



## Historical Roller Skating

# OVERVIEW

Issue No. 8

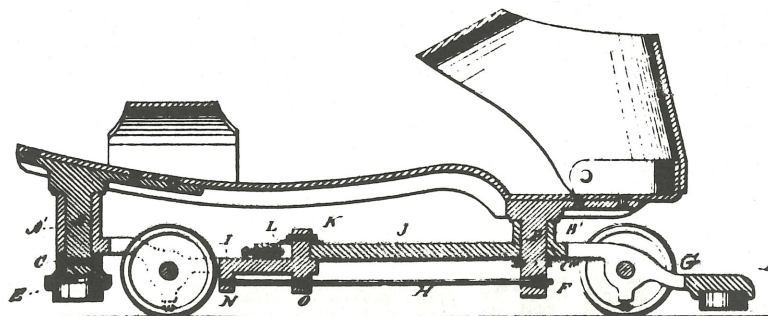
December 1983

### Curator's Corner

A few notes before launching into our stories. First of all, for those of you who are planning to be in Lincoln for the National Championships next year, please be sure to plan enough time to stop by the museum. We shall be having extended hours, most likely to include weekends. By the time next summer rolls around, we will have renovated many of our displays to include much of the materials which have been received since 1982. More on this to follow. A few words regarding the back issues of *Skate* and *Skating News* magazines the museum is offering for sale. When requested, we will send out a list of those issues available. Since these are sold on a first come, first served basis, if you want to be sure of getting the issue you want, give us a call before you send in the form and we will reserve your copy. Then when we receive your order form and check, the issue will be mailed out. A reminder; our supply of some issues is very limited. Finally, from all of us at the museum, our sincere thanks to all of you for your support in the past year, and our best wishes for the holiday season and the new year.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOE STOP

The first documented toe stop appeared in late 1800's. The forerunner of the present day toe stop was part of a Parlour Skate patented by Cyrus W. Saladee on May 16, 1876. The sketch below of that skate shows the stop, or "pad" as it was called in those days, as "E".



**Michael W. Brooslin,**  
Director & Curator

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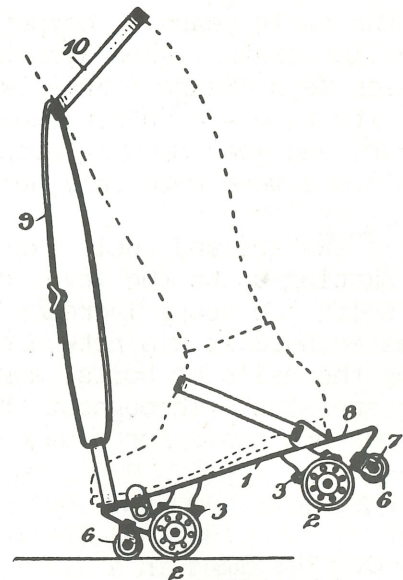
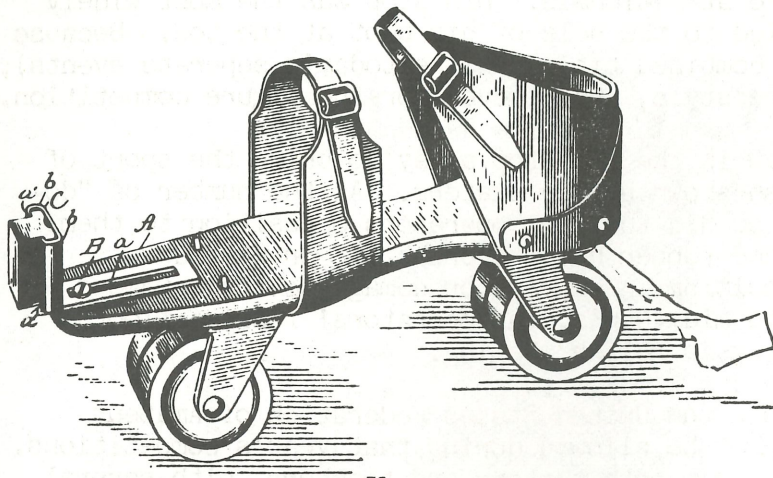
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The newsletter of the National Museum of Roller Skating is available only through membership in the museum. Minimum annual contribution is \$15. The newsletter is published 4 times a year to inform the museum's honorary members of happenings at the museum and about aspects of roller history. Although the museum cannot pay for articles, contributions by the readers are welcome. All articles, inquiries or comments should be sent to the Museum Curator.

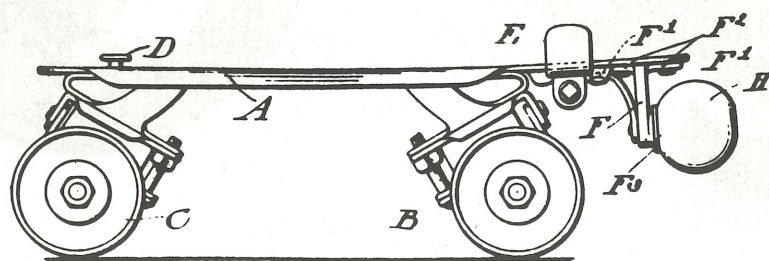
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The next step in toe stop development was the invention of an adjustable length stop, incorporated in a skate designed by Dominucus Brix in 1884 (see back cover). A few years later, J. A. Yarger invented a skate with "Brakes". This model, patented on January 5, 1886 (shown above at left), had a thumbscrew to adjust the length of the stop, which was made of molded rubber. Nothing more of toe stops is heard until 1908. In that year, a rather unique skate with stops at both the heel and toe was patented by T. M. Ferguson on September 9. In the drawing of this skate (above right), the stops appear to be an additional set of wheels mounted to the trucks. Also in 1908, a stop appeared which was quite similar to modern toe stops in design. John Hohenadel of Philadelphia patented a skate on July 28 which utilized a rubber cushion attached to the plate at the toe ("H" in the sketch below). None of these early inventions caught on with the major skating manufacturers however, and most skaters were left to make their own toe stops.

Most skates of the 1930's and early 1940's lacked toe stops - something which most of us today take for granted. It was standard procedure in those days for speed skaters to push off the start line on the flat of their skates, in a "duck walk" position. There was widespread feeling among the speed skaters that a toe stop was a hindrance rather than a help. Artistic skaters however, were of a different opinion.

As freestyle roller skating became more sophisticated, the desire for toe stops grew. The lutz, flip and mapes jumps required the use of a toe stop to duplicate the action of the rake of an ice skate. Early freestyle skaters executed jumps by tapping the side of the skate wheel when taking off. Only the most expert of skaters could do this. During 1939, Walter Stakosa of Detroit's Arena Gardens won the National Mens title with his performance of single mapes and flip jumps on skates which did not have toe stops.



During the early years of competitive skating, individuals began to improvise "rakes" for their roller skates. Bob Ryan became the first champion to use them, when in 1941 he won the Senior Mens Figure & Free Skating title at Nationals. His stop was the most widely used of its time - a rubber shoe heel nailed to the sole of his boot at the toe. Because the Figure and Free Skating events were a combined title (unlike today's separate events), the toe stops were used only during the freestyle, and removed for the figure competition.

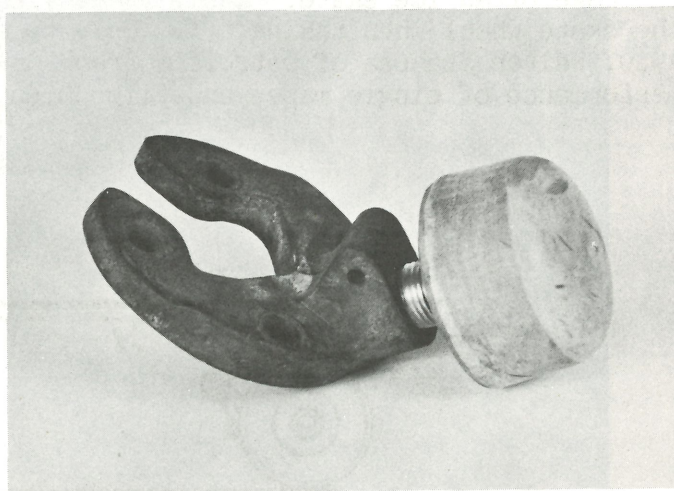
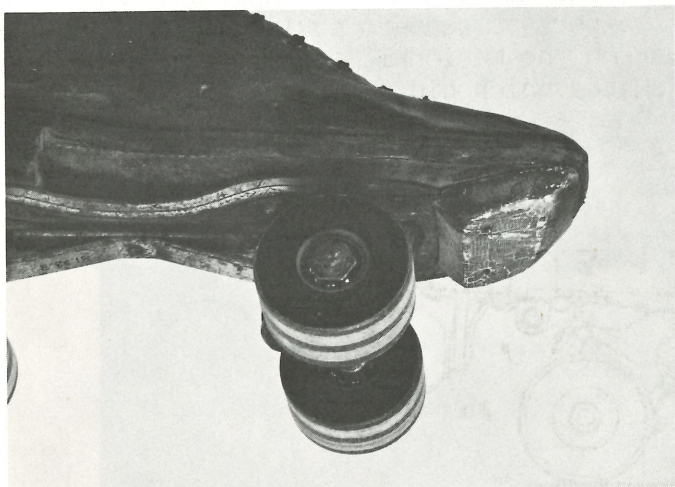
Freestyle skaters and their instructors saw in the toe stop a way to bring the sport of roller skating up to the level of expertise shown by ice skaters. As the number of "do-it-yourself" toe stops increased however, so did the rink operators opposition to them. This was because it was not uncommon for the rubber heel to break off or wear down, exposing the nails or bolts, sometimes resulting in gouging or damage to the hardwood skating surfaces. Throughout the early and mid 1940's, the operators' fear of floor damage was the basis for a major controversy in roller skating.

This controversy came to a head in 1947 when the United States Federation of Amateur Roller Skaters ruled that toe stops would not be allowed during that year's competitions. This action resulted in a storm of protest from both skaters and teachers, with several of the professionals being thrown out of that organization due to their disagreement with the Board's decision. In December however, the Board reconsidered, rescinded the ban on toe stops and reinstated the professionals.

This controversy might still be raging today if not for the efforts of one man. The single most important person in the development of the modern toe stop was Eli Fackler, and engineer by profession who was also the coach of Delores Molla, a top Senior division skater. For her use, he invented a number of different models of toe stops. His first design was a flat horseshoe shaped aluminum plate which fit around the front hanger of the Snyder skate. It had a rubber stop which screwed into this bracket. Unfortunately, the plate had a tendency to break. Fackler solved this by gradually building up the front of the bracket where the stress was the greatest. Eventually, he did away with the horseshoe mounting bracket, and in late 1947 began casting a skate plate which had an extension to the front hanger into which the bolt with the rubber stop could be screwed.

Until the 1950's, toe stops were still a rarity. Due to Eli Fackler, commercial toe stops began to be manufactured, sold as optional equipment at an extra cost. But as more and more skaters desired toe stops, the manufacturers made it a standard feature, with most companies following Fackler's lead in casting it as part of the front hanger or plate.

*Below left: The standard type of toe stop available in the 1930's; a rubber shoe heel nailed to the sole of the boot (Fred A. Martin Collection, 81.33.3, Gift of Mr. & Mrs. Richard McLauchlen) Below right: Eli Fackler's second model of the horseshoe toe stop (82.2.40, Gift of Mr. Richard G. Young)*

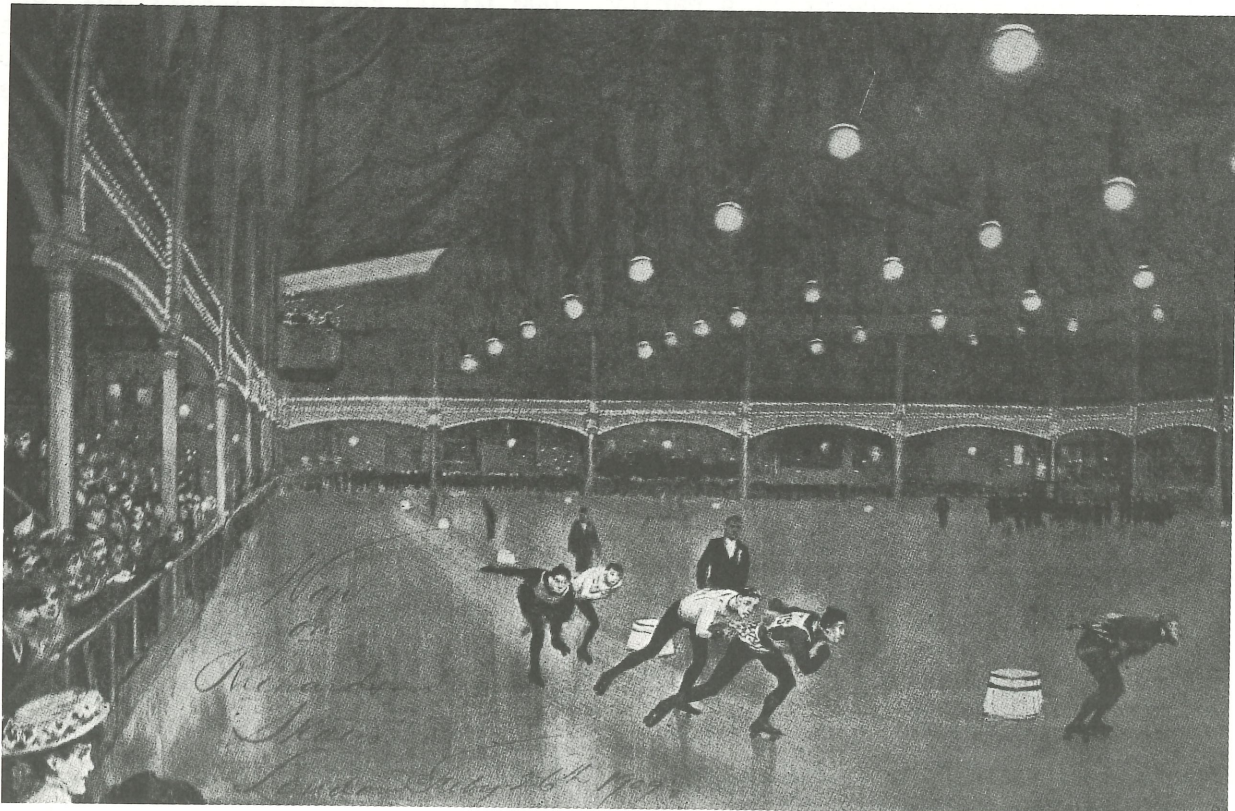


SPEED SKATING: Highlights of the World's Professional Roller Championship Races held at the Olympia Rink, London, England, in February 1909.

The track at the Olympia Rink was a massive one for its time. Free from obstructions of any kind (unlike many of its contemporary facilities), when properly measured it was six laps and five-hundred and sixty-six feet to the mile. The great length and extreme width of the skating surface, along with the large seating capacity on both the main floor and in the balcony made the Olympia the best facility in Europe in which to hold the World Championships. The publicity surrounding the event was world wide, and began months before the race was to take place, enabling the best competitors from many countries to train for the races. In addition, the advance publicity generated enormous interest in speed skating throughout Europe and the United States. Due to the advertising and the quality of the competitive field, attendance for the final event surpassed 12,000 spectators.

The judges panel was composed of high ranking officials of the National Skating Association of Great Britain, all of whom were appointed by the N.S.A. especially for this event. The contestants drew lots for placement in the various heats. The first, second and third heats were skated on Monday, February 22, with four men skating in each, the first two to qualify for the semi-finals. The fourth, fifth and sixth eliminations took place the following day with another six men advancing to the semi-finals. On Wednesday night the 24th, the two semi-final races were held with the first two men in each qualifying for the finals. In addition, the third place skater in the faster of the two semi-finals advanced to the Championship race.

The final was skated on Friday evening, February 26, 1909. The competitors moved up to the starting line, and lined up as follows: Harley Davidson, U.S.A. (pole position); C. J. Wilson, England; Allie Moore, U.S.A.; John Davidson, U.S.A.; and P. F. Powell, England. The picture below shows the skaters rounding the last turn and coming into the home straight. The results of the Championship were: Harley Davidson, followed by Allie Moore, C. J. Wilson, John Davidson, and finally P. F. Powell. Davidson received a solid gold, diamond studded medal in addition to the first prize purse of one-thousand British pounds sterling in gold.



# THE ORIGIN OF SKATE MARCHES

Note: The following was taken from "Origins of Skate Dances" by James Turner. Mr. Turner is the author of "History of Roller Skating in America", available from the RSROA, P.O. Box 81846, Lincoln NE 68501 for \$4.00 postpaid.

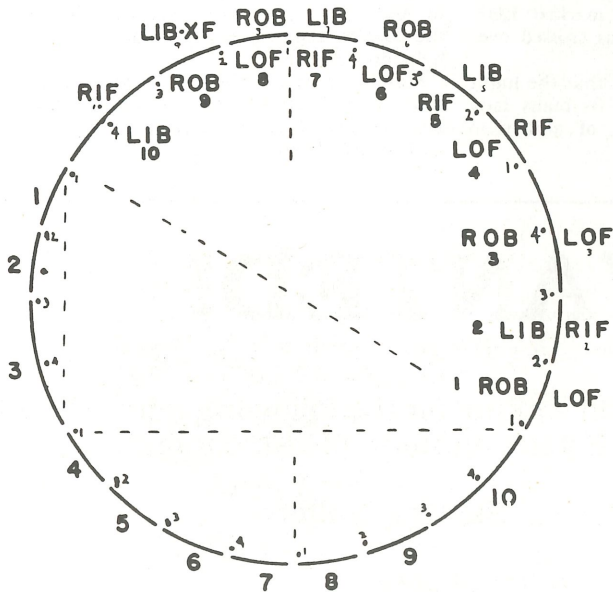
March dances, unlike waltzes, originated on skates rather than in the ballroom. The modern "Ten Step" was most likely invented by Franz Scholler in 1887, probably in Vienna, Austria. For many years it was called the "Scholler Marsch" and was skated as either a 2/4 march or as a 3/4 fast waltz.

In 1908, Georg and Elsbeth Muller, brother and sister waltz champions from Germany, learned the Ten Step from a visiting Austrian skater in Berlin (see articles on next page). At the same time, they also learned the Fourteen Step. The Mullers, being excellent waltzers, were able to learn the new dances quite quickly. From Berlin the Ten Step spread all over Europe, to England, and to America. The Mullers later moved to the United States and turned professional, teaching and inventing both ice and roller dances in Boston, and later in Detroit.

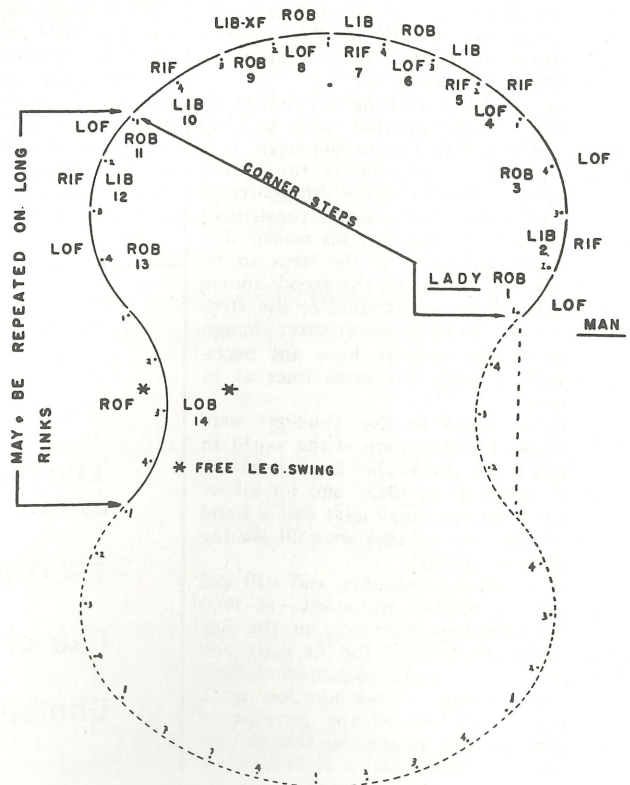
In the early part of this century, and into the 1940's, the march dances were very popular and the name "Ten Step" was often synonymous with "march". Many of these so called early ten steps actually had 12 or 13 steps in them, but they were always marches.

After the world wide success of the Ten Step, another Austrian dance was introduced by the Viennese skater Karl Schreiter, in 1909. This dance had a very difficult step to master, and it was quite popular among the more advanced skate dancers. It was called the "Side by Side Fourteen Step", but as this was often confused with the Scholler Fourteen Step (the modern Fourteen Step), another name was used, "The Killian." The Killian steps were the same as the modern dance, except that sometimes a once around pattern was used, creating deeper edges and difficult rotation problems.

## Ten-Step



## Fourteen-Step



## Evolution of Ice Skating Answer to Who Originated Ten-Step

By E. VAN DER WEYDEN

"The Roller Skating World," Chesterfield, Derbyshire, England

The Ten-Step would appear to be of slightly later vintage than the waltz; but not having access to any Austrian or German literature, I am unable to confirm even the approximate date of its inception. Nor can I be quite certain who was really responsible for creating it as, in various forms, it has been claimed by at least four people, all Austrians. Though I have questioned numerous Austrian skaters, they were all delightfully vague about it and rather puzzled as to why anyone should worry! The general impression was that it started as a solo skating movement, then gradually evolved into a pair skating step used in many programs, and finally became segregated and used as a jolly fly-round to march time.

The earliest record I can find of the steps is in "Figure Skating," by H. R. Yglesias (1905). Mr. Yglesias strengthens the impression already gained from various Austrians, for in a diagram he shows us the steps for a single skater and also for "a second skater, when the figure is done by two skaters in dancing position."

The only difference from the present steps again in Irving Brokaw's book, "The Art of Skating" (1910), this time described as the "Bohatch March"—the difference being that the lady is treated to an inside Mohawk instead of the outside, but no allowance was made for the man to change his direction while his partner indulged in this fearsome swing right across his path! Many ladies still do this inside Mohawk, but I have every reason to think this alarming manoeuvre to be due to lack of ability rather than faithfulness to the great Bohatch, of whom they have probably never heard!

On the face of all this, and the fact that in no diagrams that I have inspected prior to 1930 were the number of beats given per edge, it is not surprising that, at the time of the bronze dance test being innovated, many differences of opinion existed as to what actually constituted a correct Ten-Step. It was for this reason that the N.S.A. permitted some of the steps to remain optional, but generally the trend among professionals has been to standardize the steps a bit more as the result of experience, though methods used in this country have not necessarily followed on quite the same lines as in other countries.

Two other claimants to the Ten-Step were Hugel (figure skating champion of the world in 1897, 1899 and 1900), and Mejscrik (pair skating champion of the world in 1913), and for all we know, all four mentioned may have had a hand in developing the steps, as they were all skating at about the same period.

The dance we all do nowadays, and still call a Ten-Step, is, of course, misnamed—as it is really the Fourteen-Step, consisting of the first three steps, followed by ROF for the man, and LOB for the lady, then the whole sequence right through from the start. This addition originated in Berlin, and served the purpose of covering more ice and improving the general flow of the dance.

By ELSBETH MULLER

In an article on the "Evolution of Ice Dancing" by E. van der Weyden in the "Skating World," January 1945, it was mentioned that the author had been unable to find out who was the originator of the Ten-Step.

When reading this I immediately felt inspired to clear up the mystery and write my story of the Ten-Step.

It was on one afternoon during the first winter of the Eispalast in Berlin 1908-1909 when my brother George watched Herr Hirsch from Vienna showing new dance steps to Ludovika Eilers (now Mrs. Walter Jacobson, Finland).

He remembered the steps so well that he was able to teach me my part, and we danced the "Ten-Step" the same evening with a large crowd around. The name of the dance was "Schoellerschritt" we were told.

In the same year, another visitor from Vienna, Herr Schwarz, showed me the additional four-step with a short outside roll on the fourth step. The long roll of four beats developed much later in New York.

From the Eispalast in Berlin the Schoeller dance, mostly done to waltz time, spread all over the world under the more convenient name of the Ten-Step or Fourteen-Step.

In the "Kunstfertigkeit auf dem Eise" by Rob. Holletschek, I have on my desk the 6th edition of 1904. Franz Schoeller is credited with four dances marked 1889, one of them is the original Ten-Step with man's and lady's steps diagrammed.

The only difference from the Ten-Step we know is that a three-turn was used by the man on step 3, followed by ROB.

The lady's steps 8 and 9 are marked LOF-ROB. On step 1 the left foot was crossed over the right on LIB.

I agree with E. van der Weyden that the habit of doing 8 and 9 on inside edges by many lady skaters was due entirely to lack of ability to execute an outside Mohawk.

George and I always taught outside Mohawks, although many years back while discussing these steps I was told that I was all wrong, that in Austria they were done on inside edges.

We also preferred bringing our feet close together at transitions instead of the original way of XF and XB chasse, or taking wide steps, with the result that we were complimented frequently on the smoothness of our dancing.

I possess a list of nine compulsory dances (Pflichttänze) from Vienna. The first one named is the "Schoellerschritt" or "Zehnschrittwalzer" (Ten-Step Waltz). No. 5 is the "Mejstrickschritt" with a rocker for the man on 4, 5, 6. All other steps are the same as in the Ten-Step. No. 6 is another variation, the "Mondwalzer" (Bohatch). The man on step 7 goes into a LIF-RIB spread-eagle changing to ROB on 8, the lady does a XF-ROF on step 7.

Unfortunately no timing is given. I remember, however, that steps 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9 were short and 3, 6, 7 and 10 held longer. Mostly men wrongly shortened 7 and 8, which did not help team-work, until short steps of equal length, with the exception of 3 and 10, became standardized.

In my article in "Skating" (January 1932) I mentioned that I prefer at the end of step 9 to slide the left foot down, not crossed over but alongside the right foot, lifting it in front, thus matching my partner's free leg on step 10. Sometime later I watched a lady skater from Canada doing open Mohawk's which looked good to me.

When standardization of ice dancing was going to be discussed in New York in 1936 I pointed out the neatness of the open position on 8 and 9, with the free foot trailing on step 10, to Maribel Vinson, who was the chairman of the Dance Committee and had asked me for help and advice.

Standardization was very successful. Ever since the Fourteen-Step to march music has become one of the most popular dances on Ice and Roller Skates.

## WANTED!

The museum is still looking for the following items to add to our collection. If you can help, please contact us.

1900-1940 Mens Speed Skating Uniform

Pair of "Anagnost" roller skates

Photographs of roller skating rinks before 1930



Above: The German National Roller Hockey Team of 1936. Taken during a visit to the Pavilion Rink in Herne Bay, England. The March 1984 issue of the Museum Newsletter will have the results of the 1936 World Hockey Tourney, along with the Artistic competitions.

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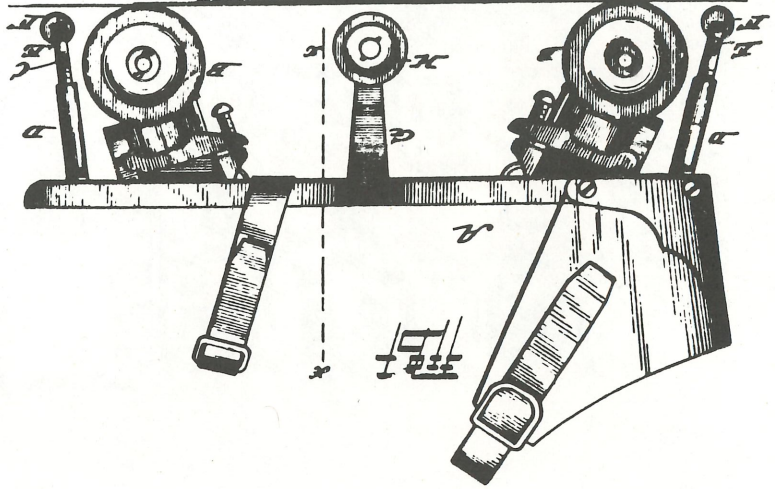
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1884-D. Brix Roller Skate patented Dec. 2, 1884. (Pat. 308,744). Here the bar "D" may be lengthened or shortened at will.



An account of the first World Amateur Championships in 1936. The Henley Skate Company of Richmond, Indiana, one of the more noted 19th century firms.

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