

# The Olympic Skater

Newsletter of the  
Olympic Figure & Dance Club

December 2005

Associations Registered Number: A0012443U

Well I thought it was time to give this baby a name and Wendy came up with the great idea of "Olympic Skater". It not only represents the name of the rink we are based at or the club, but also what we would all love to achieve with skating. However seeing it is probably something that is out of reach for most of us, we can still call ourselves Olympians!!!

Anyway hope you like the new image. I do appreciate the feedback about the newsletters and so happy there is a positive response – so thanks to you all for your support (and it shows you are all reading it!). As mentioned before, I would love any contributions you may have for the newsletter. You can email them to me on [kwillyau@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kwillyau@ozemail.com.au). I am also looking for "Skaters of the Newsletter" to feature over the next year, so just email me and I will send you the questions.

In this newsletter, as well as the usual news, I was fortunate enough to have Miriam Manzano answer a few questions for a profile on our 5 time Australian Champion. I was lucky enough to meet Miriam in Canberra. As well as being a fantastic skater she is a lovely person and great ambassador to our sport. She will be representing Australia at the World Championships next year. Oh and check out the cool photo I found on the last page – just a new move that you can all try!

The year is also drawing to a close with our forthcoming Christmas show coming up. However now is the perfect time to start planning next year's programmes and any tests and competitions you want to do.

So let's finish the year off on a high with the Christmas Show and then party!!!



## OFDC Christmas Show

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2005 at 5pm

Admission: Adults \$5, Children and Concessions \$2

Our skaters will entertain you and Father Christmas will arrive on skates!

After the show there will be a Christmas Party in the Café.  
The club will provide drinks and please bring a plate of food to share.  
Skaters can stay on the ice after the show.

## Rink Closure Dates for the Xmas/New Year period

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2006**

Last skating day in 2005: Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December

First skating day in 2006: Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January

Please note that Bendigo is closed from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December and reopens on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm. It will be open on the weekend of the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> January. So if you want to have a skate before Oakleigh re-opens then contact the rink on 5441 3000 for session details of that weekend.

*But when the rink re-opens there will be:*

**Figure Skating Sessions for January 2006 (9<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January)**

*Evening Sessions:* Monday and Wednesday – 5.30pm to 7.30pm

*Daytime sessions:* Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – 10am to 12noon.

**Weekend – Billy Schober Edges**

Saturday and Sunday - 9.15am to 10am (Skaters must be at Preliminary level to attend)

**Regular figure sessions commences from Monday, 30th January 2006**

Figure Sessions resume at 4pm Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Aussie Skate group lessons on weekends resume on Saturday, 4<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Rink Rules and Etiquette**

Recently there was an accident involving a couple of skaters during a figure session, with one being taken away in an ambulance. Thankfully she did not break anything, but certainly ended up very sore.

As well all know skating can be quite a dangerous sport. The club can only emphasis the importance of being careful on the ice. A copy of the Figure Session Rules have been put up on the noticeboard next to the tape player. Please read these and familiarize yourself with them.

### **Ice Dancing makes a comeback!!**

It has been many years since there have been sessions dedicated to ice dancing, whether as group lessons or for social dancing. Well we have decided it would be good to get them going again to cater for those who are learning ice dancing, as well as encouraging skaters to give dancing a go and learn some new skating skills.

Whether you are a coach, judge, higher level skater or just beginning, please feel welcome to come along. This will be great for those considering doing ice dancing and help those skaters who are working on tests. They can even help the skaters who are planning on doing their Preliminary and Elementary pattern tests.

At this stage we are planning on holding them on Saturday afternoons at 12.30pm. The first lot of sessions will run for about 6 weeks (until the hockey season starts). Starting date is yet to be confirmed but will probably be the last weekend of January.

Contact myself on by email on [kwillyau@ozemail.com.au](mailto:kwillyau@ozemail.com.au) to register your interest. I will be setting up a mailing list similar to Wendy's to keep you informed. Or if you don't have email access, please ring me on 9580 7003 or 0419 587 643.

# Olympic Figure and Dance Club News

The OFDC held their AGM on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November to elect position holders and committee members. Here are your representatives for the next year.

<b>President:</b>	Paul Zechovsky
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Jack Fiddock
<b>Secretary:</b>	Kim Wilson
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Wendy Meik

## **Committee Members:**

Carmel Morrison, Marie Romeo, Kristina Erzetic, Heather Brunda, Stewart Marshall

*And other roles are being carried out by:*

<b>Competition Convenor:</b>	Wendy Meik
<b>Newsletter &amp; Memberships:</b>	Kim Wilson
<b>Second hand goods:</b>	Carmel Morrison
<b>ISV Representative:</b>	Marie Romeo
<b>Figure Session Afternoon Teas:</b>	Kristina Erzetic

As always there are plenty of jobs that need doing around the place. You don't have to be a committee member to help out. Just let Wendy know what you are interested in helping with and we will use you!!

Stewart Marshall resigned as Secretary and yours truly has taken over the role. Thanks Stewart for being Secretary for the past few years.

## **Memberships for OFDC and ISV**

Just a reminder that memberships are now due if you haven't already renewed. If you are not a member of OFDC, just to remind you that the club organizes many things for skaters, including the Xmas show and competitions and does fundraising to help skaters. And also produces this newsletter that you all seem to love (well that is what people tell me)!!!

Membership for OFDC is \$20 for renewal and \$30 for new members.

Also if you join ISV before 31<sup>st</sup> December, then the membership fee is \$50. After the 31<sup>st</sup> it will be \$60. Just give you memberships to Wendy Meik.

## **Test News**

Final test sessions for the year was held on the weekend of 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November. Congratulations to the following club members on achieving their tests.

- Preliminary – Amy Brunda, Anahi Martinez, Matthew Milligan
- Elementary 1 Pattern – Sheridan Hussein
- Primary Dance (European Waltz) – Linda Lancaster
- Elementary 1 Dance (Swing Dance) – Sheridan Hussein

It is time to start thinking if you would like to do a test next year. The first test session will be around March so please keep this mind and get practicing if you want to do your test then. Something to keep in mind when you consider going for a test is to be well prepared. Don't just try and pass – try to pass well!!!!

# Coaching News and Information

You may not be aware, but just as you might be a member of a skating club or other professional body, the coaches also have their own association. The Victorian Professional Skaters Association is the body that represents our coaches and professional skaters. They help with their development and accreditations that they are required to have to be coaches. Currently all the skating clubs have held their AGMs and the Professional Association is no different. Here are the office bearers for the forthcoming year:

<b>President:</b>	Billy Schober
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Lee Sheehan
<b>Secretary:</b>	Trevor Bussey
<b>Assistant Secretary:</b>	Michelle Taylor
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Russell Marshall

If you have any questions about the role of the Association or are interested in coaching information, then please feel free to have a chat with any of the coaches.

## Coaching Accreditation Course

Some other coaching news that you may not be aware of is the Coaching Accreditation Course to help new and potential coaches with accreditation. Trevor and Russell finished conducting the Level 1 Accreditation course [part B] at Olympic Ice Skating Centre on Tuesday 15th November (Part A was conducted in November last year). 14 people attended this course. It went very well and everyone was very attentive. The recent session was held from 9am until about 3.30pm.

Christine Joyce and Nobby Doi acted as demonstrators - Christine for Elementary 1 and 2 and Nobby for the dance. Trevor and Russell thank them for demonstrating.

The remaining parts of the course for them to achieve their qualification includes completing a written exam, having themselves being videoed giving a lesson and attend a bio-mechanics lecture, as well as doing practical work on the ice.

So well done to the following people on undertaking the course and maybe we will see them on the ice soon passing on their experience to our future skaters.

- Karolina Korfanty
- Miranda Bourn
- Janet Hopgood
- Alicia Smith
- Laura Page
- Norris Choi
- Andrea Elsworth
- Andrea Balstrup
- Katherine Firkin
- Katie Murphy
- Renee Badcock (Tasmania)
- Laura Page
- Christie Johnson
- Liz Riddell

## Skating Video Day



For what is becoming an annual ritual, we are having another skating video day at Wendy's house. If you are inclined to jump in the pool, then bring your bathers along and you can try to dunk Anthony!!!

Wendy's House at is 298 St Kilda St, Brighton.

Cost is \$5 per person. Please bring a plate of food to share.

**If you are coming, please contact Wendy on 9530 5683 (Home), 9837 1618 (Bus) or email [meik@bigpond.com](mailto:meik@bigpond.com)**

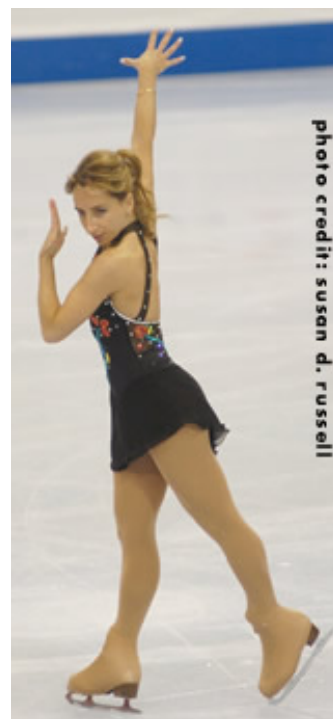
## **Profile of a Champion – Miriam Manzano**

*This newsletter I have the opportunity to feature Miriam Manzano.*

*Miriam is a five times Australian National Champion and international representative for Australia.*

*I met Miriam in Canberra during the Reg Park Artistic and got to see her skate. She has a maturity and style that is mesmerising and it was an honour to see her performance. Miriam is not a teenage jumping bean like so many world competitors, but is definitely an inspiration to those who think that you should stop competing when you reach 25!!*

*For many years now she has been in fierce competition at Nationals with Jo Carter and has a great respect for her rival. As she said to me, it is great that we have two female skaters with the full complement of triples (except axel) and are competitive internationally.*



*Miriam was kind enough to answer some questions for me by email.*

### **How many hours per week do you train?**

Approximately 25 hours (depending on time of season and competition schedule, goals, etc)

### **With on-ice training, what times and how many days per week?**

Approximately 3-4 hrs a day, 5-6 days a week

### **How much is on-ice and how much is off-ice?**

Again, it varies on the season, competition schedule and goals, eg. working on weaknesses on and off the ice. I do about 1-2 hours of off ice training a day (Sunday is my day of rest)

### **What other types of training do you do eg Ballet, aerobics, cycling?**

Heaps of stretching!!!! And rotations also incorporate ballet, pilates, skipping, plyometrics. NO CYCLING... not a fan of cycling! Lots of walking and abs too.

### **How strict is your diet?**

I don't count fat, grams or calories. I love healthy food and feeling healthy inside. I enjoy my veggies, have salad and drink 2 litres of water a day. Small frequent meals work for me. Also treating myself to something sweet pretty much everyday and not feeling guilty about it! Californian sushi rolls are my craving for the month!

### **What are your hopes for the Olympics and Worlds next year?**

My hopes..... getting to the Olympics! And definately a Personal Best at Worlds to finish my career on a great note!

### **What do you do for a living and when you are not skating (that's if you have any spare time)?**

I have a part time job as a legal secretary for a law firm and work from 12-4pm 4-5 days a week. I have a great boss who allows me plenty of time off when I need to prepare for comps or do extra training. I like having a balance in my life: working stops me from thinking about skating 24-7 and living in lycra! I get to earn some money which always helps.

Other interests: spending time with my beautiful family, friends and loving boyfriend ohhhh!! I enjoy my life, and have recently started coaching accreditation for the next phase of my life after competition which is hard to imagine.... as if I could ever leave the ice! *(Continued next page)*

**How long do you wish to keep competing for? What would you like to do when you finish skating competitively?**

It's hard to imagine not competing. Its been my life for so long but I know its time for me to move on, not just physically but emotionally too. I've done everything I've wanted to do and I really crave a normal life.

**What advice would you give to a young skater who has just started?**

Just enjoy yourself and BELIEVE in your dreams..... Skating is magic!

## Adult Competition Results from 29 October 2005

### Silver Division

1. Paul Zechovsky
2. Stewart Marshall
3. Julie Champion

### Gold Division (Under 40)

1. Christine Joyce
2. Julie-Anne Taylor
3. Kim Wilson

### Gold Division (Over 40)

1. Xenia Shaw
2. Wendy Meik
3. Carol Rivoli

### Artistic 1

1. Linda Lancaster
2. Donna Goddard
3. Michelle Brelaz
4. Ellen Nase

### Artistic 2

1. Christine Joyce
2. Julie-Anne Taylor
3. Nobby Doi

### Adult Pairs

1. Wendy Meik & Stewart Marshall

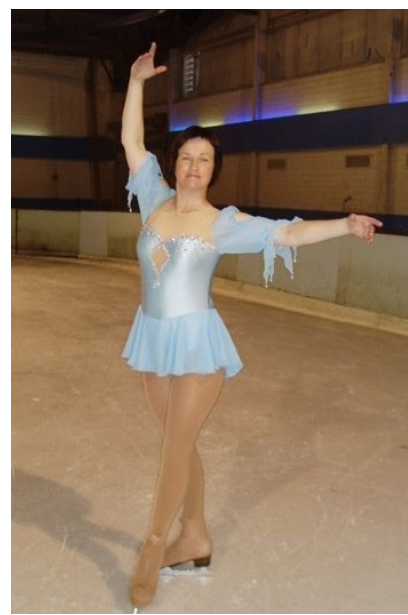
*And in my usual persuasive way, I asked Donna Goddard if she could write about the Adult Fun Skate. She kindly obliged so here is her article.*

After 10 years of adult skating, 2005 was my first year of entering competitions. My life was at a point of change, both personally and professionally, and I felt that I would also like to extend my ice skating by the challenge of public performance and competition. Well actually, I have no desire to "compete" at all, but competitions are the avenue for us skaters to devise, practice and perform a program. So along with my ice skating friends I entered the Adult Fun Skate in October. Most of us had also competed in the Masters.

My favourite aspect of skating is having the opportunity to work on artistic expression to music that moves me. Entering a competition or preparing for a show gives us the freedom to explore creative expression under the watchful guidance of our coaches. When preparing and practicing a program we can be as open, emotional, deep, funny or ridiculous as we like and hey..... we don't feel silly; it's what we're supposed to do!!

*(Continued next page)*

I especially love music that touches the deepest feelings of mankind – love, passion, fear, grief, inspiration, beauty, devotion – the qualities we both love and hate to feel and which we inevitably must all struggle with and which are unavoidably the essence of life. My music for this year is "Into the West," by Annie Lennox, from Lord of the Rings. It is about the



**Donna after her skate at the Adult Fun Skate**

passing of souls, the grief of those who are left behind and the "letting go" that is required both of the grieving ones and the passing one. Although sad and moving, the music is also peaceful, uplifting and points to the powerful, transcendent nature of undying life. These are the qualities I tried to express, to the best of my ability, while skating the program.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful and generous people who so willingly organize everything for us – in particular Wendy Meik. Her uncomplaining, gracious and calm manner and her great organizing skills are a much appreciated asset to us. I would also like to thank Kim Wilson who is doing such a marvellous job on the Newsletter.

## **November Fun Skate Results 26 November 2005**

### **Tiny Tots**

1. Brooklyn Smith
2. Natasha Jeffries
3. Stephanie Orn

### **Basic**

1. Tiffani Jeffries

### **Novice**

1. Tim Mullet
2. Taylah Smith

### **Intermediate**

1. Aimee Le Fevre
2. Erin Price

### **Freeskating Level 1**

1. Annabelle Freeman

### **Freeskating Level 2**

1. Kayla Erzetic

### **Stroking**

1. Brianna MacKnight

### **Pre-Preliminary**

1. Gabrielle Minnett
2. Michael McLaren
3. Julie Champion

### **Preliminary**

1. Rachel Wood
2. Sarah Norris

### **Elementary Ladies**

1. Julie-Anne Taylor

### **Pre-Primary Ladies**

1. Katherin Molnar

### **Artistic A – Under 8**

1. Kayla Erzetic
2. Annabelle Freeman

### **Artistic A – Over 8**

1. Rachel Wood
2. Sarah Norris

### **Artistic D – Adult**

1. Nicole Bateson
2. Michelle Brelaz

### **Adult – Gold**

1. Jennifer Fowler
2. Jason Yu
3. Carol Rivoli

### **Artistic C**

1. Kay Chim

# Skater of the newsletter

*This month's Skater of the Newsletter is Katherin Molnar.*

*Well what can I say about Katherin? I have known her for quite a few years now. She practices hard, has pretty cool spins and is particularly known for her great performance of Roxy from Chicago. I hope you enjoy her profile (I certainly did!).  
BTW – the big orange one is NOT Katherin!!*



**What is your age?** 21

**Who is your coach?** Billy Schober

**How many times do you train per week?** 3 to 4 times

**What got you into skating?**

I don't quite remember. My dad liked it so I went. Then I met nice people, notably Henri, Erin, Erica and Deb and I kept going.

**How long have you been skating?**

Skating since I was little (maybe 10) and competing properly since I was 14.

**What brand of boots and/or blades do you wear?**

Since I have the wonderful pleasure of being deathly allergic to leather, I had to find fully synthetic boots. Thanks to the ever helpful Kim Wilson, we found out that Graf Galaxys were made of some wonderful material which wasn't leather, so at the end of last season we got them in from Switzerland and put my old John Watts blades on them. (*Ed note: If you have the same problem, then this is a good recommendation.*)

**Who makes your costumes?** Kids on Broadway made a few, and Sharene Skate Wears.

**Your favourite and LEAST favourite skating move?**

Favourite, as in easiest, would have to be spins, and the sit would be the favourite. Favourite jump to do is probably double salchow (when I pull it off) because it's like you're flying!!! Least favourite. Well where do I start: salchow (single variety), my inconsistent axel, footwork and flying camel - I definitely don't feel like I'm flying in that!!

**Greatest achievement so far?**

Having the nerve (or insanity) to wear a tail and shorts to skate to Cats at Dragon City. Also being crazy enough to agree to be a cheerleader and wear SHORT shorts again.....  
Best skate was probably the Boy band thing at Christmas 2003. Ah memories!!

**Do you spin clockwise or anticlockwise?**

The normal way... although when I feel crazy enough I do dabble spinning the other way.

**Most painful or damaging fall (the more gruesome the better)!**

Ok this is going to be interesting...! (*A 3 part epic – and more graphic than “Gladiator”*)

- First really painful fall was a few years ago at Oakleigh where during my double salchow attempt I managed to kick myself in the left shin with my right toe pick. Also I wrecked a new pair of tights.
- Second, while I realise that this isn't really a fall, it caused me considerable grief. As mentioned above, I'm allergic to leather and during the 2002-2003 season, I had horrible eczema all over both feet. This lasted for almost 2 years. There were times when I could hardly walk. I went on restriction diets and had prick allergy testing to no avail. Those who

had the pleasure of seeing my feet know what I'm talking about. After having it gotten to a point where I was on the verge of quitting skating last year, that I had a patch test at the Royal Melbourne Hospital. After looking like a science experiment for 3 days, the doctor informed me that I was acutely allergic to chromate. This basically confirmed my suspicions that I was allergic to skating, because chromate is a chemical used to cure and soften leather and I reacted badly to it. So after this my old leather Wifa's were "dumped" and I got Graf Galaxy's. After the long summer break earlier this year and with the new skates my feet are back to normal and I can walk and skate and it's fabulous.

*Ed Note: Katherin did send me a photo of her feet, however if I put that photo in I would have had to put an R rating for "Horror" on the newsletter!*

- Third fall (or falls) were during my programme at the 2005 Masters Cup.

*Ed Note: Even the judges were very concerned - Mark Storton stood up during her programme to see if she was alright!*

#### **Favourite music to skate to (or perform to)**

I like interesting pieces, but I like doing artistic programmes the best. I especially like Spanish/Flamenco type music!

#### **Where do you want to go with your skating (your ambitions if you have any)?**

Maybe go to Nationals... if I learn to skate!!!!!!

## **Proposed Competition Calendar for Victoria – 2006**

This is only a proposed Calendar - dates may be changed. We will keep you informed if this happens. But please note these dates in your diary now and start preparing programmes. The main ones to consider are the Olympic Trophy and Dragon City – these are national competitions with interstate competitors coming.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
Saturday March 4 <sup>th</sup>	OFDC Fun Skate	Oakleigh
Saturday April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Skate Bendigo	Bendigo
Saturday to Monday April 15 <sup>th</sup> to 17 <sup>th</sup> (Easter Weekend)	Olympic Trophy Challenge and Artistic Cup	Oakleigh
Either: Saturday to Monday May 13 <sup>th</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> OR Friday to Sunday May 12 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup>	Sun Loong Artistic Cup and Dragon City Trophy	Bendigo
Saturday June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Skate Bendigo (Held one week prior to Hollins Trophy)	Bendigo
Saturday June 10 <sup>th</sup>	OFDC Fun Skate	Oakleigh
Monday June 12 <sup>th</sup>	Masters Cup	Oakleigh
Saturday to Sunday July 15 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup>	Victorian State Championships	Bendigo
Saturday August 5 <sup>th</sup>	Skate Bendigo	Bendigo
Saturday October 7 <sup>th</sup>	OFDC Fun Skate	Oakleigh
Saturday November 5 <sup>th</sup>	OFDC Adult Fun Skate	Oakleigh
Saturday November 25 <sup>th</sup>	OFDC Fun Skate	Oakleigh

**If you are after new skates, then go and see Daniella**

**Romeo at Bladeworx!!!**

**(Yep she has a job there now – Well done Daniella!!)**

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## **SOLO ICE DANCING - SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

For this newsletter, I would like to introduce Solo Ice Dancing to you all. I am writing from the point of view of discussions I have had with various people over the internet and also some research that I have carried out.

Now for most people, the image of ice dancing is Torvill & Dean doing Bolero. As ice dancers they were lucky to establish a great working relationship and partnership on the ice for many years. However for many young female skaters who would like to pursue ice dancing (or pairs skating for that matter), the options of partners are very limited. There are not many males out there to dance with. Solo ice dancing is helping these skaters set goals and giving them something to work towards.

Overseas, skating clubs in the US, Canada and Britain have solo dance competitions. The New Zealand Masters Games, which was held in October, had a solo dance event. In fact in Britain, solo dance has developed to a point where it is National Championship event. And artistic rollerskating in Australia has had solo dance for quite a while now at their National Championships.

Here in Australia it is starting to gain some interest. A coach in Queensland, Joan Coates is particularly interested in developing this aspect of skating. In fact they had a Solo Dance event at the Queensland State Championships. Joan is concerned about the number of female skaters who might have given up the sport because they were not getting anywhere with jumps and spins. These skaters have gained a new lease of life for skating because they now have an opportunity to work towards a competitive stream. And for adult skaters it really is a good outlet if you are the kind of person who doesn't like leaving the ice!

What I am trying to do is encourage those skaters who would like to learning dancing but think that you need a partner to do it to. Think outside the square. I have found over the years learning dancing very rewarding. The steps can be very difficult – you might be able to do a mohawk but try doing it precisely, with great attention to the edging and position of the feet – it is a lot harder than you think!! And I can spend as much time practicing a step as I do practicing a spin - and it is just as satisfying when it works well.

Of course I have a great self interest in this aspect of skating as I have been learning ice dancing for at least 11 years now. Many years ago I did a solo dance competition here at Oakleigh which was based on the Elementary 1 dance test. But at the same time I had also been working on the test so the two went hand in hand. (Now I am putting in the hard yards for my Elementary 2 test). It was during this time that my basic skating skills developed and I gained more speed, better edges and greater command over the ice.

For people like myself that don't have a partner, it would be great to have another option to put my ice dancing experience into practise. I am seeing some of the young girls playing around on the ice. I would like to specifically mention Sheridan Hussein, who as a 10 year old is learning dance just for the fun, but also working on her dance tests. I would like to think that some skaters might be encouraged to give dance a go as an adjunct to their singles skating.

### **Now how does solo dance work competitively?**

In Britain the National Championships has a number of different levels. Skaters need to do a Compulsory Dance, an Original Dance and a Free Dance. I will try and summarise what all this means (and if you don't know much about it, when you watch the Olympics next year it might help with some understanding of Ice Dancing generally).

**Compulsory Dance** – Dances are laid out in the rule book in which all skaters do exactly the same steps to set music.

**Original Dance** – Skaters are given a particular “theme” of music along the lines of ballroom dancing (eg Waltz, Tango, etc) and select their own music (as long as it is in keeping with the nominated theme) to create their own steps and interpretation. There will be some prescribed elements (like steps sequences) that they need to incorporate.

**Free Dance** – Basically the skater can do what they like, however there are prescribed elements that they must fulfill like step sequences.

So similar to figure skating, the skaters who performs the best should be judged first. But the emphasis in dance is mainly on steps, edges and difficulty of footwork. Musical interpretation also plays a big part in how the event is judged.

With considering solo dancing here, we would not be going to this extent. We might start off with just some divisions of just doing the lower level test dances. But a possibility is to take from the Aussie Skate tests and maybe do something similar to the stroking division we currently have in the Fun Skates. Anyway there are lots of possibilities and my main aim of writing this article is to put the idea in people’s minds and give some food for thought.

And to help give you more food for thought, I found this article on the Skate Today website. I thought it was very interesting from the perspective of a skater who is not aiming to be a champion, but has goals that are satisfying her own ambitions. And it also relates to Synchronized skating which is something I know many of you are interested in. So please enjoy.

Article from [www.skatetoday.com](http://www.skatetoday.com)

## **Solo Dance Leads to World Synchros for Mooney**

For six years, the only competition available for solo ice dancer Brynn-Erin Mooney was the Lake Placid Ice Dance Championships. The leggy 19-year-old has competed in novice, junior and senior solo dance in Lake Placid, winning a couple of bronze medals along the way. But it wasn't about the medals. "I like doing Lake Placid Dance because it gives me a chance to test my own abilities," she said. "I've trained there during the summer since I was nine and it's close to my home. I like being part of the world's biggest ice dancing competition. I decided when I was fourteen that I wanted to compete there and not just test all my dances."

Mooney started skating when she was four, following a hockey-playing brother to the rink to train. "When I started taking group lessons, all the other skaters were above me," Mooney remembered, "but I passed them all." Although she only found a partner once, competing in novice dance at Lake Placid with Joseph Sabanos, the talented teenager wasn't deterred from following a skating path.

"I didn't really want to move from my home to find a partner and there weren't any boys nearby," noted Mooney, who had to drive two hours from her Fort George home to Lake Placid, Saratoga Springs or Glen Falls, New York to skate. "Besides I like to do the dances by myself. I've tested half of the international ice dances and have five more to go." Mooney has gone to some lengths to compete at Lake Placid, converting two prom dresses to ice dancing costumes and borrowing another costumes from a judge who skates in Lake Placid this year. "I still have two more dresses I can convert to skating dresses," she added.

For such an individualist, her current skating priority is more of a surprise. In September 2004, Mooney started college at Miami University of Ohio to study speech pathology and audiology and began skating synchro. "I had a little bit of experience on the Lake Placid junior synchro team," she said. "Since Laura Dunn went to Miami, I started watching their synchro team. I knew when I went to college I couldn't just stop skating so I was looking for a school with a skating program. When I visited Miami, I just fell in love with the campus and the programs and the school itself, not just the skating program. Everyone supports the skating program there and I've made lots of friends."

"It's hard to make the team," she continued. "Every year about twenty freshman come in and every one of them is a strong skater. Last year, only two freshmen made the senior team and

twelve made the collegiate team. You had to have passed at least one gold test to be eligible for the tryouts and I had three so I think I had some more skills than some of the skaters who had just done singles."

"All of the skaters have to try out every year," Mooney remarked. "The coach is very particular and wants everybody to compete with one another to win their spots. There were 52 girls in the tests and I was in a row of awesome skaters in the tests. I figured if I could stay with them, I'd be OK. After the tests, I thought I had a good chance for the senior team, but thought I'd probably be on the collegiate team. I ended up ranked third of 52 and was one of the two freshmen who made the senior team."

"There are 24 skaters in both the long and short programs," Mooney explained, "twenty of whom stay on the ice during the program. Sixteen are full spots that skate both programs and eight are swing skaters. Four of the swing skaters learn both the short and the long, two do just the short and two do just the long. Since I was a freshman, I just did the short and the other freshman did just the long."

"It was a rough first four months," she remembered. "I had a real tough time adapting to the choreography. They molded me into a completely different skater. I was a twig when I left home, but I really improved my strength during the season." The synchro skaters practice on ice for ten hours a week, then spend three hours a week on weights and another hour in ballet, aerobics or Pilates. There's also time spent viewing videos of practices and performances.

"The coaches take a real interest in everything you do," Mooney stated. "We have private meetings with the coaches to discuss what to improve and they get reports every three weeks from our professors on how we were doing in class. They really believe that we're scholar-athletes and they expect us to graduate in four years. You have to take at least 12 credit hours to skate. I took 15 hours in the fall and made the Dean's List, but had to take fewer classes in the second semester because of our travel schedule. You really have to schedule your classes carefully so you can take all your labs and stuff in the fall or you'll fall behind."

The Miami team finished second at the United States Synchro Nationals and qualified for the World Synchro Championships in Goteburg, Sweden, where they finished seventh. "The USFSA is trying to push synchro to get a medal at Worlds," Mooney noted, "so we were under a lot of pressure. Worlds was really cool. It was almost like the Olympics. I'd seen and heard about competitions like that but I never got to do one. It was a full house. There were so many people waving flags and singing songs. I was pretty astounded."

"Our whole team was psyched up for the season," Mooney stated. "In 2004, we didn't get to go to Worlds and it was a big disappointment. Even our short program was selected because of that. We skated to 'The Italian Job', which is about some men who get some gold, then it's stolen and they have to get it back. That's what we wanted, to get our medal back. The program was very serious and strong and we were all stone faced when we skated. We wanted to show that we had the passion, the will and the energy to get back on top."

Mooney doesn't have much free time during the school year, but does like to hang out with friends and plays on an intramural broomball team. In high school, she played four years of soccer and competed in track and field in the long jump, triple jump, and 400 meters.



I found this on my usual trolling around forums. This is 15 year old Britt Olsen from the US. She is an Intermediate skater who has developed a new move. The Britt Glide involves maintaining her balance through a reverse glide using the inside edge of her skate blade. Her free leg and her arms are extended throughout the move and do not make contact with the ice. It started off as a training mishap when she was 8 doing a back teapot and continued from there. BTW – she also does this in a spin!!! Anyway just something else to practise – SIGH!!!