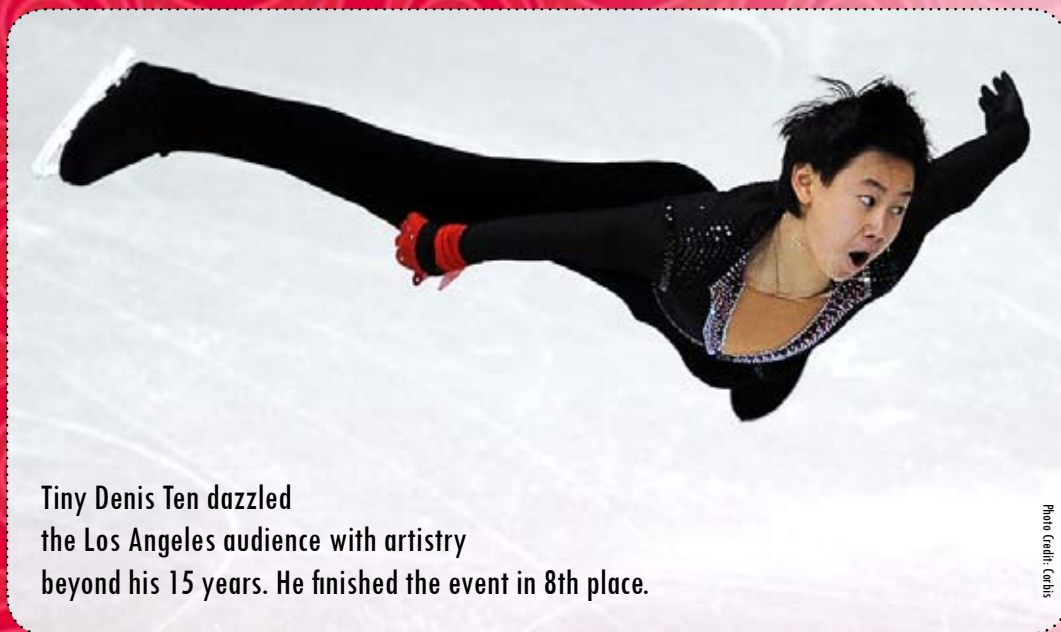
Robert McNamara

Photo Credit: Jay Adelf Photography

2009 World Figure Skating Championships

Event Overview

In 2002, the Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles hosted the U.S. National Championships. Skaters at the 2009 World titles included local residents, Rachael Flatt (placing fifth the ladies' event), and the eventual men's winner, Evan Lysacek.



Tiny Denis Ten dazzled the Los Angeles audience with artistry beyond his 15 years. He finished the event in 8th place.

From March 19 - 26, 54 ladies, 50 men, 30 dance couples and 25 pair teams hit the famed Staples Center arena in Los Angeles for a week of global competition.

A many - time host, the United States last staged the World Championships in Washington, D.C. At that competition six years ago, the winners were Michelle Kwan (USA) in the ladies' event, Evgeni Plushenko (RUS) in the men's competition, Shae-Lynn Bourne & Viktor Kraatz (CAN) in dance, and Xue Shen & Hongbo Zhao (CHN) in pairs.

With Jeff Buttle's surprise retirement from eligible men's skating last year, and dance's defending champions, Delobel and Schoenfelder out due of injury, this year, three of the four titles changed hands. It proved to be an exciting week of competition.

Firstly, new stars to feature at this event included Kazakhstan's 15 year old sensation, tiny Dennis Ten. With crisp artistry, the young skater took command of the arena, displaying textbook jumps and spins. Trained by Elena Bulenova and the legendary Tatiana Tarasova as his choreopher, Ten will soon be a force to be reckoned with.

Though she was only fifth at their recent national titles, Russia's Alena Leonova had a solid international track

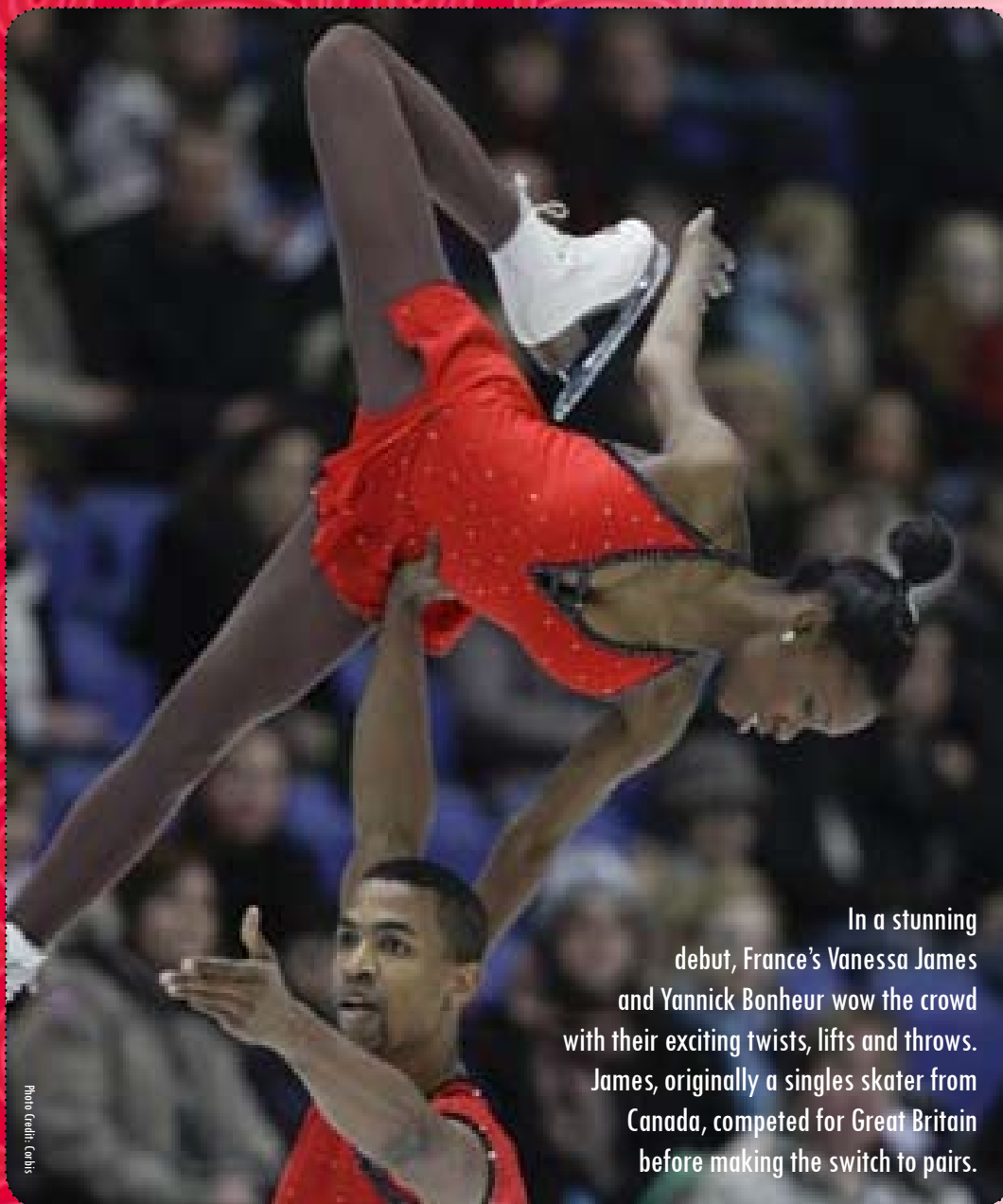
record this season. She cemented her federation's faith in choosing her for this event, firstly placing seventh at the European Championships in Helsinki, then winning the prestigious World Junior title. In the process, the spunky youngster earned herself a personal best and Russia two spots for their ladies at next year's Olympics.

In pairs, France's Vannesa James and Yannick Bonheur, brought the audience to their feet with a poised and athletic free program. Skating to the soundtrack of Baz Lurhman's **Romeo and Juliet**, their performance featured hugh throws and twists, coupled with smooth, musical choreography.

Several dance teams making their debut at the world senior level included Emily Samuelson and Evan Bates from the United States, and Canada's Vanessa Crone and Paul Poirier. Both couples demonstrated maturity beyond their years, and finished the event in the top half of the field.

Building on the momentum from her recent win at the Four Continents Championships, Korea's YuNa Kim finally claimed the one title that has eluded her for the past two seasons. Kim's short program, performed to Saint-Saens' **Dance Macarabe**, not only earned the 18 year old a personal best score, but at 76.12 points, became the highest short program total ever awarded to a lady in championship competition.

With a new-found confidence and consistency, Joannie Rochette won silver. Skating to Rodrigo's **Concerto de Arenjuaz**, the 23 year old won Canada's first medal in the ladies' category since Elizabeth Manley took silver in 1988. Miki Ando, the 2007 World Champion from Japan, skated a technically strong free program to move from



In a stunning debut, France's Vanessa James and Yannick Bonheur wow the crowd with their exciting twists, lifts and throws. James, originally a singles skater from Canada, competed for Great Britain before making the switch to pairs.

Photo Credit: Getty

fourth place to win the bronze medal. Japan's defending champion, Mao Asada, in spite of landing a triple axel in the free skate (and falling on a second attempt) dropped off the podium.

Dance became a four-way battle between one Russian pairing, a Canadian duo, and two couples from the United States. Perhaps an indication of the Code of Points' harsh demands on the body, three of these four teams were returning from injury.

Though Russia's Oksana Domnina and Maxim Shabalin won the compulsory dance, when Tanith Belbin and Benjamin Agosto from the U.S.A. won the original dance, they moved into the lead. In the free dance, however, the American couple lost the title by barely a point. Canada's Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir were third.

The German pairing of Aliona Savchenko and Robin Szolkowy successfully defended their world crown. Silver went to China's Dan Zhang and Hao Zhang, with a much improved showing over their recent Four Continents bronze. Third place went to Yuko Kavaguti and Alexander Smirnov from Russia.

Evan Lysacek proved that an average season does not an end result make. Putting behind the disappointment of U.S. Nationals and a silver behind Patrick Chan at Four Continents, Lysacek won his first World title with a technically demanding freeski. Earning his first world medal, silver went to Canada's Chan, with the 2007 Champion, Brian Joubert of France, tumbling twice in the long program, and dropping from first to third.

The Ladies' Championship

Based on her performance and short program score from the recent Four Continents championships, in theory, Cheltzie Lee should have qualified within the top 24. Why she did not, was due to problems she was having with her required combination spin in practice. Missing this element completely in her performance, left her in 33rd place. No doubt this determined young lady will come back stronger next year.

The Dance Championship

The challenging Argentine Tango was drawn as the compulsory exercise. Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merriman gave a spirited and mature performance. Combined with their solid skate in the original dance (where they placed 24th), the young couple moved to within decimal points of achieving their dream of skating in the free dance final.

The Men's Championship

Along with 49 other men gunning for a place in the free skate, since Four Continents, Mark Webster increased the difficulty of his planned jump content in the short program. However, backing off the triple flip and reducing it to a double cost him valuable points, leaving him in 46th.

New Zealand was not represented in Los Angeles in any of the events.

All of our team's skating performances from Los Angeles may be viewed at:
www.youtube.com/aussieskates

2009 World Figure Skating Championships

Results

Pairs' Champions
Aliona Savchenko &
Robin Szolkowy
(Germany)



Photo Credit: Corbis

Ladies' Champion
Yu-Na Kim
(Korea)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Men's Champion
Evan Lysacek
(U.S.A.)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Dance Champions
Oksana Domnina &
Maxim Shabalin
(RUS)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IFS

Pairs' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Aliona Savchenko & Robin Szolkowy	GER	72.30	131.18	203.48
02 Dan Zhang & Hao Zhang	CHN	67.42	119.10	186.52
03 Yuko Kavaguti & Alexander Smirnov	RUS	68.94	117.45	186.39
04 Qing Pang & Jian Tong	CHN	65.18	115.90	181.08
05 Maria Mukhortova & Maxim Trankov	RUS	66.88	111.01	177.89
06 Tatiana Volosozhar & Stanislav Morozov	UKR	64.10	111.51	175.61
07 Jessica Dube & Bryce Davison	CAN	61.80	111.02	172.82
08 Meagan Duhamel & Craig Buntin	CAN	61.28	104.13	165.41
09 Caydee Denney & Jeremy Barrett	USA	52.74	104.10	156.84
10 Mylene Brodeur & John Mattatall	CAN	50.44	99.61	150.05
11 Keana McLaughlin & Rockne Brubaker	USA	53.62	90.12	143.74
12 Vanessa James & Yannick Bonheur	FRA	44.10	95.24	139.34
13 Stacey Kemp & David King	GBR	47.74	86.99	134.73
14 Anais Morand & Antoine Dorsaz	SUI	48.50	82.96	131.46
15 Maylin Hausch & Daniel Wende	GER	46.58	79.38	125.96

Top 15 results. 25 teams skated the event. 20 teams made the final.

Ladies' Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Yu-Na Kim	KOR	76.12	131.59	207.71
02 Joannie Rochette	CAN	67.90	123.39	191.29
03 Miki Ando	JPN	64.12	126.26	190.38
04 Mao Asada	JPN	66.06	122.03	188.09
05 Rachel Flatt	USA	59.30	113.11	172.41
06 Laura Lepisto	FIN	59.66	110.41	170.07
07 Alena Leonova	RUS	58.18	110.73	168.91
08 Fumie Suguri	JPN	58.40	106.18	164.58
09 Sarah Meier	SWI	58.36	105.01	163.37
10 Elena Gedeonishvili	GEO	58.82	103.66	162.48
11 Alissa Czisny	USA	53.28	106.50	159.78
12 Carolina Kostner	ITA	63.18	90.38	153.56
13 Susanna Poikio	FIN	57.12	96.19	153.31
14 Ivana Reitmayerova	SVK	52.98	94.43	147.41
15 Cynthia Phaneuf	CAN	53.14	92.95	146.09
16 Elena Glebova	EST	55.90	84.12	140.02
17 Na-Young Kim	ROK	51.50	80.00	131.50
18 Annette Dytrt	GER	51.04	80.11	131.15
19 Anna Jurkiewicz	POL	45.60	84.69	130.29
20 Jenna McCormick	GBR	45.52	83.15	128.67
21 Tugba Karademir	TUR	44.24	80.07	124.31
22 Candice Didier	FRA	50.16	71.92	122.08
23 Kerstin Frank	AUT	44.24	62.53	105.73
24 Ana Cecilia Cantu	MEX	41.58	60.24	101.82
33 Cheltzie Lee	AUS	34.00	-	FNR

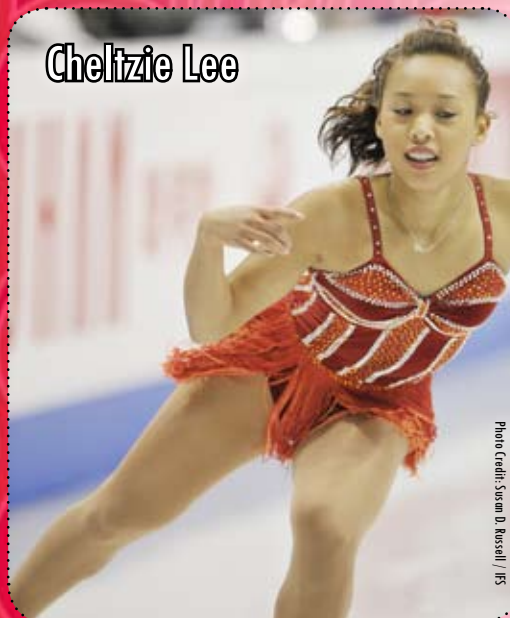
53 ladies skated the event. 24 ladies made the final.

Men's Event	Nation	Short	Free	Final
01 Evan Lysacek	USA	82.70	159.53	242.23
02 Patrick Chan	CHN	82.55	155.03	237.58
03 Brian Joubert	FRA	84.40	151.57	235.97
04 Tomas Verner	CZE	80.36	151.35	231.71
05 Samuel Contesti	ITA	78.50	148.47	226.97
06 Takahiko Kozuka	JPN	79.35	142.83	222.18
07 Nobunari Oda	JPN	76.49	141.67	218.16
08 Denis Ten	KAZ	68.54	142.89	211.43
09 Brandon Mroz	USA	76.10	131.09	207.19
10 Andrei Luta	RUS	68.95	136.04	204.99
11 Jeremy Abbott	USA	72.15	132.52	204.67
12 Vaughn Chipeur	CAN	70.45	131.63	202.08
13 Sergei Varonov	RUS	72.15	129.89	202.04
14 Kevin Van Der Perren	BEL	70.15	128.20	198.35
15 Takahito Mura	JPN	70.35	124.62	194.97
16 Yannick Ponsero	FRA	71.83	122.01	193.84
17 Jeremy Ten	CAN	60.90	132.26	193.16
18 Adrian Schultheiss	SWE	65.20	121.23	186.43
19 Javier Fernandez	ESP	63.75	119.80	183.55
20 Kristoffer Berntsson	SWE	68.61	113.70	182.31
21 Gregor Urbas	SLO	58.70	109.01	167.71
22 Anton Kovalevski	UKR	64.28	101.45	165.73
23 Przemyslaw Domanski	POL	57.00	104.66	161.66
24 Igor Macypura	SVK	58.30	100.56	158.86
46 Mark Webster	AUS	37.35	-	FNR

50 men skated the event. 24 men made the final.

Dance Event	Nation	CD	OD	FD	Final
01 Oksana Domnina & Maxim Shabalin	RUS	40.77	64.68	100.85	206.30
02 Tanith Belbin & Benjamin Agosto	USA	39.65	65.16	100.27	205.08
03 Tessa Virtue & Scott Moir	CAN	39.37	61.05	99.98	200.40
04 Meryl Davis & Charlie White	USA	37.73	62.60	100.03	200.36
05 Nathalie Pechalat & Fabian Bourzat	FRA	36.54	61.83	95.99	194.36
06 Jana Khoklova & Sergei Novitski	RUS	37.34	61.68	94.39	193.41
07 Sinead Kerr & John Kerr	GBR	35.30	60.13	90.64	186.07
08 Federica Faiella & Massimo Scali	ITA	36.30	55.92	90.54	182.76
09 Pernelle Carron & Matthieu Jost	FRA	34.39	57.68	86.65	178.72
10 Anna Cappellini & Luca Lanotte	ITA	33.30	56.33	86.07	175.70
11 Emily Samuelson & Evan Bates	USA	32.51	54.97	87.28	174.76
12 Vanessa Crone & Paul Poirier	CAN	33.33	54.75	85.08	173.16
13 Alexandra Zaretski & Roman Zaretski	ISR	32.85	54.19	80.49	167.53
25 Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman	AUS	19.81	39.70	-	FNR

Top 13 results. 30 teams skated the event. 24 teams made the final.



2009 World Figure Skating Championships

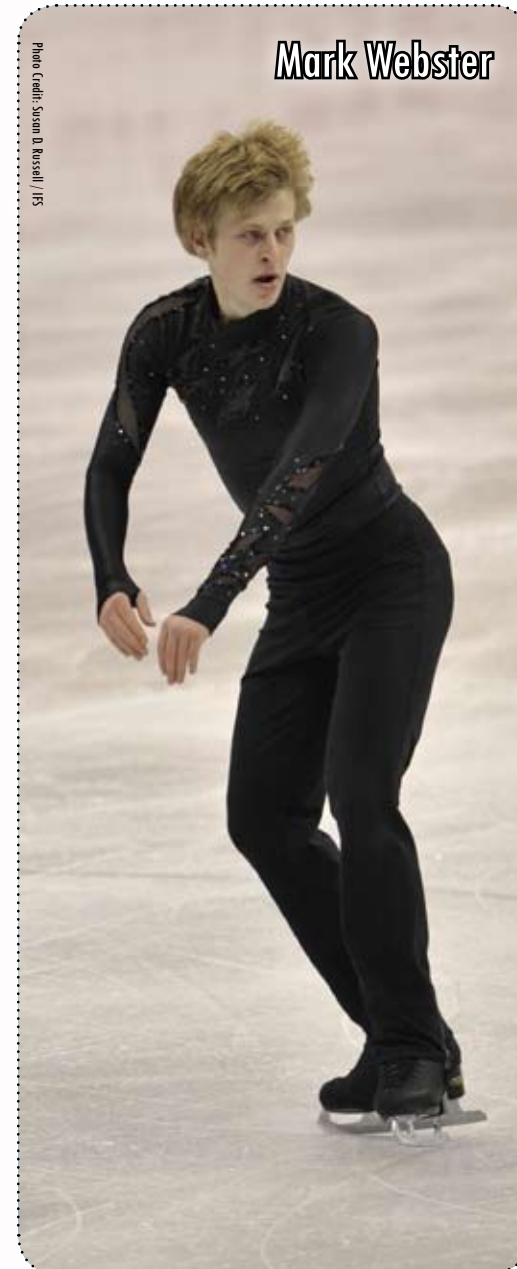
Image Gallery

Cheltzie Lee



Cheltzie Lee

Mark Webster



2009 World Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery

Mark Webster



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Chelzie Lee



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Mark Webster

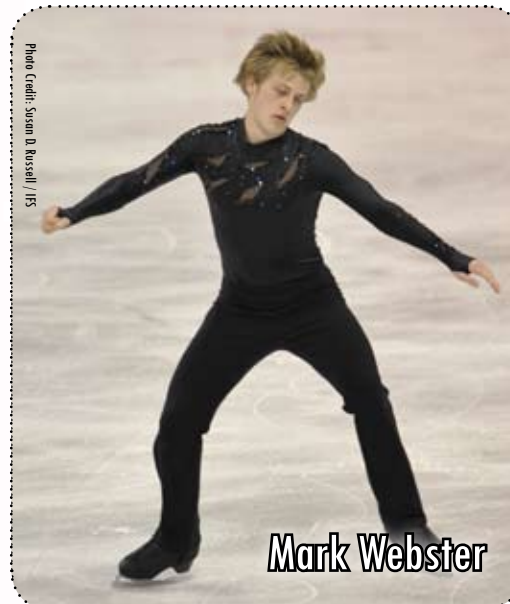


Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

Mark Webster



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell / IS

aussieSKATES: Celebrating Ten Years On Line

Flashback

1999 The **aussieSKATES** website is launched, becoming the first portal and news service dedicated to skaters from Australia and New Zealand competing on the international stage.

Australia sends a team of six skaters to the first Four Continents Championships in Halifax, Canada. Anthony Liu finishes the event in 5th place.

At the World Championships, the team of Danielle Rigg and Trent Nelson - Bond compete in dance. Anthony Liu finishes his event in tenth place.

At the National Championships later in the year, though only 13 years of age, Stephanie Zhang takes her first senior ladies' crown.

2000 After hosting the World Junior Championships in 1988 and 1996, Brisbane in Queensland is awarded the senior championships. It is the first time this event is held in the southern hemisphere. However, due to a contractual dispute with the ISU over television rights, the competition is instead given to Nice in France.

Australia is represented by Anthony Liu and Bradley Santer in the men's event, Sarah Yvonne Prytula in the ladies' competition, and Portia Duvall and Francis Rigby in dance.

2001 Joanne Carter makes her return to international competition, skating at the Four Continents Championships in Salt Lake City. She finishes a creditable 13th. Brisbane hosts the Goodwill Games to sell-out audiences. Anthony Liu almost defeats Russia's Alexei Yagudin for bronze. Stephanie Zhang places 8th in the ladies' event, ahead of Russia's Yelena Sokolova & Viktoria Volchkova.

2002 After a disappointing Olympic Games campaign, Stephanie Zhang places second in the short program (to the U.S.A's eventual champion, Ann Patrice McDonough) at the World Junior Championships.

Zhang finishes the event in 7th place.

Placing 16th, Miriam Manzano confounds her critics and surprises herself with a personal best finish at the World Championships in Nagano, Japan.

In the men's event, Anthony Liu finishes a career best in 7th place. His placement earns Australia two spots for next year.

2004 **aussieSKATES** introduces websites dedicated to athletes who have skated on the international circuit.

2005 After placing 4th at the Four Continents Championships, Joanne Carter returns to the World stage for the first time in seven years. There, she finishes the event in 16th, qualifying herself and Australia a place at the Olympic Games.

2006 Australia sends its first full team to the World Championships since 1998. Our top finishers are the pair team of Emma Brien and Stuart Beckingham.

In tribute to the 2006 World Figure Skating Championships, **aussieSKATES** creates its first e-zine.

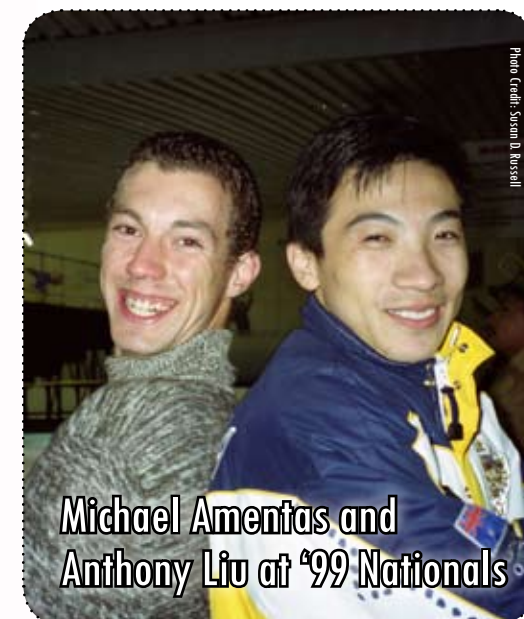
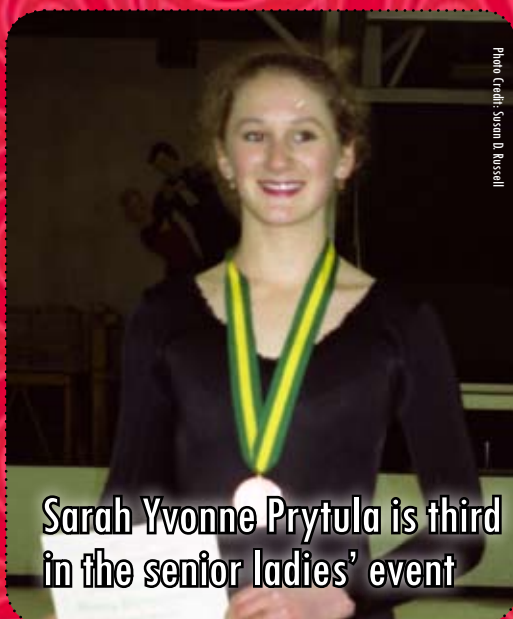
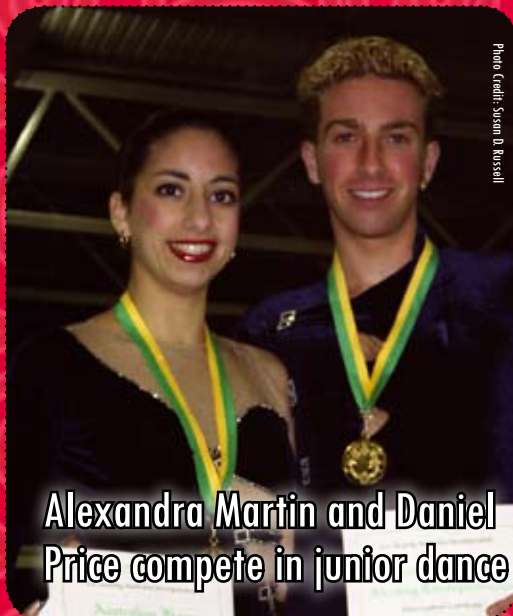
2007 Weeks after a successful campaign at the World Championships in Japan, Sean Carlow, his immediate family, and skating friends are involved in a tragic boating accident on Sydney Harbour.

Lives lost included two of Australian skating's most respected international judges, Dr. Alan Blinn & Simone Moore, and rising skating star, Morgan Innes.

2009 **aussieSKATES** attends its first championship event as a member of the press, covering Four Continents.



Peter Nicholas wins the junior men's title at '99 Nationals





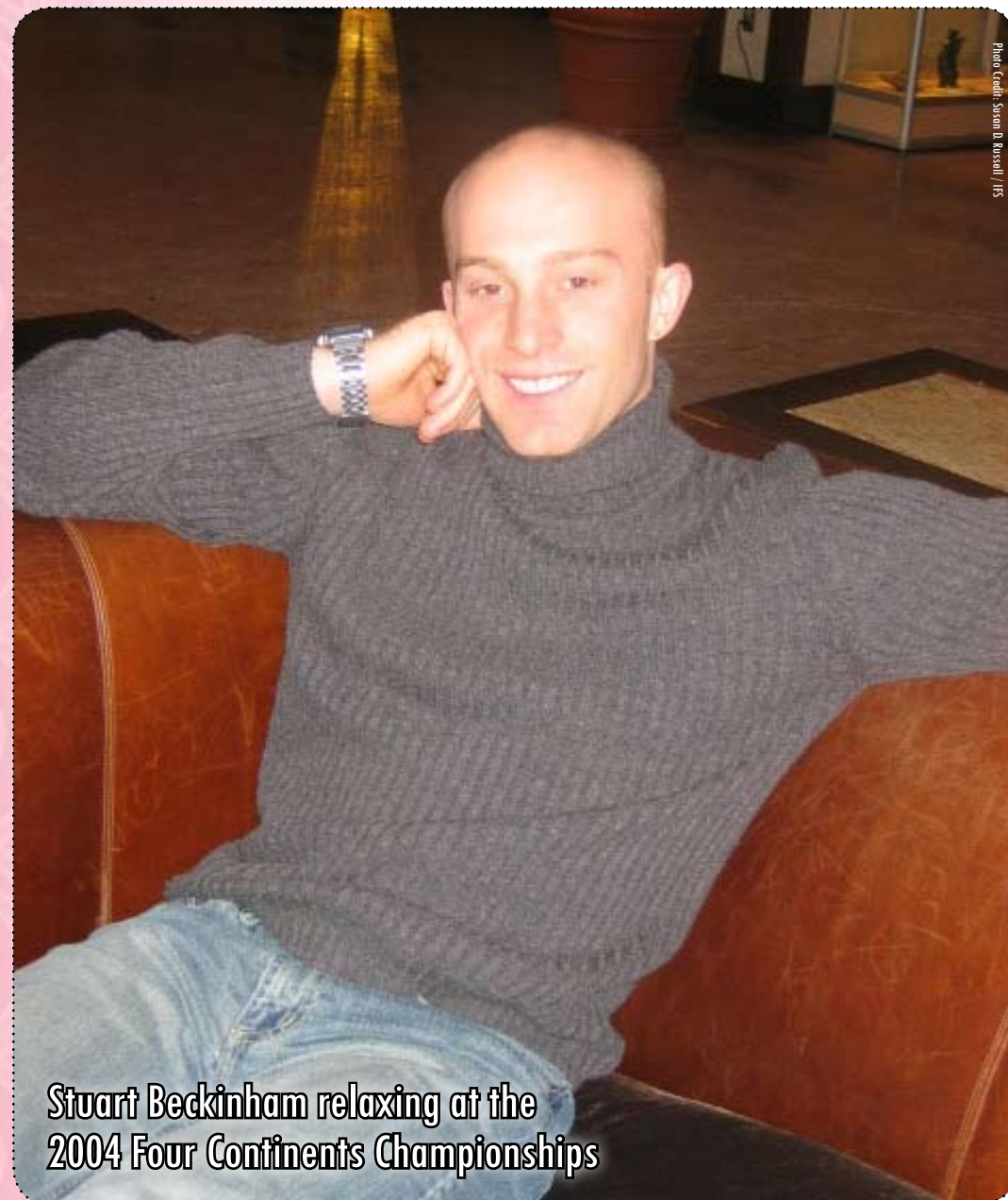






Photo Credit: Jay Adell Photography

Joanne Carter, shown during the ladies' free program at the 2006 Four Continents Championships in Colorado Springs, U.S.A.

Joanne Carter (NSW)

A seven-time senior national champion and two-time Olympian, Joanne Carter displayed a single-minded determination that saw her place as high as 11th in the world. The first Australian woman to land a triple lutz in championship competition at the 1998 World titles, Carter completed the rare triple loop/triple loop at the same event.

In 1999, a serious knee injury took her out of competition for two years. Persevering through the pain, Carter returned to the global stage in 2005. Joanne is currently touring in Europe with **Holiday on Ice**, and is seriously considering a comeback in time for the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Belinda Noonan (NSW)

Belinda Noonan (nee Coulthard) has dedicated more than half her life to the sport of figure skating. Firstly, as a national and international competitor in pairs and ladies' singles; later she was a respected coach to many of Australia's top names including Danielle & Stephen Carr, Tracy Brook and Cameron Medhurst. She also commentated with Sandy Roberts for Channel Seven at three successive Olympic Games, and was a judge on Torvill and Dean's **Dancing On Ice**.

In her new life as a newspaper editor, Belinda stays in touch with skating, writing articles about the the sport's current champions and new rising stars.

Perry Meek (SA)

Like Johnny Weir from the United States, Perry took to skating late. Within five years, however, he had mastered some of the sport's most difficult tricks and manoeuvres.

The upset winner of the 1983 National Men's Senior title, Perry beat the defending champion and competition favourite, Cameron Medhurst, to the title. With high, quick triple jumps, Meek also displayed good speed and sensitive artistry.

Making his own costumes has led to a career as a fashion designer. Recently, Perry made outfits for Cher and the Spice Girls' World Tour.

Michael Pasfield (NSW)

The 1980 and 1981 National Men's Senior Champion, Pasfield won a silver medal at the junior world championships' level for his dedication to compulsory figures. A gifted free skater, Michael was one of the first Australian men to include difficult triple jumps in his competitive routines.

Training in the United States with many elite skaters from around the world, allowed him to develop a strong sense of showmanship. As a professional, Michael includes the difficult and crowd-pleasing backflip in his routines.

In 2008, Pasfield coached his daughter, Zara, to the national ladies' novice title.