

SEAN CARLOW
3-TIME SENIOR
MEN'S NATIONAL
CHAMPION OF AUSTRALIA

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



aussie SKATES

FIGURE SKATING DOWNUNDER

FEATURING

WORLDS OVERVIEW • NATIONALS RESULTS • BELINDA NOONAN: A LIFE IN SKATING • MICHAEL PASFIELD: FOOTLOOSE & FANCY FREE • MONICA MACDONALD: BY THE BOARDS • ALLISON MANLEY: PODCASTS & DOUBLE FLIPS • THE HALL OF FAME • THE TRIPLE AXEL TURNS 30 • TWENTY YEARS OF THE QUAD

FOCUS ON

NEW SOUTH WALES & QUEENSLAND

PART THREE ON OUR HISTORY OF FIGURE SKATING IN AUSTRALIA

Summer 2008



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Welcome

In this issue, **aussieSKATES** concludes its look at the history of figure skating in Australia. Part three will focus on the sport's impact and influence in New South Wales and Queensland.

Skaters to emerge from these states include national junior and senior ladies' champions, Vicki Holland, Tracy Brook, Tamara Heggen and Stephanie Zhang. Michael Pasfield, a two - time national men's champion, colourfully recounts his career as an eligible and professional skater, coach and skating parent.

We interview Belinda Noonan (nee Coulthard), a national senior ladies' and pairs' champion. With a life devoted to skating, her transition from competitor to coach saw Noonan guide many of our brightest stars including Danielle & Stephen Carr, Perry Meek, Cameron Medhurst, Mandy James and Tracy Brook. Monica MacDonald, a seven - time champion in dance, talks to us about her experiences skating at the national and world level with two successive partners, as well as training the current

national dance champions, Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merriman.

In March, Australia and New Zealand sent one dance couple, two men and two ladies to the World titles in Goteborg, Sweden. Both teams comprised mostly of fresh new faces to senior competition, as four of the six skaters were making their world championship debut at this level.

On the international front, **aussieSKATES** profiles Allison Manley, a Chicago - based graphic designer, marketing strategist, masters' competitor, & skating podcaster.

With special thanks to Wikipedia, we chronicle jumping's technical advances within the sport, celebrating thirty years of the triple axel & twenty with the quad.

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

Congratulations to former Australian dance champion, Jonathan Guerreiro. After moving to Moscow with his parents, he has teamed with Russia's Ekaterina Riazanova. Together, they won the JGP Madrid Cup, and combined with a second placing at the JGP of Merano, have qualified for the JGP Final in Seoul, Korea.

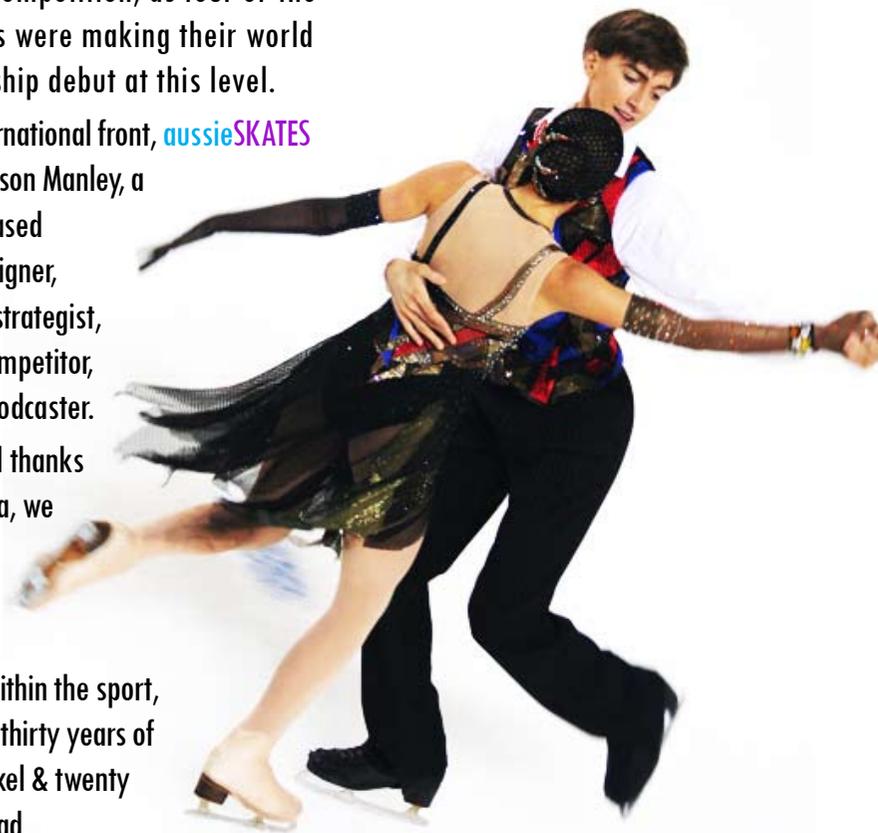


Photo Credit: James Stuart



Michael Pasfield
**FOOTLOOSE AND
FANCY FREE**

Seeming like it was yesterday since winning his senior national crowns, Michael Pasfield continues to dazzle crowds with trademark butterflies and backflips. Now, **aussieSKATES** catches up with this home - grown skating icon.



Michael in 1970, with his second coach, Nita Solomon. Solomon trained under the legendary Jacques Gerschweiler and basically taught his technique

When did you first discover skating?

My introduction to ice skating was haphazard, to say the least. I attended a little Catholic school, St. Mel's, Campsie, in Sydney which was walking distance from Canterbury Ice Rink. Sister Kristen, still a good family friend, was quite progressive and took my class on an ice skating excursion as a treat to end the first term of fourth class (Year 4).

I remember quizzically looking at the sight of all of my classmates hanging onto the barrier. I, also, remember an egg-sized bump on my forehead. Being the middle child of five boys I was not seemingly fazed by the bump when asked by the cashier, Jean Hopkins, upon leaving if I would like to take up classes.

Fate must have played a part because to this day I am amazed with myself for asking mum to follow me to the ice rink the same afternoon to organise things. I remember how excited I was to have found a niche, in that my small stature didn't lend itself to compete against my brothers in their swimming, football or athletic domains.

How old were you when you began taking lessons? Who was your coach / were your coaches?

I was two months off ten years old when I started skating. Ten is relatively old to start figure skating but my upbringing till then was quite sporty, thanks to my father's influence. The benefit of being older to me was that I remember how I was taught most of my elements. I am and will always be thankful for being taught with such ageless and accurate technique by my first coach, Jack Lee.

I started group lessons in a 'school camp' setup during the May school holidays of 1970. Jack had only recently returned from a life of show business in Europe and the UK. His enthusiasm was a real factor in any success I ever had.

My parents paid for 3 half hour lessons per week but Jack was very generous and often spent an hour with me each afternoon after school. At times, Vicki Holland and I skated around the rink just copying Jack. I

do not remember in the four years I learnt from Jack him ever raising his voice at me. This says much more about Jack than me, I must admit. My career spanned four main coaches, and training time overseas gave me input from the world's finest of the day.

Nita Solomon was my second coach, overlapping with Jack for a while. She trained under Jacques Gerschweiler and basically taught his technique. In my books, Jacques is credited alongside with Gustave Lussi (Dick Button introduced me to Mr. Lussi at Skate America in 1981) as an instigator of modern crossed leg jumping technique. She taught me the somewhat necessity of being 'obsessive compulsive' when it came to school figures — "same thing, same time, every time", still rings in my head.

Nita took me on my first international stint in 1976. Geneva, in Switzerland, was our first stop where I trained with renowned school figure champion, Karen Iten, for a few weeks. We did a Junior competition in Meurico Cuic in Romania, where the temperature dropped to -36°C.

Unfortunately, the rules had changed just prior to this competition and hadn't quite made their way to Australia. I will never forget the look on Nita's face at the barrier after my warm-up when she informed me I had to start the figure on the other foot to what I'd meticulously trained, saying, "you can do it..." I imagine she has a memory of my look, too. I came 6th out of 8 in that one.

Nita is very endeared to me but there is no surpassing she was a colourful character. Every Thursday during our stay in Geneva was deemed day off from training and tour day. Travelling to Chamonix by train around Lake Geneva amongst snow covered mountains mirrored upside down on the still water to meet 1960 World Champion, Alain Giletti, is something chiseled in my mind.

Another venture was to Grenoble, an old Olympic venue, where I forgot to pick up a bag from a locker at the train station. My Catholic upbringing was stung by a steep vocabulary learning curve at the time.

Nita's worldliness saw nothing wrong with getting off at the next station and hitchhiking back to get it. I have vivid memory of her telling me to stay out of sight when she let down her hair and beckoned down an unsuspecting red Alfa Romeo. We lived, but I can honestly say it was the hairiest ride I'd experienced so far.

Nita's courage grew after that.

She decided Montreux, France was our next destination. Unfortunately, the only way to get there was by car. No hesitation - hitchhiking saw us under the middle of a semi-trailer. Nita broke her foot and I chipped a tooth. Who could ever forget the, "Don't tell anyone we were hitchhiking"?

The story gets worse when Nita saw the sights of Kerry Leech at ISU Junior Championships in Megeve, France a couple of weeks later. Her eyes lit up so brightly she cut her cast off by herself so she could go out with him.

One last quick adventure worth noting is when friends of Nita, Don McKnight (President of the National Ice Skating Association of Australia at the time) and Colin Jackson had arrived for ISU Juniors to be held in Megeve, France. It was decided we would go for a drive. Nita told me to take my skates. After a beautiful and surreal skate high up in the mountains and in the open air, we proceeded to a border. Nothing was said about bringing my passport. It couldn't be done these days but I was smuggled through three countries under a fur coat in the back of a station wagon that day.

My first ISU Junior Championship (it wasn't called Junior Worlds till 1978) saw me place 14th out of 21 skaters.

My next coach was Gretchen Black (Doolan). Unfortunately, Nita made the change feel necessary. Gretchen actually approached me which was quite flattering, I remember. She had a lot of the good skaters. I don't really comprehend clearly what happened between me and Nita.

In those days any serious athlete was just plainly over-trained so a misunderstanding of some sort, beyond me, is highly possible. Nita just stopped coming in of a morning for training. It was not really for me to argue as she was, like Jack, very generous with her time.

Gretchen introduced me to America for training in 1977. Santa Monica, California with Mr. John Nicks was the first experience. Mr. Nicks was noted for training the American pair team, Tai Babalonia and Randy Gardner, at the time. His most recent successful student was Sasha Cohen. America was hard work for me. I started five days at 6am and finished at 2pm. Only two hours on Saturday and Sunday off. I suspect the common sense sports

science ethic of 'periodisation' (weighing of training work efforts verses rest) had not played hard on the agenda of the Americans when the dollar signs of international skaters were spinning. I also worked a lot with Gary Visconti of whom I could relate to very well. Gary won US Nationals a couple of times and came 5th at Olympics in 1968. During a figure lesson with Gary one day, he went out on a limb

and told me my figures were worth third place at Junior Worlds. I remember in disbelief thinking he was magic when I came third.

I also worked with Terri Rudolf. Jack Lee often used to cite Terri's name in high regard. Both worked together for years in Garmish, Germany's Casa Carioca Ice Revue.

At 75, she was still demonstrating the splits. I felt very privileged to work with Terri but I have vivid recollection of her frustration with me to, "point that toe..."

1977 was a great year for me in Megeve. This was the year the world protested Apartheid (basically South Africa's oppression and segregation of the blacks). South Africa competed so Russia and the US didn't. I always felt for the skaters of

those countries who had trained so hard - I was psychotically training on-ice four and a half to five and a half hours each day by then. I managed third in the Figures and fourth overall that year.

The 1978 Junior Worlds were bitter sweet.

While training in Santa Monica, once again, I had an accident during a simple one foot Axel/ double Salchow and sprained my left ankle very badly. It was just three weeks till Junior Worlds. It was not possible to skate at all for one full week.

I recall very painfully resuming figure training just before leaving the US to finish my training in Geneva. In Geneva, I stayed at the Hotel Moderne which was owned by Dr. Wilhelm of the ISU.

Dr. Wilhelm arranged a doctor to tend my injury with electro-therapy and cortisone injections. This wonderful doctor would only take money for the cost of the drugs used. I was only able to resume free skating one week before competition.

My stay in Geneva this time was quite lonely. Dr. Wilhelm arranged free ice time for me to the extent I turned the lights on in the morning and was able to get ice resurfacing if I wanted it.

It is possible my figures benefitted from my injury - I once spent seven hours straight training them. I reminisce fondly of the evening Dr. Wilhelm came down to the ice while I was training, looked at my back inside loop, put his arm around me and said, "That's my boy."

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Michael Pasfield: Footloose and Fancy Free

Profile



Michael, with Nita Solomon, celebrating a good performance at the first World Junior Championships in 1976.

The feeling after performing my back outside loop in the World Junior Championships 1978 (as it was now formally called) was indescribable. In practice it was usual to stand back and check your tracings and line-up but in competition it was usual to just skate off. That day the judges had to wait till I got out of the way. I received a 4.0 which was very good for a figure, believe it or not, and was the highest awarded mark in the figures section of the competition.

I remember Mrs. Sonia Bianchetti, the referee, trying to quell my elation when I passed her while walking up the stairs afterwards. She obviously knew I had finished second in the figures even though I got more points than Vladimir Kotin who won that section with only two first places to my four first places – work that one out? Little did she know second place was as good as first to me at the time.

I believe, if it was a year earlier I would have won them. But, because the Ordinals System was introduced that year over the Points system, I came second. My free skate was disappointing for me with an ankle that felt no pain, but had the sensation of brittle plaster. I placed seventh overall.

1979 was the year I did my HSC (Higher School Certificate). Much to my protest, my father would not allow me to compete internationally. Trying to explain the need to stay in the judge's eyes fell on deaf ears.

Nationals were held in Adelaide in 1979.

This was the venue of my most terrifying experience. Leading Victoria's Billy Schober after the Short program, I was about thirty seconds into my Free program when I lost my place. Mind you, I had trained this program for years. I eventually found it again to finish my five minute program. Billy did a good job to win Nationals that year.

In 1980 I became the Open Men's Champion of Australia. This qualified me to skate at the 1981 World Championships in Hartford, Connecticut. Before Worlds I trained at the The Skating Club of Wilmington, Delaware with Ron Ludington.

I worked mainly with Arthur Bourque while I was there. An ex-student of his was Misha Petkevich, who was credited as one of the first men to do a triple Axel. I was sad to hear years later that Mr. Bourque took his own life.

There was a blind skater by the name of Stash Serafin training at Wilmington. Amazingly, he once said to me, "That was a nice double flip, Michael." I asked him how he knew it was me and what I'd done and he told me he could hear it.

He tended to skate around in a circular pattern and could hear where the barrier was when he trained. Even his Red Setter seeing-eye dog was clever. Timing it to a tee, just before the end of a training session he would put his paws on the barrier and wait for Stash.

Worlds in 1981 was an extraordinary experience. I remember on the ice for warm up, looking up

and seeing what looked like ants at the top of the 13,000 seat packed stadium.

Deathly quiet while warming up I heard Elisa Spitz, who dance partnered Scott Gregory and trained at Wilmington, call out and resonate through the building, "Go Michael." It was an unassumingly comforting call.

Another memorable part of that adventure was being comically entertained by Colin Jackson, an Australian judge at the time, while lying in hospital emergency with an antibiotic drip for an infected lower leg. Coincidentally, it was the same leg I had sprained years earlier. A ride back to the hotel in a police car by some obliging police saved on a taxi fare and topped off my hospital stay.

An American, Ron Frank was my final coach. He took me to Ennia Challenge Cup in The Hague, Netherlands; Prague Skate in Prague, Czechoslovakia; Golden Spin in Zagreb, Yugoslavia; and Worlds in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1982.

It was after Worlds Ron decided to move to Queensland from Sydney and advised me to turn professional.

You were one of the first Australian men to master triple jumps in competition. How difficult was it to learn them without anyone else within the country to observe as a guide or example?

The double Axel was a long time coming for me. Interestingly, I couldn't wait to go to the ice rink after a dream I had landing it. It was an uncanny belief I knew I was going to land it.

The triple toe-loop and Salchow came within two weeks of the double Axel. They were similar in feeling for me. It is always a benefit to have skaters around you trying the hard tricks as it takes a 'super' psychological power and 100% all-out effort. Visualising

the likes of Scott Hamilton and positive self-talk always helped me.

Did you have any idols growing up?

When I was in Geneva the first time in 1976 I watched Terry Kubicka perform his 'backflip' on television (it's really a somersault) at the Innsbruck Olympics. I thought that was pretty clever. The next year I was nearly jumped on by him when he did a backflip inches away from me while training in Santa Monica.

Showmanship was always vitally important to my skating. I attribute most of my showmanship style to Jack Lee. People used to say I looked like a little Jack. Showmanship is different to artistry. If I had to pick one, I must admit, showmanship probably overshadowed artistry in my amateur days.

I suppose he was my first major influence because I thought he skated with a masculine style and he was always the instigating reason for me to want to master the backflip. Robin Cousins was always a favourite but Scott Hamilton was certainly someone I tried to emulate when it came to jumps. Kurt Browning will always be a favourite.

Your showmanship is notable. How important was that to your overall performance and interaction with the judges / audience?

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Did you take on a particular character when skating?

I honestly don't believe I was trying to have a particular character on the ice other than to demonstrate an athletic style. I enjoyed doing fast tricky footwork, show-tricks like the butterfly from stars, fast spins and big jumps. In hindsight, if I'd listened to choreographers more seriously I may have developed more of a character.



Michael in 1977, doing one of his trademark butterflies.

How many hours a week did you train preparing for competition?

Remembering that a lot of time in the 'olden days' was devoted to school figures, it was not unusual to skate 24 hours a week. It was usual in the lead up to international competitions to do late night practice. This normally entailed two to four hours after the last session at night, from about 10:30 or 11pm onwards. I used to enjoy the solitude on the ice with the only distraction being the coach.

What sort of mental preparation did you do?

Visual imagery was the major mental preparation I used regularly. I often listened to music to take a break from life for a while, and imagine super human feats.

What personal goals did you set yourself overall and at each competition?

Generally, my goals encompassed the broad picture to get better. Personal attitude focused on performance and never results. If I fared well it was always a bonus, hence my excitement of second in the figures as opposed to disappointment of not coming first in 1978.

Skating has gone from the reduction to removal of compulsory figures, a shift towards triple and quadruple jumping, to racking up as much overall technical and choreographic complexity as possible. What are your thoughts about the current judging system?

The new IJS system of judging has good points and bad points. I think the new system makes the game slightly more honest overall. The judges' job is still mainly the same and highly subjective but the technical panel adds a measurable dimension — albeit, highly dependent on the technical specialists' knowledge and integrity. Certainly, it is helpful to have the judges' detailed scores to examine the marks.

The rules always changed in the old system but were never as regulated as they are these days. The term 'free skating' has lost credence completely. New ISU Communications come out every year. It helps if you have a university degree to read them. Then you still have to talk to someone else to clarify the meaning, or you have to trust the particular technical panel at competition that interprets the rules the same way you do.

Not trying to be too critical, I see trying to get an eight year old to hold three different spirals for three seconds each, for example, like getting blood out of a stone sometimes. If the spiral is done on a straight line, watch out — not counted, even if it's beautiful.

Rules can be confusing because some are different for the short and the free. A lot of the step sequences look more like ice dancing now. Everyone does the same spin positions. Downgrading of jump rules discourage up and coming skaters to try harder, more risky jumps.

If a skater gets downgraded on a double Axel they receive fewer marks than for a single Axel. The mark off rule has been in for quite a while but if they happen to fall on it they end up getting minus marks. Easy to say don't try it till you have it solidly but this attitude is only valid in theory.

When the new system came out I thought the Component marks were out of 5. Some of my young skaters were getting low 2s. I accepted this as pretty believable — comparing each component to a school figure-type mark which was always low. Then I saw marks up in the 7s and 8s for fairly average performances in the upper levels. I soon realised it was out of 10 but still scratch my head about that one.

In its simplest form sport should be a physical activity for pleasure and, possibly, character building. Kids still love ice skating and would with any rules, I suspect. Advances in sports science and technique have raised the bar for jump difficulty and if people can do it they will. In my experience skaters love to 'show off'.

I see the new judging system not so much as encouraging the demise of triples and quadruples, it's still a jumping game, but more addressing the natural progression of the sport in a way to keep the historical beauty and grace of the sport alive and progressive. There is certainly some great skating going on so it can't be all that bad. I often remind my students, "don't blame me. I didn't make it up..."

What are your favourite competitive memories as an eligible / professional?

In 1985, I went to World Professionals in Jaca, Spain. I came fifth there after warming up with a single lap around the rink and doing a backflip then I got off. I stand by this as showmanship not laziness. I was presented an award for Best Personal Presentation.

The trophy actually aided my trip home by allowing me to be given preferential treatment by staff at Zurich airport to board a stand-by flight home to Australia.

Way back about that time I travelled around Australia with the Torvill & Dean show. John Carlow was married to my good

friend Liz Cain at the time and became best man at my wedding years later. I was supposed to travel to New Zealand with the show but was dropped because I missed a rehearsal I knew nothing about. I like to think things happen for a reason.

I skated numerous shopping centre shows with Mr. Pat Burley, and his daughters, Sharon and Robyn. I have very fond memories working with these beautiful people. I skated with Pat at Dreamworld a few times.

Once, my heel came away from my skate just before I was to go on. Terrence Lyness, pairing with Emily Minns at the time, from Macquarie rink, was good enough to loan me one of his skates after his performance so I could do the show. I did the backflip but felt like a pirate with a wooden leg because his boot was so much stiffer than mine.

I was never really serious about skating in a show overseas but I did audition for Disney On Ice. For some reason I still ponder, I turned down a spot after being rung from America on the Thursday and asked to leave on the next Tuesday.

Brian Boitano's coach, Linda Leaver, said that

if nothing else, pursue skating for the process. What advice do you pass on to your own students?

I always ask them what they want from the sport and try to remind them the challenge is to get better.

In its simplest form sport should be a physical activity for pleasure and, possibly, character building. Kids still love ice skating and would with any rules, I suspect. Advances in sports science and technique have raised the bar for jump difficulty and if people can do it they will. In my experience skaters love to 'show off'.

What is it like having your daughter skate?

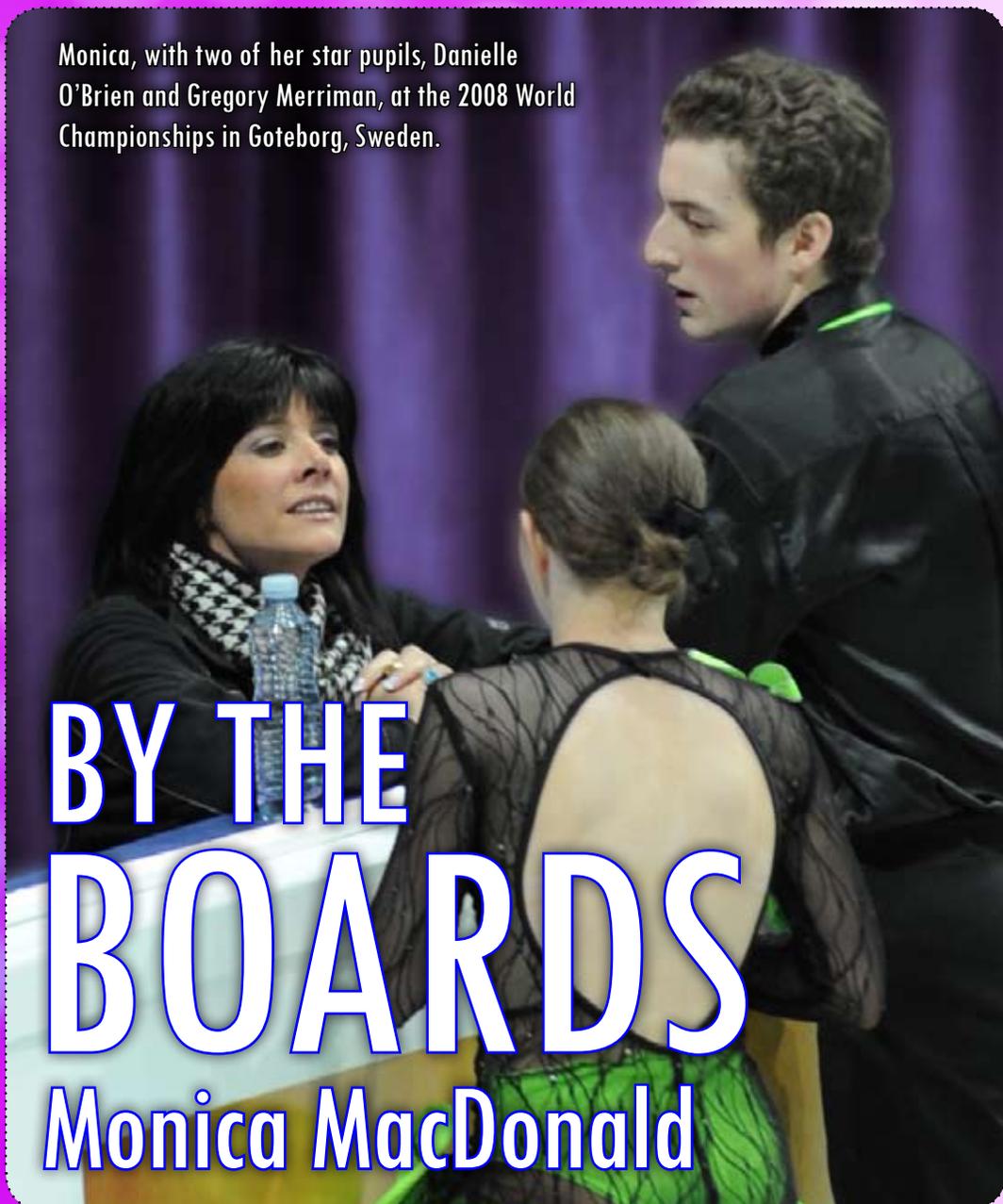
As a father I get much pleasure at watching my girls perform. They certainly make me very proud. Being able to skate with them occasionally in practice is a great delight.

As a father/ coach it is sometimes difficult not to look with a keen eye, of course. Zara and Katie are great kids, try hard and are generally responsive to my instruction. My wish is they ultimately enjoy the outcome of their efforts.

Michael has a page at Youtube where you can view some of his and daughters' Zara and Katie's skating performances: www.youtube.com/michaelpasfield

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|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|--|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--|--------------|
| Senior Ladies | | State | Junior Pairs | | State | Novice Pairs | | State | Primary Ladies | | State |
| 01 | Allie Rout (guest) | NZL | 01 | Morgan Figgins/ Grant Howie (guests) | NZL | 01 | Courtney Flynn / Dominic Di Tommaso | NSW | 01 | Claudia Dong | NSW |
| 02 | Tina Wang | QLD | Junior Synchronised | | State | Novice Synchronised | | State | 02 | Iyryn Quigley (guest) | NZL |
| 03 | Jessica Kurzwaski | NSW | 01 | Fire on Ice Junior | NSW | 01 | Iceskateers | QLD | 03 | Madeline Parker (guest) | NZL |
| 04 | Morgan Figgins (guest) | NZL | 02 | Iceskateers Elite | QLD | 02 | Adelaide Icicle Magic | SA | 04 | Kassidy-Rae Browell | VIC |
| 05 | Phoebe Di Tommaso | NSW | 03 | Nova | QLD | 03 | Botany Blades (guests) | NZL | 05 | Emily Povey | QLD |
| 06 | Fei Fei Hardy | NSW | Novice Ladies | | State | 04 | Macquarie Mice | NSW | 06 | Jessie Park (guest) | NZL |
| 07 | Kelly Alder | NSW | 01 | Zara Pasfield | NSW | 05 | Jitterbugs | WA | 07 | Karuna Henderson | ACT |
| Senior Men | | State | 02 | Moho Fujita | NSW | 06 | Ice Hoppers | QLD | 08 | Ariel Nadas (guest) | NZL |
| 01 | Tristan Thode (guest) | NZL | 03 | Chantell Kerry | NSW | 07 | Fire On Ice Novice | NSW | 09 | Katie Whitten | QLD |
| 02 | Nicholas Fernandez | NSW | 04 | Taylor Dean | QLD | Intermediate Ladies | | State | 10 | Tayla Kearns | QLD |
| 03 | Mark Webster | NSW | 05 | Anna Dekany | QLD | 01 | Loretta Nguyen | NSW | 11 | Ada Wong | NSW |
| 04 | Cameron Hems (guest) | NZL | 06 | Kristin Secola | WA | 02 | Emily Standen | NSW | 12 | Alexis Kooyman | ACT |
| Senior Dance | | State | 07 | Alicia Kijak | WA | 03 | Ayesha Campbell (guest) | NZL | 13 | Terrny Berardone | QLD |
| 01 | Danielle O'Brien / Greg Merriman | NSW | 08 | Montana Sumner | QLD | 04 | Hayley Yen | NSW | 14 | Karen Ka | NSW |
| 02 | Maria Borounov / Evgeni Borounov | WA | 09 | Samantha Waugh (guest) | NZL | 05 | Elizabeth Mayers | NSW | 15 | Sarah Cullen | NSW |
| Senior Synchronised | | State | 10 | Victoria Cini | QLD | 06 | Chanel Cheung | NSW | 16 | Tara Amin | WA |
| 01 | Fire on Ice | NSW | 11 | Sydney Knight | NSW | 07 | Courtney Bettink (guest) | NZL | 17 | Lauren Moore | SA |
| 02 | Adelaide Ice Magic | SA | 12 | Alannah Stott | NSW | 08 | Ashlee King | NSW | 18 | Rebecca Ackah | NSW |
| 03 | Ice Statix (guests) | NZL | 13 | Jessinta Martin | SA | 09 | Melissa Morris (guest) | NZL | 19 | Lianne Williams | WA |
| Junior Ladies | | State | 14 | Hayley Van Der Zanee | QLD | 10 | Felicity Mclvor | QLD | 20 | Rhiane Cook | WA |
| 01 | Allie Rout (guest) | NZL | 15 | Millie Campbell (guest) | NZL | 11 | Sharni McPhee | QLD | 21 | Rebecca Delleca | NSW |
| 02 | Jamiee Nobbs | WA | 16 | Clair McGillan (guest) | NZL | 12 | Rebecca Seymour-Bernard | QLD | 22 | Amy Newberry | SA |
| 03 | Albrina Lee | NSW | 17 | Kara Johnson | NSW | 13 | Rhiannon Reese | SA | 23 | Hannah Smith | SA |
| 04 | Kayla Doig | QLD | 18 | Laura Guilford - Manachino (guest) | NZL | 14 | Nicola Bauman | NSW | 24 | Ayla Kauschke | QLD |
| 05 | Rikki Lee Goswell | NSW | 19 | Natalia Gimenez | NSW | 15 | Sheridan Murray | SA | WD | Bethany McMahon | ACT |
| 06 | Lowanna Gibson | NSW | 20 | Emilia Ash | ACT | 16 | Adele Morrison | VIC | Primary Men | | State |
| 07 | Kyle Betteridge | QLD | 21 | Melissa Tyson | SA | 17 | Michelle Toms | WA | 01 | David Kranjec | QLD |
| 08 | Laura Mills (guest) | NZL | Novice Men | | State | 18 | Denise Maniatis | SA | 02 | Harley Dahlstrom | NSW |
| 09 | April Hering | QLD | 01 | Oliver Porter | WA | 19 | Megumi Gavin | QLD | 03 | Ryan Dodds | QLD |
| 10 | Elizabeth O'Neill (guest) | NZL | 02 | Storm Schrimmager | NSW | 20 | Paige Brownsey (guest) | NZL | Primary Dance | | State |
| 11 | Danielle Bartels | NSW | 03 | Brad McLachlan | NSW | Intermediate Men | | State | 01 | Crystal Campbell / Nick Kokay (guests) | NZL |
| 12 | Caitlyn Paul (guest) | NZL | 04 | Jordan Dodds | QLD | 01 | Jason Ren | NSW | 02 | Jade Watters / Cameron Gaskell | NSW |
| WD | Essex Reid | ACT | WD | Brendan Schloss | QLD | 02 | William Salisbury | NSW | Adult Synchronised | | |
| Junior Men | | State | Novice Dance | | State | 03 | Zachary Ockenden | QLD | 01 | Team Renaissance | NSW |
| 01 | Matthew Precious | WA | 01 | Rachel Gregory / Shane Speden (guests) | NZL | 04 | Christopher Boyd (guest) | NZL | 02 | Chill Factor | QLD |
| 02 | Brendan Kerry | NSW | 02 | Lisa Phillips / Andrew Budd | QLD | 05 | Joshua Broad | SA | 03 | Organised Chaos | WA |
| 03 | Cameron Hems (guest) | NZL | | | | 06 | Andrew Taylor | VIC | 04 | Spectrum (guests) | NZL |
| 04 | Cameron Jorey - Hughes | NSW | | | | 07 | Callum Bullard | NSW | | | |
| 05 | Simon Hardy | NSW | | | | 08 | Daniel Pini | NSW | | | |
| 06 | Andrew Dodds | QLD | | | | | | | | | |
| 07 | Matthew Dodds | QLD | | | | | | | | | |

Monica, with two of her star pupils, Danielle O'Brien and Gregory Merriman, at the 2008 World Championships in Goteborg, Sweden.



BY THE BOARDS

Monica MacDonal

What was your first skating experience?

My first skating experience was at the old Homebush Ice Rink where my mum and her friend took me for my birthday. There was no public session on so they joined the club and we skated in the private session and just kept going after that.

How old were you when you began taking lessons? Who was your coach?

I was almost 12 when I started having lessons with Barbara Clarke.

Did you have any idols growing up?

My obvious idols were Torvill and Dean. Rodney and I had the opportunity to train in England so we met them a few times and were able to watch them compete at the British Championships. I also got to meet Robin Cousins and see him skate and became a huge fan of his as well.

How many hours a week did you train preparing for competition?

Not enough. It was very difficult for my mum to get me to the rink as she did not drive, so every trip was an ordeal with public transport. On average we trained about 10 hours a week so I am very proud of what we achieved on those sort of training hours.

What sort of mental preparation did you do, if any?

I usually did a lot of visualization before competition. Sitting quietly going through the program in my head.

Did you take on a particular character when skating?

When I was young I was quite shy although many people might find that hard to believe. In my day not many programs revolved around characters although Torvill and Dean had started to head in that direction. We wanted to entertain the audience so that was more our focus.

Your showmanship is notable. How important was that to your overall performance and interaction with the judges / audience?

I believe it is really important to bring the judges and audience into your performance, to make them feel they are a part of it. I would often look directly at the judges and audience members and try to make a connection with them but some programs were more about portraying a relationship between me and my partner so it was important to us to have the audience believe in what we were doing.

What personal goals did you set yourself overall and at each competition?

I had very strong goals about what I wanted to achieve from early on in my competition career. My first goal was to make it to Junior Worlds so I focused very strongly on what it would take to achieve that. Once we had competed at our first Junior Worlds the goal

Monica MacDonald: By The Boards

then changed to moving up the rankings at the next one. To then go on to compete at Worlds and then once that goal was reached it was all about achieving the placings we needed to make the Olympic Team. Throughout all of that though it was important to focus on the preparation and performance as those things are what make it possible to achieve your ultimate goals.

What are your favourite competitive memories?

I have so many, I am not sure which one to choose. I have to say the friends I made during those years is something that is really special to me. I meet up with many of them through my travels these days, it is really wonderful to catch up on old times. The ultimate competitive memory would have to be the Olympics and walking into the stadium as they played happy birthday. It was 1988 when Australia was celebrating 200 years and the feeling of being there representing Australia at the ultimate competition, was indeed a very proud and memorable experience.

How difficult was the transition between skating in an established team (with Rodney Clarke), and maintaining that level with a new partner (Duncan Smart).

It is always a difficult experience changing partners. Rodney and I had been together a long time and were moving up the world

rankings so changing partners was like starting all over again. Duncan and I formed a great friendship which really helped the partnership but unfortunately that relationship went through some tough times which definitely took its toll on the skating. Both Rodney and Duncan had different strengths and I think I became a better skater by skating with them both.

As a coach, what goals did you set your students on a weekly, monthly and seasonal basis?

The goals for my skaters vary throughout the different phases of the season and depending on whether they are doing singles or dance. The focus for my young singles skaters is very technical based, trying to achieve the more difficult jumps whilst they are still so young. We focus a lot on the IJS system as well so that they learn and understand how to achieve levels and the importance of the component mark.

For Danielle and Greg we have specific goals of what marks they need to achieve to have a chance at making an Olympic Team and then work on the areas they need to improve on to achieve those marks from season to season. The weekly and monthly goals vary depending on whether our focus is on the elements or the choreography. As for the season we set a goal as to what we want to achieve and plan around that.

It was a difficult transition from competing to coaching as I had hoped to continue

competing for another two years when my last partnership broke up. However I have found the coaching a very rewarding experience both personally and professionally. I have worked with a number of talented dance couples but have to say my most rewarding experience has been with Danielle and Gregory. We continue to grow as a team and they are really dedicated to achieving their goals.

It has also been challenging becoming so involved with the singles skating. My proudest moments since becoming a coach would have to be seeing Danielle and Gregory compete at their first World Junior Championships and then this year making the World Championship team.

Coaching my own two children and watching them win the National titles in their divisions for singles this year and the wonderful relationship, respect and success I have had with all of my skaters makes me proud to be a coach in Australia.

Team Profiles

Ice Dance Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman (Australia)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell

Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Dates of birth: | February 2 nd , 1990 / October 3 rd , 1988 |
| Home town: | Sydney |
| Profession: | Students |
| Hobbies: | swimming, scuba diving, music, being with friends / sport, motor sport, drifting, beach |
| Coach: | Monica MacDonald |
| 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: | |
| 2006 JGP Chinese Taipei Cup | 37.82 |
| Free Dance: | |
| 2008 Four Continents | 63.16 |

2008 World Figure Skating Championships

Team Profiles

Men's Singles
Sean Carlow
(Australia)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell

Ladies' Singles
Morgan Figgins
(New Zealand)



Photo Credit: NZISA

Men's Singles
Tristan Thode
(New Zealand)



Photo Credit: Joy Adair

Ladies' Singles
Tina Wang
(Australia)



Photo Credit: ISA

Sean Carlow

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Date of birth: | March 13 th , 1985 |
| Home town: | Sydney |
| Profession: | Full time athlete |
| Hobbies: | music, sport, family |
| Coaches: | Liz Cain, Brian Orser |
| Started Skating: | 1987 |
| Club: | Macquarie Ice Skating Club |
| Choreographers: | Liz Cain, David Wilson |
| Personal Best Total Score: | |
| 2006 Four Continents | 136.68 |
| Short Program: | |
| 2007 Worlds | 49.73 |
| Free Skating: | |
| 2006 Four Continents | 87.98 |

Morgan Figgins

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Date of birth: | March 29 th , 1992 |
| Home town: | Dunedin |
| Profession: | Student |
| Hobbies: | Swimming, beach |
| Coach: | Fanis Shakirizianu |
| Started Skating: | 1998 |
| Club: | Dunedin SC |
| Choreographer: | Fanis Shakirizianu |
| Personal Best Total Score: | |
| 2007 JGP Sofia Cup | 74.98 |
| Short Program: | |
| 2007 World Juniors | 34.69 |
| Free Skating: | |
| 2007 JGP Sofia Cup | 48.23 |

Tristan Thode

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Date of birth: | Christmas Day, 1983 |
| Home town: | Auckland |
| Profession: | Student |
| Hobbies: | pool, computer games, reading |
| Coach: | Viacheslav Kuznetsov |
| Started Skating: | 1991 |
| Club: | Auckland Figure Skating Club |
| Choreographers: | Marina Kudriavtseva |
| Personal Best Total Score: | |
| 2008 Four Continents | 115.99 |
| Short Program: | |
| 2008 Four Continents | 42.16 |
| Free Skating: | |
| 2006 Four Continents | 74.50 |

Tina Wang

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Date of birth: | December 13 th 1991 |
| Home town: | Brisbane |
| 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: | |
| 2008 Four Continents | 94.28 |
| Short Program: | |
| 2007 World Juniors | 35.77 |
| Free Skating: | |
| 2008 Four Continents | 63.71 |



Following a nightmare national championship experience in January, the 2006 winner, Kimmie Meissner from the USA, skates for pride. She finished here in seventh place.

With numerous European and World Championships under its belt, this year Sweden played host to the grand finale of the global skating season. From March 17 - 23, 53 ladies, 45 men, 31 dance teams and 21 pairs took to the ice at Goteborg's famed Scandinavium.

The competition was not without its share of drama, however, as all four titles changed hands. Firstly, Russia's Oksana Domnina & Maxim Shabalin, the 2008 European gold medallists in dance, were forced to withdraw after he sustained a knee injury.

As co-favourites for the title, they left the door wide open for America's Tanith Belbin & Ben Agosto to secure victory. However, an early fall by Belbin in the compulsory dance, shook her confidence for the remainder of the championship. Thus, for the first time since 2004, the veteran couple from the USA finished off the international podium.

Miki Ando, the 2007 ladies' winner, withdrew during her free program with a shoulder injury. Mao Asada, the eventual winner also from Japan, took a tumble of her own when she slid into the barrier attempting a trademark triple axel.

The capacity crowd felt that their team-mate, Yukari Nakano, was robbed of gold, certainly of a medal. Awarding her free skate the only standing ovation of the night, like the American dancers, she too finished fourth.

Easiest to predict was the pairs' outcome, certainly in the absence of China's legendary, Xue Shen & Hongbo Zhao. Though they finished second in the short program to Dan & Hao Zhang of China, Germany's Aliona Savchenko and Robin Szolkowy (who had been undefeated all season) moved up in the free to take the title.

The week wrapped up with the men's event. Canada's Jeffrey Buttle was the surprise champion, skating two superlative performances. Using the international judging system's code of points to maximise his strengths, he became the first male winner since 1996 (and much to the runner-up, Brian Joubert's dismay) to strike gold without including a quadruple jump.

The teams from Australia and New Zealand were represented by two ladies, two men, and one dance couple. Neither country entered a pair team.

The Ladies' Championship

Earning qualification for this event through the Four Continents Championship in February, Tina Wang would skate for Australia in the ladies' competition. New Zealand was represented by Morgan Figgins. Both ladies were making their senior world debut here.

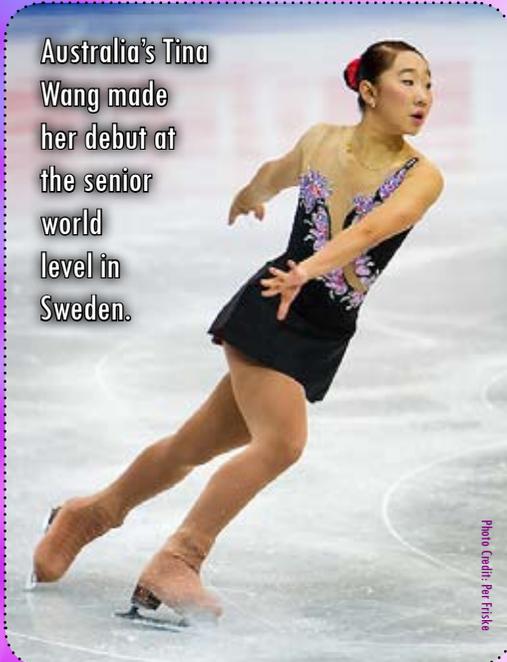
2008 World Figure Skating Championships

Event Overview

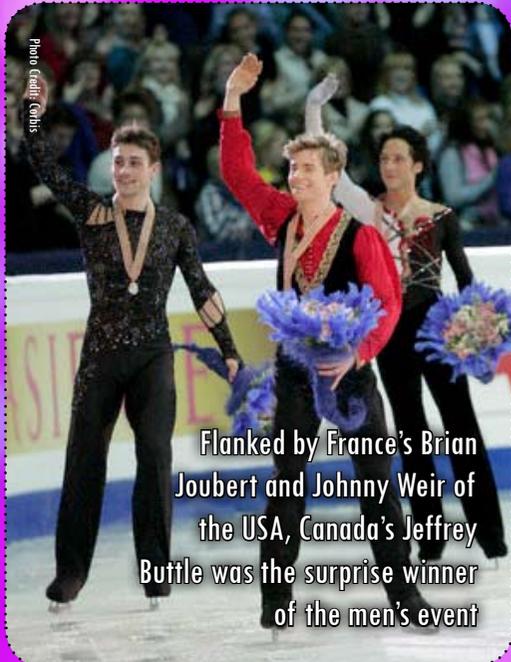
Goteborg's Scandinavium last played host to the World Championships in 1976.



Australia's Tina Wang made her debut at the senior world level in Sweden.



Flanked by France's Brian Joubert and Johnny Weir of the USA, Canada's Jeffrey Buttle was the surprise winner of the men's event



Drawing first of all 53 ladies in the short program, Figgins performed to 'No Name, No Face' by Modern Talking. Interpreting the music well, she had beautiful extension in her spiral sequence. Morgan however, appeared to be more comfortable as a spinner, as she missed all three jump elements.

Wang, skating to 'Rondo Capriccioso' by Saint Saens, displayed a mature, balletic style. Maximising points with her fluid spins, complex spirals and intricate steps, she too had problems with the jumps. Doubling the required triple jump in the combination and falling on the triple jump out of steps left her in 37th place.

The Dance Championship

The Argentine Tango was drawn as the compulsory pattern for this event. Displaying confident edges, timing and unison, the 2008 National Champions, Danielle O'Brien and Greg Merriman, handled the difficult dance well.

With a folk or national dance chosen for round two, Danielle and Greg took advantage of the rules and presented Koori Tribal Music and costuming as their theme. Skating to 'Forest Phunk' and 'Turtle on Yulara Yulara', both by S. Wilson & J. Drury, combined with their results from round one, the Sydney couple finished the championship in 27th place.

It will be exciting to see this young team mature and develop with ongoing competition experience.

The Men's Championship

New Zealand's Tristan Thode qualified for this event by fending off Joel Watson at the Four Continents Championship. Here however, he struggled on both triple jump elements in the short program. Skating to 'Harlem Nocturne' by Earl Haegen, Thode finished competition in 41st.

The 2008 season has been a difficult one for Australia's Sean Carlow. Apart from a groin injury preventing him from attending the Four Continents Championship in February, 12 months ago he was involved in a boating tragedy on Sydney Harbour that killed four people (including three members of the Australian skating community).

However, following a recent trip in December 2007 to Toronto to work with Brian Orser and David Wilson, Sean added new choreographic details to a short program he has used for several seasons now.

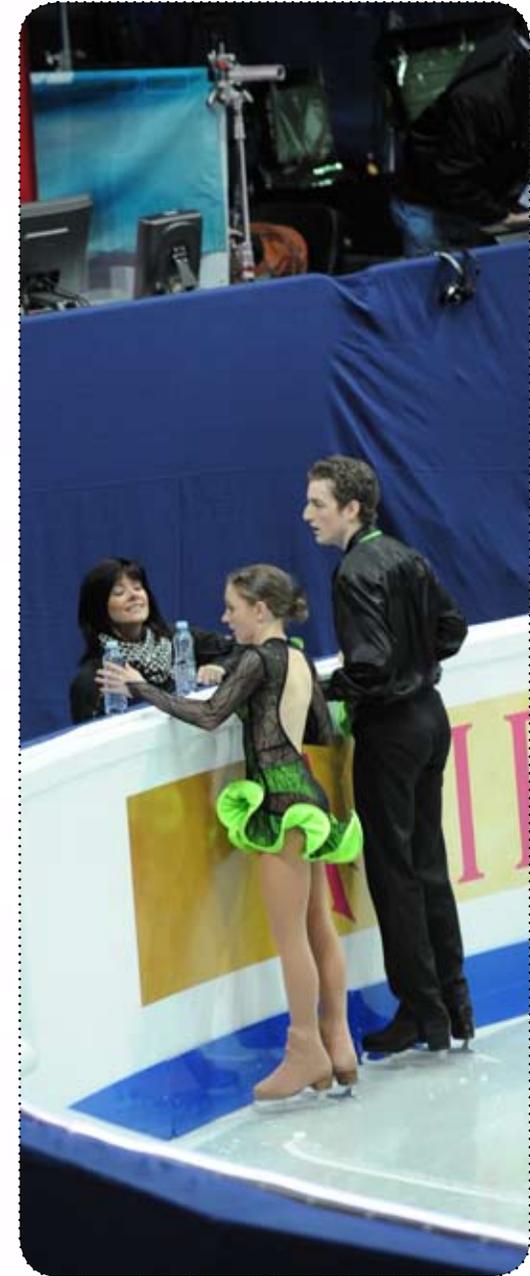
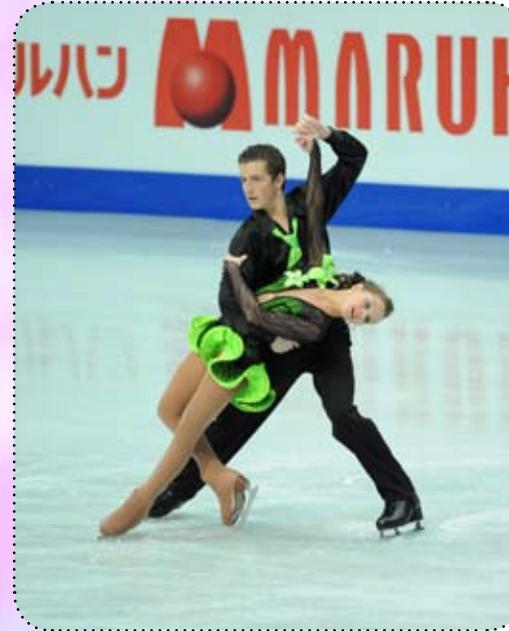
With mother and coach, Liz Cain, by the barrier for support, Carlow skated a strong, expressive performance to 'Scott and Fran's Paso Doble' from the sound track of Strictly Ballroom.

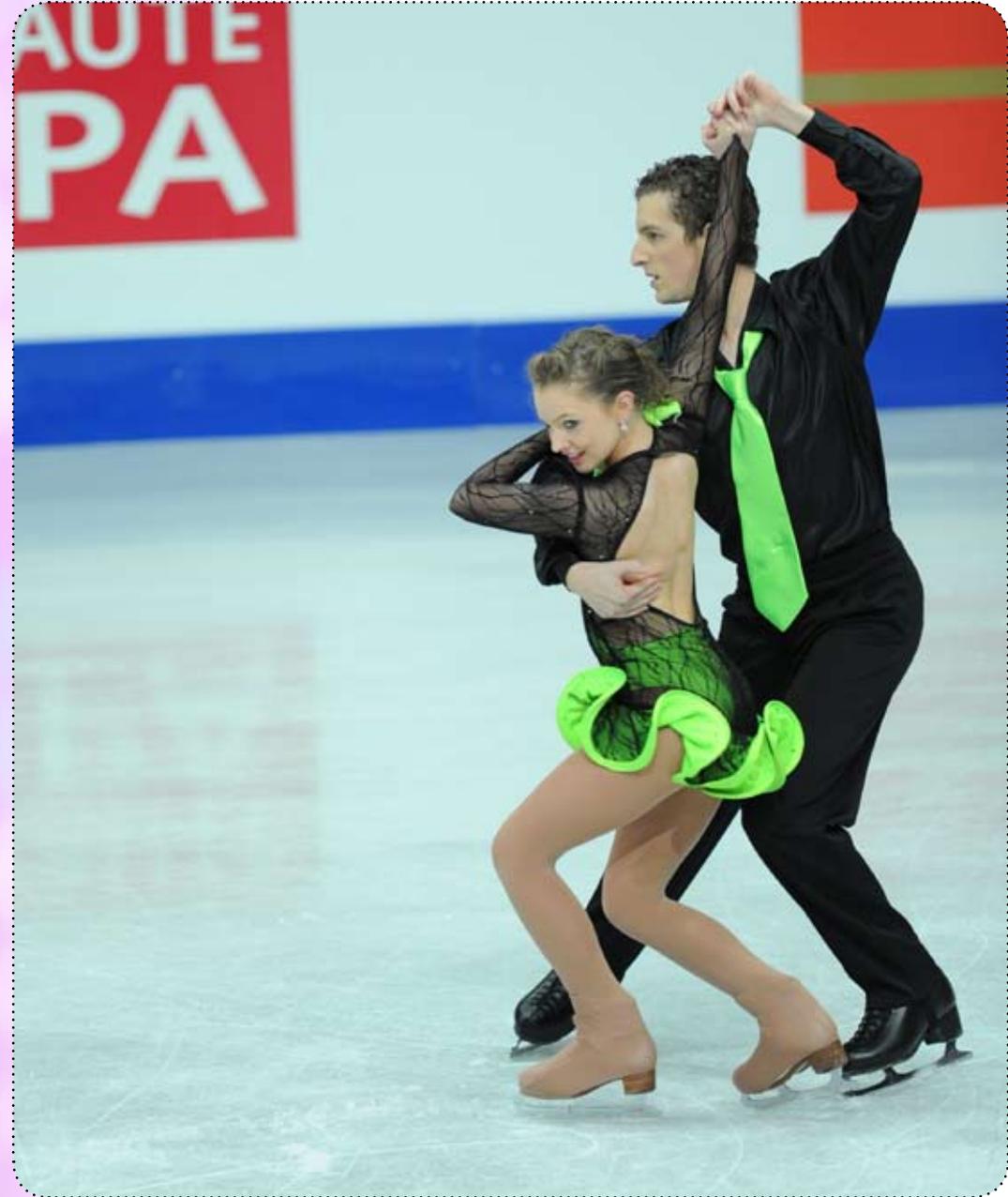
He finished the event in 35th.

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

2008 World Figure Skating Championships

Image Gallery





2008 World Figure Skating Championships

Results

Pairs' Champions
Aliona Savchenko &
Robin Szolkowy
(Germany)



Photo Credit: ISU

Ladies' Champion
Mao Asada
(Japan)



Photo Credit: Susan D. Russell

Men's Champion
Jeffrey Buttle
(Canada)

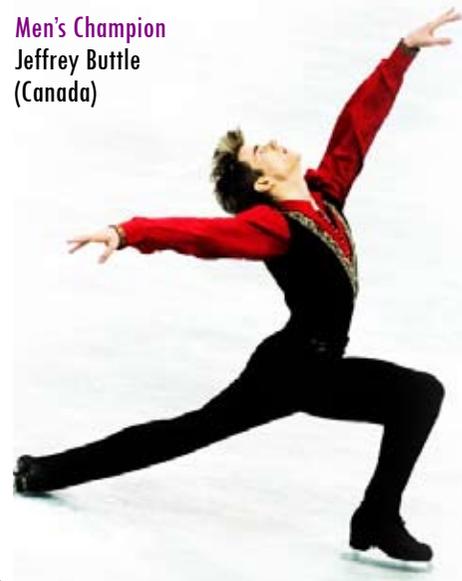


Photo Credit: ISU

Dance Champions
Isabelle Delobel &
Olivier Schoenfelder
(France)



Photo Credit: ISU

| Pairs' Event | Nation | Short | Free | Final |
|---|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 01 Aliona Savchenko & Robin Szolkowy | GER | 72.00 | 130.86 | 202.86 |
| 02 Dan Zhang & Hao Zhang | CHN | 74.36 | 123.46 | 197.82 |
| 03 Jessica Dube & Bryce Davison | CAN | 68.66 | 124.12 | 192.78 |
| 04 Yuko Kawaguchi & Alexander Smirnov | RUS | 71.42 | 119.91 | 191.33 |
| 05 Qing Pang & Jian Tong | CHN | 67.87 | 118.91 | 186.78 |
| 06 Meagan Duhamel & Craig Buntin | CAN | 60.01 | 109.60 | 169.61 |
| 07 Maria Mukhortova & Maxim Trankov | RUS | 64.09 | 102.55 | 166.64 |
| 08 Anabelle Langlois & Cody Hay | CAN | 59.43 | 105.24 | 164.67 |
| 09 Tatiana Volosozhar & Stanislav Morozov | UKR | 59.53 | 100.42 | 159.95 |
| 10 Rene Inoue & John Baldwin | USA | 53.83 | 103.37 | 157.20 |
| 11 Brooke Castille & Benjamin Okolski | USA | 49.59 | 96.44 | 146.03 |
| 12 Huibo Dong & Yiming Wu | CHN | 50.49 | 92.34 | 142.83 |
| 13 Laura Maggitter & Ondrej Hotarekita | ITA | 42.18 | 84.20 | 126.38 |
| 14 Adeline Canac & Maxim Coia | FRA | 41.75 | 82.93 | 124.68 |
| 15 Stacey Kemp & David King | GBR | 44.28 | 79.70 | 123.98 |

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

| Ladies' Event | Nation | Short | Free | Final |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 01 Mao Asada | JPN | 64.10 | 121.46 | 185.56 |
| 02 Carolina Kostner | ITA | 64.28 | 120.40 | 184.68 |
| 03 Yu-Na Kim | KOR | 59.85 | 123.38 | 183.23 |
| 04 Yukari Nakano | JPN | 61.10 | 116.30 | 177.40 |
| 05 Joannie Rochette | CAN | 59.53 | 114.59 | 174.12 |
| 06 Sarah Meier | SWI | 60.58 | 112.39 | 171.88 |
| 07 Kimmie Meissner | USA | 57.25 | 92.49 | 149.74 |
| 08 Laura Lepisto | FIN | 45.41 | 101.85 | 147.26 |
| 09 Kiira Korpi | FIN | 60.58 | 85.15 | 145.73 |
| 10 Beatrisa Liang | USA | 52.81 | 92.48 | 145.29 |
| 11 Julia Sebestyen | HUN | 47.04 | 98.13 | 145.17 |
| 12 Annette Dytrt | GER | 50.99 | 93.32 | 144.31 |
| 13 Valentina Marchei | ITA | 48.89 | 94.04 | 142.93 |
| 14 Mira Leung | CAN | 50.69 | 89.90 | 140.59 |
| 15 Elena Glebova | EST | 46.26 | 93.84 | 140.10 |
| 16 Ashley Wagner | USA | 51.49 | 85.91 | 137.40 |
| 17 Ksenia Doronina | RUS | 49.94 | 85.31 | 135.25 |
| 18 Viktoria Helgesson | SWE | 49.68 | 78.28 | 127.96 |
| 19 Na-Young Kim | ROK | 47.96 | 79.36 | 127.32 |
| 20 Elene Gedevanishvili | GEO | 44.06 | 81.93 | 125.99 |
| 21 Anastasia Gimazetdinova | UZB | 50.84 | 74.08 | 124.92 |
| 22 Tamar Katz | ISR | 43.58 | 73.28 | 116.86 |
| 23 Melinda Sherilyn Wang | TPE | 44.77 | 71.35 | 116.12 |
| WD Miki Ando | JPN | 59.21 | | |
| 37 Tina Wang | AUS | 34.00 | | |
| 52 Morgan Figgins | NZL | 25.16 | | |

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

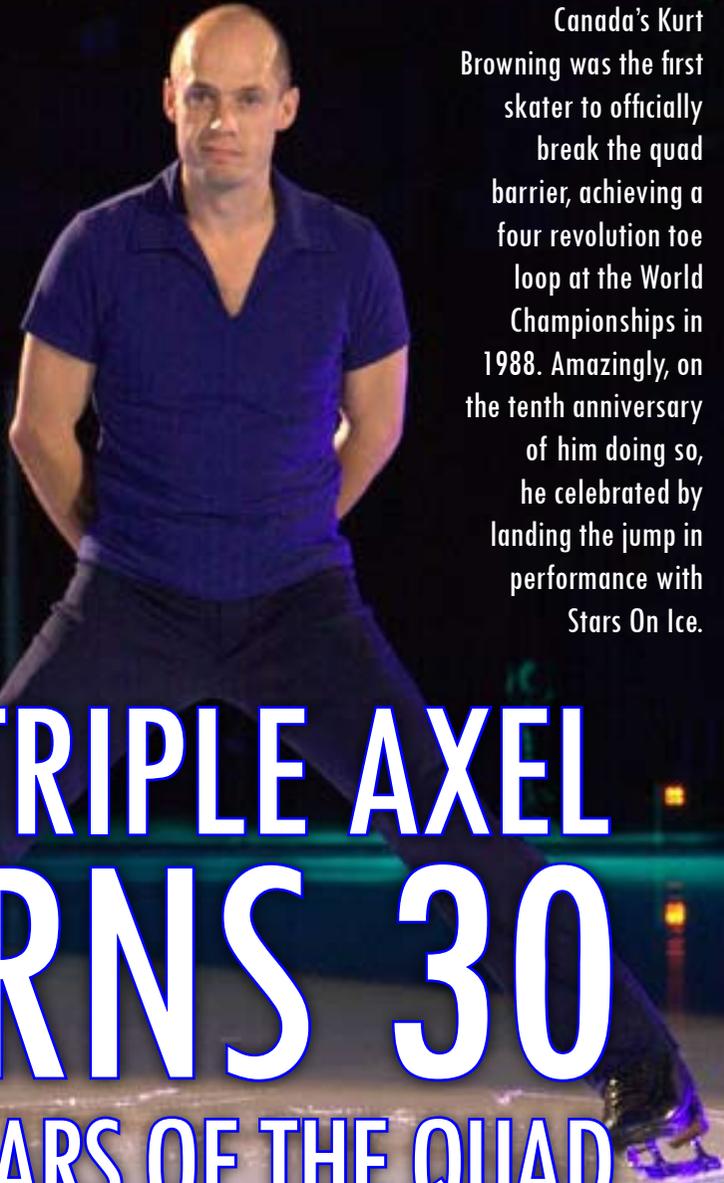
| Men's Event | Nation | Short | Free | Final |
|-------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 01 Jeffrey Buttle | CAN | 82.10 | 163.07 | 245.17 |
| 02 Brian Joubert | FRA | 77.75 | 153.47 | 231.22 |
| 03 Johnny Weir | USA | 80.79 | 141.05 | 221.84 |
| 04 Daisuke Takahashi | JPN | 80.40 | 139.71 | 220.11 |
| 05 Stephane Lambiel | SWI | 79.12 | 138.76 | 217.88 |
| 06 Kevin Van Der Perren | BEL | 70.24 | 145.78 | 216.02 |
| 07 Sergei Voronov | RUS | 65.26 | 144.67 | 209.93 |
| 08 Takahiko Kozuka | JPN | 70.91 | 134.24 | 205.15 |
| 09 Patrick Chan | CHN | 72.81 | 130.74 | 203.55 |
| 10 Stephen Carriere | USA | 68.20 | 133.49 | 201.69 |
| 11 Jeremy Abbott | USA | 65.61 | 131.65 | 197.26 |
| 12 Sergei Davydov | BLR | 68.19 | 128.60 | 196.79 |
| 13 Adrian Schultheiss | SWE | 66.45 | 127.94 | 194.39 |
| 14 Kristoffer Berntsson | SWE | 69.02 | 124.70 | 193.72 |
| 15 Tomas Verner | CZE | 79.87 | 112.07 | 191.94 |
| 16 Karel Zelenka | ITA | 64.05 | 123.60 | 187.65 |
| 17 Gregor Urbas | SLO | 61.65 | 125.83 | 187.48 |
| 18 Yannick Ponsero | FRA | 64.46 | 117.60 | 182.06 |
| 19 Yusuharu Nanri | JPN | 60.89 | 118.99 | 179.88 |
| 20 Anton Kovalevski | UKR | 60.74 | 117.39 | 178.13 |
| 21 Igor Macypura | SVK | 61.19 | 108.74 | 169.93 |
| 22 Jamal Othman | SUI | 57.75 | 106.27 | 164.02 |
| 23 Chenjiang Li | CHN | 53.99 | 101.76 | 155.75 |
| 24 Abzal Rakimgaliev | KAZ | 51.58 | 98.34 | 149.92 |
| 35 Sean Carlow | AUS | 43.98 | | |
| 41 Tristan Thode | NZL | 35.29 | | |

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

| Dance Event | Nation | CD | OD | FD | Final |
|--|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| 01 Isabelle Delobel & Olivier Schoenfelder | FRA | 40.73 | 67.25 | 104.96 | 212.94 |
| 02 Tessa Virtue & Scott Moir | CAN | 38.71 | 64.81 | 105.28 | 208.80 |
| 03 Jana Khoklova & Sergei Novitski | RUS | 37.98 | 65.99 | 99.29 | 203.26 |
| 04 Tanith Belbin & Benjamin Agosto | USA | 35.02 | 64.69 | 103.29 | 203.00 |
| 05 Federica Faiella & Massimo Scafi | ITA | 37.15 | 63.55 | 101.21 | 201.91 |
| 06 Meryl Davis & Charley White | USA | 34.80 | 60.36 | 96.03 | 191.19 |
| 07 Nathalie Pechalat & Fabian Bourzat | FRA | 34.82 | 60.67 | 95.02 | 190.51 |
| 08 Sinead Kerr & John Kerr | GBR | 33.48 | 59.86 | 93.60 | 186.94 |
| 09 Alexandra Zaretski & Roman Zaretski | ISR | 32.51 | 58.10 | 88.60 | 179.21 |
| 10 Anna Cappellini & Luca Lanotteita | ITA | 31.52 | 57.05 | 90.46 | 179.03 |
| 11 Kristin Fraser & Igor Lukaninaze | AZE | 31.86 | 56.35 | 85.74 | 173.95 |
| 12 Kimberly Navarro & Brent Bonmentre | USA | 31.48 | 52.10 | 82.32 | 165.90 |
| 13 Ekaterina Bobrova & Dmitri Soloviev | RUS | 29.12 | 52.88 | 82.72 | 164.72 |
| 27 Danielle O'Brien & Gregory Merriman | AUS | 20.24 | 39.88 | | |

Top 13 results. 31 teams skated the event. 24 teams made the final.

Photo Credit: Stars On Ice



Canada's Kurt Browning was the first skater to officially break the quad barrier, achieving a four revolution toe loop at the World Championships in 1988. Amazingly, on the tenth anniversary of him doing so, he celebrated by landing the jump in performance with Stars On Ice.

THE TRIPLE AXEL TURNS 30 & 20 YEARS OF THE QUAD

As the Canadian television commentator, Debbi Wilkes, says in her 1994 book, *Ice Time*, it doesn't matter how brilliant, new wave, theatrical or adventuresome your program may be. If you don't do the tricks, it's 'see ya chum'.

Equivalent to breaking ten seconds in the 100 metre dash, they are skating's most spectacular jump elements. The triple axel and the quad help showcase figure skating as one of the most difficult sports of all to master.

What is a triple axel?

Though he attempted the quadruple toe loop more than a dozen times in competition, the Czechoslovakian champion, Petr Barna, never tried the triple axel. In fact, he compared doing it to jumping off a bridge.

From humble beginnings, the first axel was named after its creator, Axel Paulsen. The Norwegian landed the 1½ rotation jump, distinguished by its left forward outside edge take-off, in 1882. Paulsen did it, no less, in speed skates.

The first male skater to do a double axel (2½ turns in the air) was Dick Button from the USA. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Button made the almighty leap forward at the biggest competition of all. With it, he won gold at the 1948 Winter Olympics.

Five years later in 1953, Carol Heiss, a fellow American, became the first woman to do the double. The feisty baker's daughter from Queens, New York, was only 13 at the time.

Axel technique

According to Wikipedia, 'computerized biomechanical studies of skaters performing double and triple Axels have shown that skaters typically do not achieve quite as much height on the triple Axel as they do on the double. This may seem counter intuitive, since a higher jump ought to give a skater more time to complete the rotation in the air. Instead, on the triple Axel, skaters do not take such a big "step up" so that they can pull in to the rotation position more quickly.'

What is a quad?

Generating the greater speed necessary to achieve four turns this centrifugal force means even less error for landing than attempting a triple.

Using the assistance of a toe pick or preparation edge, unlike the axel, the skater takes off backwards. Crossing one leg over the other and pulling both arms tightly to the body, the jump is over in less than a second.

Twists and Throws

Pairs are even in on the action, too.

In a move called the twist lift, the male partner throws the female aloft, whereby she will rotate two, three or four times in the air. Upon turning, he must catch his partner, placing her on the ice in a landing position.

Another spectacular element is known as a throw jump. Where the twist lift required the man to catch his partner, this time the woman lands unassisted as she would in a normal jump.

The Triple Axel Turns 30 and 20 Years of the Quad

Flashback

1957 David Jenkins lands a triple axel for newsreel cameras in Sun Valley, Idaho. Truly a skater before his time, the U.S., four - time World and 1960 Olympic Champion not only performed it outside and at altitude, but in a heavy fitted dinner suit (which were de rigour for competitive skaters during that era.)

1971-74 Two men, US champions, John 'Misha' Petkevich, then Gordon McKellen, dabble with the triple axel in the early part of the decade. McKellen lands several in exhibition at the World Championships. Later in the decade, the 1980 Olympic Champion from Great Britain, mentions that he too has landed triple axels in practice.

1977 Thanks to their size disparity, Russia's Marina Cherkasova and Sergei Shakrai perform the first ever quadruple twist lift at the European Championships.

1978 Though he makes a double three on landing and almost touches down with his hand, Canadian Vern Taylor, becomes the first person to land a competitive triple axel in front of his countrymen at the World Championships in Ottawa, Ontario. Several minutes later after viewing it on video replay, the jump is recognised by the International Skating Union as official.

One can only wonder with today's judging system's list of strict deductions, whether the jump would actually count now.

1978-79 Robert Wagenhoffer from the USA, is rumored to practice quads 10 years before one is officially landed.

1983 Russia's Alexandr Fadeev attempts a quadruple toe loop at the World Championships in Helsinki.

USA's Mark Cockerell lands quads in training at the National Sports Festival, but decides against it during his performance.

1984 Alexandr Fadeev of Russia fully rotates a quadruple toe loop at the Winter Olympics in Sarejevo. A flawed landing prevents the ISU from recognising it.

Japan's Midori Ito attempts a triple axel at the NHK Trophy, falling heavily. At the exhibition gala later in the week, however, she nails the jump perfectly.

1985 Alexander Fadeev lands the triple axel in combination with a double toe loop at the World Championships in Tokyo, Japan.

1986 Josef Sabovcik of Czechoslovakia lands the first quadruple toe loop in championship competition. On slow motion replay, the camera appears to catch him touching down with his free foot. However, America's CBS records the jump from a different angle, declaring the jump good. Oddly, ISU

officials refuse the television station's offer of showing officials their footage.

1987 US Champion, Brian Boitano, attempts a quadruple toe loop at the National titles in Tacoma, Washington. Though touching down with his hand, it does not deter him from trying the jump again at the World Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio. This time, however, a heavy fall costs him the title.

Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov of Russia land a quadruple twist lift at the World Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio.

1988 Kurt Browning from Canada, breaks the quad barrier, landing a four revolution toe - loop in the free program at the World Championships in Budapest, Hungary. At the same event, Brian Boitano tries the jump but pops out of the landing.

Victor Petrenko lands the triple axel in combination with a triple toe loop at Skate Canada.

Japan's Midori Ito becomes the first woman to land a triple axel in competition. She does this in front of her countrymen at the NHK Trophy.

1989 Midori Ito of Japan lands the triple axel to help her win the World Championship. She also earns a record number of 6.0 scores at a single event for an individual skater.

Browning lands a quadruple toe loop at the Canadian championships to win the

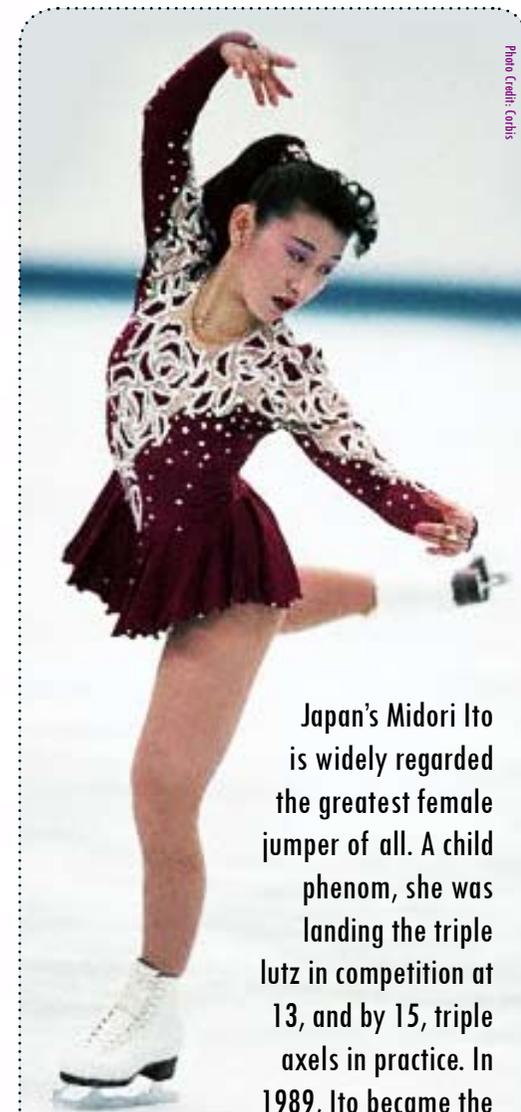


Photo Credit: Corbis

Japan's Midori Ito is widely regarded the greatest female jumper of all. A child phenom, she was landing the triple lutz in competition at 13, and by 15, triple axels in practice. In 1989, Ito became the first skater from her country to win world championship gold.

title. He two foots the jump the following month, but still wins his first World Championships in Paris. Czechoslovakia's Petr Barna also lands a quadruple toe loop at the same event.

1990 Alexei Urmanov becomes the first Russian skater to land a quadruple toe loop in competition, at the Soviet championships in December.

Petr Barna stumbles out of a quadruple toe - loop attempt at the European Championships.

Surya Bonaly tries two quads (a toe loop and salchow) at the same event, but stumbles on both attempts.

1991 Michael Chack attempts a one-foot axel/quad salchow combination at the US Nationals, but two-foots the landing.

Alexei Urmanov lands a quad toe - loop at the European Championships in January.

Tonya Harding becomes the first woman from the United States to land the triple axel. She does it at the national championships, and the World titles a month later.

Surya Bonaly is briefly credited with landing a quadruple toe loop at the World titles in Munich, Germany. Though recognised by Guinness' World Book of Records, it is only later that the jump is found to be a quarter turn short of rotation.

Elvis Stojko lands the first quad toe - loop / double toe - loop combination at the same event.

Tonya Harding from the USA, becomes the first woman to not only land the triple axel in combination at Skate America, but does so in the short program. She also lands the jump, this time on its own, in the long program.

Japan's Midori Ito lands the triple axel in combination with a double toe loop in her free skate at Trophée Lalique, site of the Albertville Winter Olympics venue.

1992 For her short program, Midori Ito lands the triple axel in combination with the double toe loop at the Japanese National Championships. In early practices at the Olympic Games, Ito is seen landing triple axels in combination with triple toe loops.

Petr Barna of the Czech Republic lands the first quadruple toe loop in Olympic competition but touch down with his free foot.

France's Surya Bonaly tries a quad toe at the Olympics, trying it again at the World Championships the following month. Both attempts are under rotated.

Japan's Midori Ito becomes the first woman to land a triple axel in Olympic competition. She rallies back from 4th place in the short program to win the silver medal.

After successfully landing one in warm - up, Canada's Lisa Sargeant falls while trying a triple axel at Skate America.

1993 Lisa Sargeant attempts a triple axel at the Canadian Championships, but two - foots the landing.

1994 Stephen Carr becomes the first Australian to land a triple axel in Olympic competition. China's Min Zhang lands a quadruple toe loop cleanly at the Winter Olympics, Lillehammer. Midori Ito of Japan lands her trademark triple axel to become the first woman to include the jump in world professional competition. She beats the 1992 Olympic Champion, Kristi Yamaguchi, for the title. Ito lands the jump again the following year at the same event.

1995 Michael Weiss falls on a quadruple toe loop attempt at the U.S. Nationals. Francis Gastellu lands a quad toe at the French Nationals.

1996 Guo Zhengxin of China becomes the first skater to land a quadruple toe loop at the World Junior Championships. The following March, he lands it at Senior Worlds in combination with a double toe loop.

1997 At the U.S. Nationals, Michael Weiss two foots a quad toe attempt.

Canada's Elvis Stojko completes the quadruple toe loop in combination, this time

with a triple toe loop at the Champion Series Final in Hamilton, Ontario.

A total of three quads are landed by three different skaters at this competition. The other two skaters are Russia's Ilya Kulik and Alexei Urmanov.

Guo Zhengxin of China becomes the first skater to land two quadruple toe loops in the one program at the World Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Elvis Stojko repeats his quad toe-triple toe at the World Championships to take the title.

Anthony Liu becomes the first Australian to land a quadruple toe loop in competition, winning the national title.

At the same competition, it is reported that the ladies' champion, Joanne Carter, is landing triple axels in practice.

1998 Chenjiang Li of China lands the first quad toe - triple toe loop at the World Junior Championships in Canada.

Todd Eldredge falls on a quad toe attempt at the U.S. Nationals.

At the same event, Michael Weiss rotates a quadruple lutz, but two foots the landing. He falls attempting the jump at the Olympic Games.

France's Sarah Abitbol and Stephane Bernadis attempt a throw triple axel at the European Championships, and a month

later at the Olympic Games. Neither attempt is ratified by the ISU.

Timothy Goebel becomes the first American to land a quadruple jump (a quad salchow in combination with a double toe loop) in competition at the Junior Champions Series Final. In so doing he also lands the first quadruple salchow and the first quad salchow in combination (as well as the first quad combination by an American). The jump is not ratified by the ISU for nearly a month.

Ilya Kulik of Russia becomes the first Olympic champion to land a quad in a winning program.

The ISU votes to permit solo quadruple jumps in the men's short program at their biennial congress in June.

The USA's Timothy Goebel lands a solo quadruple salchow at the Goodwill Games in July.

Canada's Derek Schmidt attempts quad toe loops in his short programs during two minor regional summer competitions but fails to complete the jumps cleanly.

Elvis Stojko of Canada is the first to test the new ISU ruling, by attempting a quad (toe loop) in a short program. He falls trying it at Skate America.

1999 At the Four Continents Championship in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Australia's

Anthony Liu combines the jump with a triple toe - loop to place 5th overall.

China's Min Zhang becomes the first man to land a quadruple jump (a toe loop) in a short program at the Four Continents Championship in February.

At the Junior Champion Series Final, Russia's Ilya Klimkin is the first skater to land two different quadruple jumps in competition.

Michael Weiss (USA) is the first American to land a quadruple toe at the World Championships in Helsinki. He finishes 3rd.

Timothy Goebel from the United States lands three quadruple jumps in his free program at Skate America.

Evgeny Plushenko of Russia performs a quad-triple-double (quadruple toe-triple toe-double loop) combination at the NHK Trophy.

2000 Alexei Yagudin of Russia lands two quadruple jumps in his World Championship long program, including one in combination .

Pair skaters, China's Dan Zhang and Hao Zhang, perform the first quadruple twist in a Junior competition at the Junior World Championships.

2001 Russia's Evgeny Plushenko lands a quad-triple-double-double (quadruple toe-triple toe-double loop-double loop) at the World Championships in Vancouver.

America's Sasha Cohen lands a quad salchow in warmup and practice at Skate America, but aborts her attempt in competition.

2002 Min Zhang of China becomes the first to land three quadruple jumps in the long program at the Olympic Games.

China's Shen Xue and Zhao Hongbo attempt a quadruple-throw salchow at the Olympics. Shen momentarily lands, then falls, and the jump is not ratified.

Japan's Yoshi Onda falls attempting a triple axel at the World Championships in Nagano.

Russia's Evgeny Plushenko lands a quad-triple-triple (quadruple toe-triple toe-triple loop) combination in competition at the Cup of Russia.

Ten years after the last triple axel is landed in ladies' championship competition, two skaters begin the race again. At Skate America, Japan's Yukari Nakano lands the jump only to be followed minutes later, by Ludmila Nelidina of Russia.

Japan's Miki Ando lands a quadruple salchow at the Junior Champion Series Final.

2004 Chinese pairs skaters, attempt a throw quadruple toe loop at the Four Continents Championship in Hamilton, Ontario.

2005 Mao Asada becomes the first woman to land a triple axel in junior championship competition, a jump the Japanese skater

has been attempting in competition since she was 12. With it, she wins the event and goes into the record books.

For her long program, Asada lands two triple axels (one combined with a double toe loop) in the same performance at the Japanese National Championships.

2006 Japan's Mao Asada becomes the first lady to land a triple axel in the short program at the World Junior Championships.

Rena Inoue & John Baldwin successfully land a throw triple axel at the U.S. Nationals. They repeat the move at the Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy.

Also at that Games, China's Dan Zhang comes crashing to the ice after a botched attempt at the throw quadruple salchow. To the amazement of the crowd, she regroups and with her partner, Hao Zhang, they finish their skate to win the silver medal.

2007 Nobunari Oda, lands the triple axel in combination with two triples, toe - loop and loop, at the World Championships in his home country of Japan.

Tiffany Vise and Derek Trent of the U.S.A become the first pair to land a quadruple-throw, a salchow, at the 2007 Trophee Eric Bompard.

2008 Only 17, Kevin Reynolds is the second man in the world to land a quad-triple-triple. He lands the combination at the Canadian Championships in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Allison, with one of her interviewees, Canada's World Champion, Kurt Browning, pictured together backstage during the 2007 Stars On Ice tour.

By design, Allison Manley has fused her sporting pastime with a gift for new media journalism. We talk with the Chicago-based masters' athlete & graphic artist, who is taking a fresh approach to U.S skating.

Allison Manley PODCASTS AND DOUBLE FLIPS

All images courtesy of Allison Manley



Allison, pictured with U.S ice dancer and ESPN commentator, Susie Wynne.



Right, with respected coach, Ron Ludington, who holds the record for taking the largest number of skaters to a world championship in a single year.

What inspired you to create a podcast series?

When podcasts first came into being around 2005 - 2006, I was working a really boring job. I needed a way to keep my brain interested, and music day in and day out just wasn't doing it. I found podcasts on iTunes on all sorts of topics . . . news, comedy, travel, etc.

Then in spring of 2006, I found a podcast about podcasting: how to do it, what equipment you need, all the necessary info. And I immediately decided that a podcast on skating would be terrific.

I thought of a long-form interview format, allowing the guest to really go in-depth about topics rather than be constrained to the short amount of time TV allows, or the word count limitations of printed articles. The beauty is that there are no length limits in podcasting, and the user can always pause fast-forward, or rewind.

I had enough connections in skating to at least get me through the first ten interviews, and hoped that I'd gain enough interest in the community to gain more interviews. Turned out I was right. Now people send me the names and contact info of all sorts of incredible people in the sport. I have quite the rolodex now!

And I really liked the idea of also speaking with those people in the sport who really work behind the scenes, for example Doug Wilson, who worked the television end of the sport. The man can barely do more than skate a circle around a

rink, but he's made a huge impact in skating in the United States. The interviews with those folks really provide a balanced view of how the sport operates from all points of view, just not from the that view of a famous athlete or coach.

I'm still the only consistent skating podcast out there. I've seen a few others come and go, but the authors don't stick with it for more than a few episodes. It's unfortunate because I think there are so many other ways that a skating podcast could be done that wouldn't mimic my format. There's room for more, and it's easy to do once you learn the equipment and process.

How much research, preparation, and post production goes into each podcast?

A lot!

I'd say research and preparation is minimum a half a day, longer if I need to watch a lot of past videos of performances/programs. Post production is roughly four hours. If the subject has a clear speaking style, and doesn't trip over their words much (for examples, lots of "umms" and "ahhhs") that means less editing for me, and it can then go much faster.

Do you have a list of general questions, or topics specific to each interview?

With the exception of my icebreaker question (see page 25), the questions are always specific to each interviewee.

We love that you ask each subject what their most embarrassing skating related moment is. Do you use this as an ice - breaker or otherwise?

Ice-breaker mainly, but I'll admit I'm sadistically curious as to what these great stars of skating consider embarrassing! It reminds me that we're all human, regardless of how many Olympic medals you may have.

What is your most embarrassing on - ice or off - skating related moment?

I knew I'd be asked this someday! Mine is on the pathetic end of embarrassing: just a few years ago, in my early thirties, I was competing at Adult Sectionals in the Masters division. I'd only qualified once before, because it's a tough, tough field of women. Well this one year a lot of the top girls withdrew for various reasons, leaving me with an excellent chance to not only qualify in fourth place, but to even get as high as third!

So I made the mistake of inviting my mother to come watch me compete, since the event was fairly close to my parent's place. Well, I got so nervous in front of my mom that I wiped out four times, on really easy things. It was your basic disaster skate. So a number of girls who had never beaten me in years of competing against them all passed me that day, and I got sixth. I just keep thinking how sad it is that even in my thirties, I still get nervous in front of mom!

Do you sometimes follow your subject's lead as the interview is in progress? Are there things they say which surprise you?

Always.

Sometimes they'll say things that force me to reorder the questions. Many times they'll say something that surprises me. The recent interview with Ron Ludington was a great example of that. Again, it's the beauty of the medium: since they can talk as long as they like, I can really get some terrific surprises and candor.

Apart from being a competitor yourself, what is your involvement with the USFSA's adult / masters competitive skating scene?

I'm on the Adult Committee, which helps define the rules and regulations for Adult skating.

Tell us about how your company, Rogue Element Inc, created the marketing material for the USFSA's Adult Figure Skating Championships.

I was co-chair for that event, so in a way we ended up doing the materials by default. But it was fun to apply the logo to all the materials . . . T-shirts, pins, cd cases, program, etc. Due to the success of that logo we have since been asked a few times to do other logos for other skating events.



Some of the support material Allison's company, Rogue Element Inc., created for the 2007 U.S. Adult Championships.



How involved is the design process? For those budding designers out there, what time frame are we looking at from concept to completion?

That's a loaded question!

Good logos take a lot longer than people realize. We came up with the ideas for that logo fairly quickly, but it isn't always that way. Then we had to work with USFS to make sure it fit within their branding standards. I'd say the logo alone took three months by the time it was created, shown to the adult committee, and then worked through USFS's standards. Then we needed to source it out to all the vendors for the various applications.

What is it that attracted you to the sport?

I started as a kid, about six years old. I got into it for physical therapy reasons. Actually, I was born with hip disorder that required surgery and a cast. The doctors told my parents to get me involved in sports to help keep my hips strong. Apparently, I hated ballet.

So, one of my parent's friends told them to send me to the local skating rink, which happened to be where Scott Hamilton was training at the time. My parents had no idea it was even there, let alone less than a mile from our house. So I went there and just really enjoyed it.

How many hours a week do you spend training?

I just had a baby, so now, I'm lucky if I get an hour a week! But prior to the baby, I was on the ice about six hours a week, which was about two

hours of Figures (yup!) and four hours of Moves in the Field and Freestyle.

What is it about the double flip that motivated you to learn it?

It's the next jump in the series for me to learn, and the kids just make it look so easy, I've been working on it for five years. I finally started landing it with some consistency, and then I got pregnant. Oh well! I hope I'll do it again someday.

Do you have a favourite piece of skating music?

No. It depends on how it's skated. I've seen gorgeous music skated very badly, and bad music skated well. It really depends on the interpretation and skater.

Is there any music that should be outlawed?

Well, anyone who listens to my podcasts would know that I have issues with Carmen. Actually I love the opera, I just think it's overused in skating. So unoriginal. Enough already. She's dead. Let her rest!

What are your thoughts on the current International Judging System versus the previous 6.0 format?

I have mixed feelings. I love that spins, spirals and footwork finally count for something. But I do miss a really beautiful, basic spin done spectacularly. They have to change positions so much, there's little to appreciate there. And the footwork... well, it's too much of a mess to look at now. So I think the basic premise was a good idea, but I'm not a fan of the implementation.

Do you have any favourite skaters, specific performances, or role models within the sport? If so, who are they and why?

Honestly, no. There are too many to list! I will admit I tend to prefer the more lyrical and interesting skaters who really use choreography well (Jeff Buttle, Jeremy Abbott, Matt Savoie, John Curry) over others. I do however have a list of skaters who I really can't stand and usually have to suffer through their performances, but I'll just keep those to myself!

**If you would like to listen to Allison's podcasts, go to www.manleywoman.com
For more on her design strategy firm, Rogue Element Incorporated, go to www.rogue-element.com**



Photo Credit: Ice Skating Australia



Belinda performs during her days as a competitor.

Belinda Noonan A LIFE IN SKATING

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 as a respected coach to many of Australia's top names. 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 spite of her hectic schedule, now as a newspaper editor, Belinda has generously given **aussieSKATES** her time for this interview.

What was your introduction to skating?

My mother took me skating at the Bondi Junction rink when I was two. She was part of a Mother's Club in 1960. I only know this because there is picture of me with Mum, on the ice with little bells on my skates.

As far as discovering skating, it was when I was seven and the Burwood Ice Rink opened (owned by Jim Lynch, my pair partner's father - and life-long friend, Mark Lynch). I have a clear recollection of my mother asking if I'd like to go skating at Burwood, and I said yes. The rest is history - because I loved it, and wanted to go all the time.

We were living 30 minutes drive away then, and I was probably one of the first Sydney skaters at a low level to go skating in the early hours of the morning before school. (For example, I could do an axel but that was about the extent of it. Certainly the few other skaters on the rink in the early hours were older, but not very good)

How old were you when you began taking lessons? Who were your coaches?

My first coach was Cubby Lyons, a middle-aged, sort of overweight, but compelling woman, who wore a leopard skin fabric leotard, 1960's black cat - style glasses and who scared the living daylights out of me. I did my preliminary (level test) with Cubby. She was married to a much younger man, Noel - who met an unfortunate end at the bottom of Sydney Harbour, so it was said. Although, his body was never found and to this day, no-one knows what happened to him.

It was a scandal at the time, but as a very young girl, my recollections are vague. I do remember having "dance lessons" in the public sessions with Noel - and I thought he was fabulous.

Cubby gave up teaching after Noel disappeared. So, I went to learn from Gloria Aiken (Pracey) before I turned 10. Gloria had been a student of Cubby's. I thought blonde and beautiful Gloria was the kindest, loveliest person on the planet.

She still is, 40 years later.

At 12 in 1970, my parents took the unusual step in those days of sending me to Vancouver, Canada for three months of lessons with Linda Bruakkman. Sharon and Robyn Burley had been in the previous year, and a rivalry between the dominant Melbourne skaters and the infant Sydney skating community was starting to brew. To this day I remember my lessons with Linda, (the coach of World Champion, Karen Magnussen) Brian Powers (for stroking) and Jean Westwood (dance). When I left Australia I could do the axel, a double salchow and a double loop on a cheat. When I came back I had passed four Canadian figure and free tests, three dance tests and had up to a double flip clean. I was a different skater, with a different perception forever of my sport — even for a 12 year old. I can see now this was clearly a defining point in my skating career.

Being with an eminent coach, whom I respect as a person, for her enormous understanding of figure skating and of people, has been a huge bonus in my life. I can still tell “Linda” stories as could many Canadian skaters.

For example, she stood with me for well over two hours on the “little rink” at the North Shore Winter Club in Vancouver, as I skated forward outside loops. Over and over and over, until I’d almost covered the entire rink with my pathetic offerings. Eventually I did a set of loops that must have been adequate, because Linda looked me in the eye and said, “See that last set?”

“Yes,” I said.

“That is the worst set you will ever do — you will never do less than THIS set. Is that clear?”

Bloody oath it was clear. I KNEW what the bottom line was.

When I was 17, 18 & 19, I also had the great privilege of learning from Gladys Hogg in London. That is where

I met Robin Cousins, also a student of Gladys at the time, but that would end in another year or so when the world landscape of skating changed.

However, Robin and I became life-long friends; a treasured friendship to this day. There are many lasting friends from those

days between the Aussies and the Brits, which is the greatest benefit from being in the sport. Margaret Doolan (now Nichols), Peter and Liz Cain, Brian Meek and of the Brits; Robin, Phyllida Beck (now Barden), Glynn Jones, Janet Thompson (Coton), Warren Maxwell and others. Basically we were all struggling for every penny and doing our best.

To this day I remember my lessons with Linda. . . . When I left Australia I could do the axel, a double salchow and a double loop on a cheat. When I came back, . . . I was a different skater, with a different perception forever of my sport — even for a 12 year old. I can see now this was clearly a defining point in my skating career.

Did you have any idols growing up?

Idols? We were naive in terms of skating because the coverage in Australia was nonexistent. We watched Sonia Henie — in those old 1940’s movies during school holidays because they were on, but her skating was so pathetic (we thought) and a good laugh.

Peggy Fleming was fabulous in all those TV specials, but I don’t know that she was an idol because it all seemed so removed from Australia. I remember Linda’s husband Jack taking my mother and I to Seattle from Vancouver in 1970 to see Peggy in a show there. Success on that scale seemed unobtainable — so we were setting out own paths I guess and looking to each other.

How different was skating pairs to singles?

Pairs was mostly fun and something to do after we’d practised singles — that was with Mark Lynch. My first partner, with whom I won Juniors when I was 10, Phillip Brown was 15 and I don’t remember having one conversation with him. The age gap was too great. It must have been a real trial for him, now that I think of it. Imagine being stuck with a 10-year-old!

Apparently we were destined for “great things” and the then National President, Sid Croll called my parents offering to send us overseas for training in order to make the Olympics in a few years time. But we would have to change our coach (from Gloria) to another Sydney coach and take on an overseas coach.

My parents put this to me and I came back with an absolute NO. So that was the end of that and pairs finished. In hindsight, perhaps it would have been perfect for skating, but I felt a great loyalty to Gloria, even at 10 years of age, and wouldn’t consider changing what made me happy. That would continue for another ten years.

Gloria was teaching another young boy, Mark Lynch, but we were the same height — nonetheless we did pairs for 4 or 5 years — passing tests and winning four national senior titles. As far as I can remember we were never beaten — and we did have competition. I have a recollection of an event with five teams. Imagine that now!

Mark and I are like brother and sister - even now — we have the war scars to prove it! He is very bright man. To this day, in many ways, when we get our heads together on various projects — we are unbeatable. It’s a matter of focus, determination and using what you have. I think we both learned that very early.

By the mid 1970’s when we were skating pairs and coming to grips (or not) with overhead lifts, new fangled throw jumps and death

spirals — the juggernaut that was the Russian team of Irina Rodnina and Alexander Zaitzev dominated the world pairs event. There was a suggestion for us to go to Worlds, and then we saw a “home movie” of this Russian team that someone had been able to obtain and show us. We watched it, looked at each other and said “No way!” We knew we were not good enough.

After five years, when we about 17 or 18, Mark called it a day. But later on, we did do some Xmas shows and had great fun.

In answer to your question, pairs for me was different to singles because there was someone to talk to on the ice, even during an event. I was always more serious about singles, but I love that I did pairs. The whole notion of what it takes to work with someone else would stand me in good stead for many endeavours in life — not just coaching.

How many hours a week did you train preparing for competition?

I competed when there were figures, so it was not unusual to do 30 - 40 hours in a week. Especially, when we were doing pairs. That schedule certainly kept me off the streets! In my late teens and early 20's, I was definitely a singles skater. It was four to five hours a day multiplied by five times a week, and another couple of hours on the weekend. I did do off - ice as well, but that was mostly running stairs, step ups, sit ups and leg exercises. Later (I did) weekly killer ballet classes. There was no formal off - ice training in those days. I know a lot more now.

What sort of mental preparation did you do?

Getting my head in the right place was always very important for me — and this was in the days before sports psychology, so I thought I was weird thinking what I did to get ready. I always wanted to be in a quiet place by myself and would go through a few “key” reminder points for my jumps. I had a need to plan my day and follow routine which included the entire day, off - ice warm up and on ice. I would “see” the day, warm up and do the first few jumps in my head so often that when the actual day came, it was very familiar to me.

I could only do this if I was fit enough to carry out the task and the times this mental prep came unstuck was usually because I hadn't done the hard yakka practise in the weeks leading up to the event. Another valued lesson, upon which I built my coaching career. There is no escaping the truth. You compete what you practise.

What personal goals did you set yourself overall, and at each competition?

I always set out to win. Winning Nationals was supremely important to me. Doing my best for Australia and getting up in the results as high as

possible was a prime motivator. At no time did I want to just “be there” for the hell of it as a vehicle to wear the green and the gold.

I did concede that Worlds was not an event I was ever going to win or even get into the top tiers. Another lesson I learned. If I can't do it, then do my best to help someone who might. We need to coach, encourage and foster skaters

who are able to learn the tricks and carry the thought that they CAN win.

Skating has gone from the reduction to removal of compulsory figures, a shift towards triple and quadruple jumping, to racking up as much overall technical and choreographic

complexity as possible. What are your thoughts about the current judging system?

I like many aspects about the current judging system. Especially the fairness and the quantifiable results that compare one competitor to another and one event to another. But the sameness of the programs that are being churned out is making it boring. Innovation doesn't have room or time to flourish. The quads are going, holding a beautiful

spiral or camel spin for heaps of revolutions has no value or not worth the risk. The system has the feeling of being over-regulated.

Risk is good, and it's not evident in our sport lately. We need some risk takers to move it forward technically and artistically. We need diversity of athletes, performances and officials to re-invigorate. We need judges who aren't afraid to sit outside the mean average and be able to explain why. We need to support and encourage judges in the task they undertake, not defer to them or suck up to them.

And for the record, spinning on the outside edge as a feature for sits and uprights is a load of crap - unless it's a forward camel.

What are your favourite competitive memories?

Finally winning the Nationals Senior Ladies' title in 1979 in Melbourne is a fantastic memory. After so many podium appearances, I was fed up to the back teeth and just wanted to get that title for my own satisfaction — it was not a matter of beating any other skater. Just getting the best out of myself.

So, being the slow learner I believe myself to be, I finally understood what it would take and put my shoulder to the wheel and worked. I'm sorry I learned that as late as 20 years of age. It was a perfect event for me. I did the work, was ready, confident and didn't make any errors at any point.

There was some International referee (at the event), and when the high marks went up for figures I thought it would be embarrassing, but he marked

I could only do this if I was fit enough to carry out the task and the times this mental prep came unstuck was usually because I hadn't done the hard yakka practise in the weeks leading up to the event. Another valued lesson, upon which I built my coaching career. There is no escaping the truth. You compete what you practise.

higher so I was told later — so that was cool. The short was spot on and I know what “the zone” feels like. You almost become like a zombie — and just do the job. The free program went the same way.

I remember utter relief at the end of the event and personal satisfaction. I didn't even want to party. Sleep seemed like a good idea.

Other great memories are gold for the free in Holland at the Ennia Challenge Cup when Jurg Wilhelm (the Worlds Referee back then) gave me a 5.6 in the free program, (followed by) silver in Zagreb.

Regarding Zagreb — to this day I have no idea how I ended up with that medal. It was an event similar to Nationals in 1979 for readiness and “zone-ness” But, above and below me were jumping machines in the up coming Sanda Dubravcic, and a Russian girl. There was me, with only my very reliable, fast flowing double axels — zip spins and, umm... enthusiasm.

I couldn't believe it when I came second in figures as they had always been my downfall (or I was from Australia — we'll never know).

Very surreal.

Triples were just starting to hit the scene and I didn't have one. So, Zagreb sticks out in my mind as a favourite moment. The crazy crowds were quiet until someone fell, and then they applauded and carried on like a football crowd. All the more reason to stay on your feet!

Brian Boitano's coach, Linda Leaver, said that if nothing else, pursue skating for the process. What advice did you pass on to your own students?

I totally agree with Linda and have counselled many skaters about why they are skating and what they expect. It's not about winning in judges eyes... it's winning in your own eyes and that means setting goals you CAN achieve and then work to achieve them — when you do achieve those goals its worth so much. It's called self esteem and that's why the process is worth pursuing in sport or any endeavour.

What is it like having your daughter skate?

Gorgeous Em! With her Dad 6' 3" (whatever that is in centimetres) and me being reasonably tall in modern skating terms, I knew figure skating was not going to be her sport competitively. So right from the outset, it was a matter of going a few times a week — do a couple of tests, some Aussie Skates, have fun, and choose the right coach. So, who else but Gloria, and the whole wheel went around (full circle).

Em never did early mornings (bad Mum), but skated for 5 years, passed some tests and had a great time and when she won her first competition there was great rejoicing. We became very good friends with Svetlana & Frank Guerreiro, Jonathan and his brothers during that time. Now we watch Jonno's progress with pride.

Em's skating was over by the time high school

started but it was a positive and happy experience. She's a team sport girl and into netball, touch footy and surf life saving. I was a hopeless skating mother because I didn't pay enough attention and left Gloria to it!

As a coach, you played the role of mentor, mother, and motivator. What

goals did you set your students on a weekly, monthly and seasonal basis?

This is a loaded question because there isn't a “one-fits-all” answer. A talented emerging Novice skater is an entirely different proposition to a Senior elite athlete. That goals are set, either verbally or in print, is a commonality. But, there are so many factors to bring to the table: age, physical development, ability and opportunity.

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I am a firm believer in planning. Planning takes dedication and commitment from the coach, athlete and parents. If it's only the coach who is willing to plan and the athlete can't or isn't to commit to that plan, then the goals set in macro or micro cycles fall away.

It is my experience that many skaters, parents and coaches don't plan for success but rather “hope” for it. Our successful Australian skaters have formulated a week-by-week plan that leads to an ultimate goal.

Success is perception. For example, a 10th place at Worlds or Olympics is a huge achievement for Australia. Eventually we are going after a medal — and it will happen.

It's also a massive success, personally, for an Intermediate, Novice or Junior skater to get their best performance out. That's empowering for all involved.

Therefore, in answer to your question. It's courses for horses and the coach needs to be able to evaluate achievable goals for the success of the individual skater — and counsel those goals, to achieve a positive outcome.

Some coaches insist on a full short and long program run through each day. Others require back to back or double run throughs from their skaters (when building consistency and stamina). It is believed however, that coaches from Russia only ask their skaters to work on certain elements

or sections of their programs. What are your thoughts on full run throughs, and does it depend upon the skater or the lead time up to an event to their overall success?

I was a committed coach to full run throughs (and double run throughs) - particularly in training cycles, as established in the plan, that required full run throughs. The challenge is to engage the athlete in committing to an intelligent, achievable plan. Communication, understanding and realism is vital to succeed — and then it's a bucket load of very HARD work. Once that happens the skater and coach achieve the goals.

As a coach I have been well known to say over and over "You compete what you practise." So the goal is to make the practise very good or better.

As a competitor, I've stood out there in the middle of the rink at international events many, many times. Personal experience taught me that the best results came from those events where, even though naturally nervous, I could say to myself..... "I've done this in full, so many times, now it's just one more!"

If I wasn't fit enough I paid for it in poor placings.

How different is it working with single skaters and pair teams?

Totally different.

The one-on-one dynamic changes completely. It's night and day compared with singles skaters.

How different is it working with seasoned champions to skaters who are still in the developmental stage?

Patience is needed for developmental skaters. Plans fall away regularly. Physical changes occur and therefore progress alters — sometimes incredibly fast, sometimes backwards at a speedy rate.

I would advise any coach who is working with a talented, developing athlete to be patient and think carefully before they speak or act. Young athletes can take everything the coach says as gospel. It's an enormous responsibility and again, communication with the skater and especially the parents is essential.

You were the only member on the panel to award a perfect '6.0'. Tell us about your experience as a judge on Torvill and Dean's Dancing On Ice?

That was fun.

Great for the ice rinks and I still get comments about it, even though it's two years ago.

Perhaps Dancing On Ice will be remembered

for the Bingle/Clarke union. I remember the day that Michael Clark was at the rink - on set, visiting Michael Slater (a great guy by the way). I didn't have a clue who he was (out of his creams and I'm a cricket fan!). And that was the day he met Lara. Good on 'em. I wish them happiness.

Of course, it was great to see Jayne and Chris again

and watch them do their stuff.

With numerous World and Olympic Games behind the microphone, as a commentator, what are your responsibilities to the viewing audience?

The role for me, as I see it, is very simple. "Describe the action."

I say that very easily and I understand that all media commentators come under fire — especially from within their sport, for comments made.

Commentating is the easiest skating "gig" I've ever done and I love it. Compared to skating the event, coaching or performing in shows, talking about it seems easy. That seems like a flippant comment and I don't mean it to be. I have been

very fortunate to have had a super, solid grounding in broadcasting — and there are many technical observances I won't go into here, and I do thank many talented people for those opportunities. Starting with Sandy Roberts, and also a Canadian producer who came to Australia to direct much of Channel Seven's Winter Olympic coverage and run-ups, Dave Stewart.

I was always mindful to "describe the action" in a way that the general viewing public can understand what is going on — without interrupting the performance too much. It's important, I think, for the majority of the viewing audience (who don't know anything about figure skating) to engage in the event and be able to follow the action to an end result.

For example, watch it! That helps build our sport.

As a competitor, I've stood out there in the middle of the rink at international events many, many times. Personal experience taught me that the best results came from those events where, even though naturally nervous, I could say to myself..... "I've done this in full, so many times, now it's just one more!"

- 1956** Allan Ganter (NSW) skates in the men's event at the Olympic Winter Games in Cortina - d'Ampezzo, Italy.
- 1960** The pair team of Jacqueline Mason & Mervyn Bower from NSW, compete skate at the Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley, USA.
- 1976** The brother and sister pair team of Liz & Peter Cain (NSW) win bronze at the World Junior Figure Skating Championships. Belinda Noonan (NSW) is 3rd at the Ennia Cup Challenge in The Hague, Holland.
- 1977** Belinda Noonan wins silver at the Golden Spin of Zagreb in Yugoslavia.
- 1978** Michael Pasfield (NSW) wins the compulsory figures silver medal at the World Junior Figure Skating Championships, finishing the competition in 7th place.
- 1980** Liz & Peter Cain (NSW) skate at the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid, New York, USA.
- 1984** Vicki Holland (NSW) skates in the ladies' event at the Olympic Games in Sarejevo, Yugoslavia.
- 1988** Brisbane, Queensland is awarded the World Junior Figure Skating Championships. It is the first time an ISU event is staged in the Southern Hemisphere. Representatives include Natalie Crothers (NSW), Narelle Rolfe & Stephen Roberts (NSW), Sally Biggs & David Austin (QLD). Single's skater, Tracy Brook from NSW, is Australia's youngest representative at the Olympic Winter Games. Monica MacDonald and Rodney Clarke (NSW) are the first ice dancers from Australia to be invited to the Winter Olympics.

- 1989** Danielle & Stephen Carr place 10th at the World Championships in Paris.
- 1990** Stephen Carr skates in two events (men & pairs) at the World Figure Skating Championships in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.
- 1992** Danielle & Stephen Carr place 13th in the pairs event at the Olympic Winter Games in Albertville, France. Danielle lands her recently acquired double axel in both the short and free programs.



Team NSW at the 1984 State Championships. Can you spot some of the famous faces, including Tracy Brook, Stephen & Danielle Carr, and Leanne Telling & Michael Fisher?

- Facing tremendous competition, Tamara Heggen (QLD) skates a personal best short program to make the final at the World Championships in Oakland, California, USA.
- Danielle & Stephen Carr win bronze at the prestigious Skate Canada International.
- 1994** Danielle & Stephen Carr (NSW) place 10th at the World Championships in Chiba, Japan.

- 1996** Brisbane hosts the World Junior Figure Skating Championships for a second time. Australian representatives include Joanne Carter, Michael Amentas, and pairs' skaters, Emily Minns & Terence Lyness, all from NSW.
- 1997** Joanne Carter (NSW) skates a personal best to finish 11th at the World Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland. Later that year she is the first Australian woman to land a triple lutz.

- 1998** Joanne Carter (NSW) finishes 12th at the Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan. The brother and sister pair team of Danielle & Stephen Carr go into the record books for winning the most (19) senior national titles. Joanne Carter (NSW) wins the Piruetten Trophy in Hamar, Norway.
- 1999** Queensland's Anthony Liu places 10th at the World Championships in Helsinki, Finland.

- 2000** Stephanie Zhang (QLD) wins bronze at the Junior Grand Prix event in Harbin, China. Brisbane, awarded the World Figure Skating Championships, has them withdrawn due to a legal dispute over television rights.
- 2001** Anthony Liu is a close fourth behind Russia's Alexei Yagudin at the prestigious Goodwill Games, hosted in his home town of Brisbane. At the same event, the husband and wife ice dance couple, Portia Duval — Rigby & Francis Rigby, say farewell to eligible competition. Following two years out from injury, Joanne Carter makes her return to championship competition at the Four Continents event in Salt Lake City, U.S.A.
- 2002** Stephanie Zhang (QLD) wins the short program silver medal at the World Junior Championships. Anthony Liu (QLD) is 10th at the Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. A month later at the World Championships in Nagano, Japan, Liu places 7th.
- 2004** Joanne Carter (NSW) wins bronze at the Karl Shafer Memorial Trophy in Vienna, Austria.
- 2005** Joanne Carter (NSW) finishes 4th at the Four Continents Championships. This result qualifies her to skate at the World Championships in Moscow, Russia. It is the first time she has attended world competition in seven years.
- 2007** Tina Wang (QLD) wins bronze at the Australian Olympic Youth Festival in Sydney.
- 2008** With Joanne's Carter's retirement from eligible competition, Tina Wang replaces her at the World Championships in Goteborg, Sweden.

Stephanie Zhang, shown here in the Ladies Short Program at the 2001 Four Continents Championships in Salt Lake City, Utah.



Photo Credit: Doug Parsinger

Tracy Brook (NSW)

Small and determined, her rise to the top was impressive. Firstly winning the national novice crown in 1983, she earned the junior title two years later, then became the senior ladies' champion of Australia in 1986.

In her championship debut at the 1987 World titles in Cincinnati, Ohio, Tracy beat many more experienced skaters, a huge result for our sport at the time. Brook was also one of the first Australian ladies to pack her routines with difficult double and triple jumps.

The following year, she realised her dream to skate at the Winter Olympics in Calgary, Canada.

Vicki Holland (NSW)

Quick and powerful, Vicki was a four - time national senior ladies' champion and a six - time state winner. Her rivals for the top spot during this period included Mandy James, Diana Zovko and Natasha Viel, all from Victoria.

Known for her expressive musicality, big jump combinations and fast spins, Holland represented Australia on the international circuit between 1976 and 1984.

Coached by the American, Amy Brown, Vicki's career culminated with a place on the Sarejevo Winter Olympics team. She retired from eligible competition immediately after the Games.

Tamara Heggen (QLD)

Tamara's first big victory was as a junior skater. At the 1988 Australian Championships in Sydney, with intense competition from NSW, particularly Sasha Loom & Hayley Antal, the 14 year old also beat defending champ, Natalie Crothers, for the title & the lone spot on that year's junior world team.

With long elegant lines, big jumps and complex spins, Heggen established herself as a front - runner on the senior circuit, eventually winning the national title three times. Often fighting for the top spot with the ACT's Miriam Manzano, and Joanne Carter from NSW, Tamara retired from competition in 1996 to concentrate on coaching.

Stephanie Zhang (QLD)

Born in China, Zhang was a phenom, landing difficult triple jumps by the time she was ten. At the 1998 National titles in Melbourne, the then 12 year old met her potential by winning not only the junior crown, but also placing a close second to Joanne Carter in the senior event.

By 2001, Stephanie gained international attention, skating for a home - town crowd at the Goodwill Games in Brisbane.

Her biggest success came by earning the short program silver medal at the 2002 World Junior Championships, second to eventual winner, Anne Patrice McDonough of the United States.