

Gauteng North Figure Skating

Issue 1

January 2011



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From the Chair:

Welcome back to everybody after the Christmas holidays. I hope you had a wonderful break and may 2011 be your best year ever! Personally, I had lots of time to rest, relax and enjoy some quality time with the family.

I also had time to reflect on the past year. I really enjoy the fact that we have the best province in South Africa: the most national representatives per club skaters, the best senior team (with a trophy to prove it!), the best coaches (all home grown) and willing parents that take pride in their children's achievements.

This gives me renewed energy to tackle the constant obstacles we face as a province, also in those areas where we didn't perform well. Those will be addressed and you are bound to see tangible results in the future, both on a personal and provincial level.

Enjoy the first issue of our newsletter and please tell us whether you like it or not. Also, tell us what you want to see in it and help us give it a name.

Christo

COMPETITION

We intend to send out this newsletter as often as possible, but we can't have a newsletter without a proper name!

Give us a name for the newsletter and you could win 4 Ster Kinekor movie tickets!

Send your possible name(s) to skating@gnfigureskating.co.za before the 31st of January 2011. The committee will select the best names and post in on our website www.gnfigureskating.co.za. You will then be asked to vote for your favourite by a certain date, after which we'll announce the winner and winning entry in our next newsletter.

Start sending in your names!!!!!!

LEVEL TESTS

We shall hold a test as soon as there is enough interest shown, please call us.

What to expect in 2011.

“There are going to be times when we can’t wait for somebody. Now, you’re either on the bus or off the bus.” from *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* by Tom Wolfe, 1999.

If it seems that this year is going to be a rather dull affair as we won’t be hosting any “major” competitions. But in fact, this statement could not be further from the truth. The committee is embarking on a road to become even better. Although we were able to cope with all the competitions, tests and daily management of the province, it was also our biggest challenge: we were only “coping”. The size of the committee was both an advantage and a disadvantage: The smallness meant quick decisions could be made, but a major disadvantage was that no rigorous debate took place, rigorous debate that could have meant that something being done better, more efficiently and quicker. Also, fewer hands meant some things weren’t done, and the probability of errors was more likely.

I have to compliment the rest of the committee on always delivering on time with constant pressure always on them, but the current situation will not withstand the test of time. What we did was good, really good, but a change is needed. 2010 saw a change in the Executive of SAFSA, 2011 will have to see a change in Gauteng North.

So this “quiet” year will be used to address those areas that were lacking: Member Communication, Member Statements, Club Development, assistance to the Coaches, Improving our Skaters and importantly Fund Raising.

Shortly after our next committee meeting you will receive a year planner to plan your skating year.

We are also going to talk to various members, coaches and skaters on how to

address these areas.

2011 is then the ideal year to plan and put measures in place to achieve success. It is therefore important for everybody to give their input, whether asked for or not, as this needs to be a collective effort to be the best. Mediocrity and complacency is the enemy of becoming great, we shall and must not fall prey to it.

As the quote above states, as soon as the bus starts to move, you are either on it or off. I ask you, urge you, to get on board and join us on this incredible journey.

The destination is always great, but most of all it is the journey we’ll remember!

Technical: Centering Spins by Janet Champion

Many skaters come to me for spin lessons and the first thing they usually ask is for me to invent some interesting new positions that are fun to do. Although this should be a goal for skaters, first, all the regular position spins must be controlled and centered. The most important part of a spin is the centering. Even when a skater has the ability to spin fast and in aesthetically pleasing positions all is lost if the centering is not achieved. When a skater is spinning on loops instead of circles even the most beautifully positioned spin will lose balance.

.....continued on page 5



News & Views...

Please send us your views, queries, challenges, goals, dreams, photos, ANYTHING...

We'll gladly reply to it or just share it!

News

Our National team did us proud again in Cape Town:

Juvenile Girls:
Megan Timmerman – 6th
Her 1st Nationals and thereby earning her Provincial Colours, congratulations!

Pre-Novice Girls:
Alicia Gerber – 5th
Christel Viljoen – 7th
Amber Britz – 14th

Novice Girls:
Crystal Liebenberg – 4th
Vicky Sailer – 7th

Junior Ladies:
Nadia Geldenhuys – 1st
Meredith Potgieter – 2nd

Senior Ladies:
Lejeanne Marais – 1st

SENIOR TEAM TROPHY WINNERS:
Lejeanne, Nadia & Meredith. You go ladies!!!

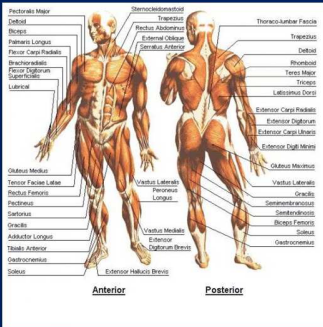
Useful Websites:

www.safsa.org.za

Figure Skating News from all around South Africa.

www.isu.org

International skating news, rules, updates & events.



shock to the spine when a fall occurs. Back injuries are quite common among figure skaters, and all necessary steps should be taken to prevent them.

Proper Warm-up

I can't stress the importance of a proper warm-up enough! In this day and age, skaters rush from school to skating with a few minutes to spare to put the skates and gloves on, leaving little time for stretching and warm-up. The problem is, those ten minutes of warm-up that the skater skips can quickly result in a muscle strain. Muscles should reach a certain temperature and mobility level before a skater completes jumps that require plyometric strength or spins and spirals that require a certain degree of flexibility. A muscle that is not warmed up can't be pushed past its maximum flexibility level, and will result in pain.

Dynamic warm-ups have gained in popularity in the past five to ten years, and involve taking each joint and muscle through its full range of motion in an active way. The tissue temperature of a muscles increases far more quickly with dynamic stretching than if a skater stretches statically. Static stretching (holding a muscle in a lengthened time period in one position) does not increase tissue temperature and will not effectively prepare a skater's muscles.



The Basics of Injury Prevention for Figure Skaters

By Lauren Downes MSPT

An athlete who participates in a sport, whether it be individual or team, obviously has an increase in risk for injury than the non-athlete. If the athlete participates in one sport year round, that risk may increase due to the repetitive motion and muscle dominance associated with that sport. Competitive figure skating is a sport that requires year round practice, with little time for rest; therefore, skaters are susceptible to injury in various joints and muscles. When a family enters the world of competitive figure skating, or even recreational skating, it is important for that family to be aware of the factors that cause and can prevent injury. By adhering to some basic guidelines, a skater may have a long and prosperous career without significant interruptions by injuries. Longevity in the sport is important to maintain consistent training and progress, and a skaters' overall musculoskeletal health is important post-skating career. This article will discuss several precautions a skater can take to prevent injury.

Proper Equipment

Biomechanical alignment of the body is influenced from the bottom up, starting at the feet. An alignment dysfunction, lack of motion, or improper arch in the foot can have an effect on the knee, hip, and back. Unlike gymnasts, who have no support on their feet, figure skaters have the luxury of wearing exceptionally designed boots to support them. A skilled boot fitter will be able to match the correct skate to a skater's level of ability, yet the correct boot is only the beginning of the process. A skater with a flat foot may need either generic or custom arch supports to prevent excessive pronation in the skate. If pronation is not addressed, it may cause

a skater to twist the boot or favor one edge over the other. A high, rigid arch can be addressed with extra cushioning in the arch of the skate, to increase the amount of shock absorption in the foot, which is lacking in a high, rigid arch.

Attention should be paid to the width of the foot, the flexibility of the ankle, and the skaters' weight. If a skater uses a boot that is too stiff or too flexible for his or her body type, it may affect a variety of joints. The ankle must bend properly for the knee and hip joints to function correctly.

Mounting of the blade in the proper position can affect a skaters' balance on the edges and the ability to maintain control in turns, spiral, spins, and jump landings and takeoffs. An excessive angle of turn-in of a skaters' knee or an anteverted hip (turned in) may require the blade to be moved to compensate for the alignment problem. An experienced boot fitter will spend a significant amount of time watching a skater balance, walk, squat, etc. to find the ideal blade alignment for that skater.

Padding is also essential to prevent injuries from falling. Every skater falls when he or she is learning a new jump, and those falls are not always pretty! Vulnerable areas are the hips and buttocks, and various types of padding have been invented to create a cushioning for the susceptible areas. If the padding does not provide enough cushioning, and a skater lands consistently on a certain spot, it may be beneficial to cut a hole in the pad over that spot and build up the padding around it. Therefore, pressure will not be put on the sore spot. Padding on the buttocks can also reduce the amount of

Ideally, 15 to 20 minutes of dynamic warm-ups should be completed, yet even 10 minutes will provide a skater with a decent warm-up to prevent muscle strains. A skater will learn which muscles are his or her 'problem area,' and can create a warm-up that is most beneficial for the body as a whole.

Off-Ice Strength and Conditioning

Every skater should be involved in an off-ice strength and conditioning program, whether it be one day or five days per week. Skating is a sport that creates dominance in certain muscle groups, and over time, a skater develops an imbalance in muscle strength. This may lead to joint or muscle pain. If a skater is properly evaluated by a health professional, that person can determine which muscles are inflexible or weak, and will guide a skater toward a program that will focus on the skaters' deficits. Sk8Strong has developed programs that will focus on skating specific muscles, yet also address the need for an overall balance in musculature to prevent injury.

Figure skating also requires a significant amount of hip stability from the gluteal and hip abductor muscles, and strength in the quadriceps. Without proper hip stability, a skater will have trouble stabilizing landings, achieving the correct alignment on jump takeoffs, and creating power for higher jumps. Gluteal and hip abductor strength (in my opinion) is lacking in many skaters, and can be the primary cause of inconsistency, injuries, and slow progression of skills. It will greatly affect the movement pattern of the lower extremity when a skater bends the knees and hips.

Core strength is absolutely necessary for a skater to prevent back injury. Skating is a sport with a high demand for core stability, and the abdominals play a large part in keeping the back and trunk healthy. At least two days of core strengthening exercise is recommended for any skater, both to prevent injury and improve skating skills.

Strength and conditioning may also involve stamina training, if a skater is at a level that demands a lengthy program. There are various methods of stamina training, including the use of a slideboard, jump rope, elliptical, or exercise bike. The slideboard is most useful, as it trains the muscles in a similar manner to skating. Why is stamina training is important to prevent injury? Near the end of a program, the muscles are fatigued. Fatigued muscles do not create as much power, and the risk of falling is increased. Stamina training will increase oxygenation to muscles, increasing the chance that the muscles will stay strong at a later point in a program. This will improve performance and decrease the risk of falls.

Flexibility: too much or too little

Since the inception of the International Judging System, there is high demand for flexibility for all skaters. Spin variations and spirals require more mobility than in years past to gain the maximum amount of points. For the lucky few that possess the natural mobility for these positions, the need for consistent stretching is not at a premium. In fact, the 'overly flexible' skater should do more strength training to compensate for the overabundance of mobility in his or her joints. Excessive joint mobility typically results in a lack of stability.

The muscles a skater should focus on for mobility are the psoas (front of the hip), hamstrings (back of the thigh), and adductor (inner thigh). A flexible psoas will help a skater reach back efficiently for jump takeoffs and extend the free leg for landings and spirals. The adductors and hamstrings will also affect a spiral and camel spin.

Quadriceps (front of thigh) and ITBand (outer thigh) tightness will not directly affect most skating moves, yet play an important role in prevention of injury. Skaters are constantly using these two muscles for power, which tends to make the muscles tighter. Both will affect mobility and motion at the knee and hip, and can cause pain around the kneecap if not stretched on a regular basis.

Try Moves Within Your Range of Motion

Some skaters just aren't meant to do a biellman or a haircutter spin, no matter how hard they try. A biellman requires a great amount of flexibility in the hamstrings, psoas, adductor muscles, and a great amount of joint mobility into extension of the lower back joints. It is recommended to consult with a physical therapist or other health professional to evaluate back mobility and flexibility of the previously mentioned muscles before trying a biellman. Forcing a joint into a position that it does not naturally reach is harmful to the joint, and a skater is setting her or himself up for injury. Find alternate ways to gain points, and your body will thank you!

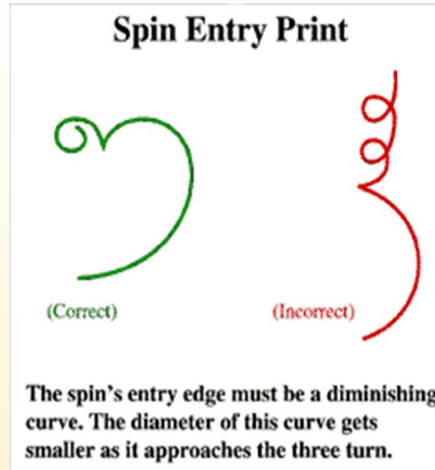


DAFT but TRUE Facts:

- A Duck's quack doesn't echo. No-one knows why.
- The average human being eats 8 spiders in their lifetime at night.
- The names of the continents all end with the same letter with which they start.
- "I am" is the shortest complete sentence in the English Language.



the three turn, allowing the free leg to swing around before the point of the three turn, starting to spin before the entry edge has diminished sufficiently.



The basic building blocks of centering spins can be learned with the one foot spin and scratch spin. A spin requires the conversion of forward momentum into rotational force. To achieve this the entry edge of a spin must be a curve whose diameter diminishes as it approaches the three turn. Examining the print on the ice can be a major help to clue the teacher in on mistakes and to assist the student in understanding good spin technique. Consider this spin entry print on ice: (See Illustration). The following is a list of some common mistakes which can cause a spin to travel: Skating to a shallow entry edge, skating an entry edge that does not progressively diminish in diameter as it approaches

Some entry edge techniques that assist in centering spins are:

With the body weight over the skating side lean into the entry edge circle (this helps to make the edge a diminishing curve). Skating a strong deep entry edge with the free leg stretched and held firmly behind until the point of the three turn. The skating knee should stay bent until at least one full turn of the spin

(when the knee straightens to soon or too suddenly balance and centering is disturbed). The skating arm leads into the spin and gradually reaches strongly back at the point of the three turn. In the scratch spin the arms and free leg should reach their forward position simultaneously.

After skating into the scratch spin many things can be done to center a spin: keep the shoulders level and down with the arms rounded slightly forward of the body. The hips should be level and square. The free leg should be at a 90 degree angle to the body, not lower. After hooking the spin wait until the arms and free leg have reached their forward position.

Try to feel the skating foot making smooth, even, little circles. Relax and allow centrifugal force to pull out on arms and free leg. Now you are centered and ready to accelerate.

As with jumping, good spins require a careful preparation and entry. Master the fundamentals first and with adequate flexibility many interesting positions can be achieved.

Coaches' Fees 2011:

Please find below, the new fee structure for the period 1 January 2011 – 31 December 2011. These are the maximum amounts that may be charged by a SAPSU coach.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	0 – 2YEARS	3 – 6 YEARS	7 +YEARS
PRO-AM (PER HOUR)	R110	R120	R130
MAX / 15 Min	R27.50	R30.00	R32.50
COACH (PER HOUR)	R155	R165	R175
MAX FEE/ 15 Min	R38.75	R41.25	R43.75
PROVINCIAL (PER HOUR)	R185	R195	R205
MAX FEE/ 15 Min	R45.00	R48.75	R51.25
NATIONAL (PER HOUR)	---	R215	R225
MAX FEE/ 15 Min	---	R53.75	R56.25
INTERNATIONAL (PER HOUR)	---	NO MAXIMUM	
MAX FEE/ 15 Min	---		

(As at December 2010)

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