

Historical Roller Skating

OVERVIEW

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

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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.

CURATOR'S CORNER

As you can see by this edition of the museum newsletter, we are continuing to upgrade the quality of our services to our honorary members. We would like to thank those of you who joined our group since April, and in part, made this possible. We would like to be able to continue to both upgrade the quality and to expand our efforts to serve the roller skating community. It is only through increased support that this will be possible. Please, ask your friends, fellow skaters, coaches & teachers, and your colleagues in the roller skating industry to join with you as an honorary member of the museum. The quantity of the support we receive from the skating community will determine the extent and the quality of our future services.

On another matter, as this newsletter is issued as a service for our honorary members, we would like to know what types of articles you would like to see in future issues. Let me know what areas of roller history you would like covered. Your ideas, comments and suggestions would be greatly appreciated. In addition, please feel free to send in your own articles dealing with the history of roller skating.

Below: The contestants at the 1918 National Speed Roller Skating Championships, held from August 10 to 15, for both Professional and Amateur racers.



THE 1ST UNITED STATES AMATEUR SPEED SKATING CHAMPIONSHIP

The 1st official Amateur Speed Roller Skating Championship races were held at the Arena Gardens Roller Skating Club in Detroit, Michigan, from April 2nd through 4th, 1937. The races were sponsored by the Michigan Skating Association and sanctioned by the Amateur Skating Union of the United States. 23 competitors were entered in the only division to crown a champion: the Senior Men's. At the same time, the Inter-City Women's Amateur Championship was held, with 15 ladies entered in that competition. It was not until 1938 that the first Women's Amateur Speed Skating Championships were held. Most of the competitors in 1937 were from Detroit. Other cities represented were Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and from the East Coast, Boston and Newark, NJ.

The men's championship was awarded on the basis of overall points standings. 5 different events were held; the 440 and 880 yard, and the 1, 2, and 5 mile races. Points were awarded only for placement in the finals of each event: 30 for 1st, 20 for 2nd and 10 points for 3rd place. Lloyd Christopher of the Palladium Rink in St. Louis was the overall men's champion, with a total of 100 points. Christopher won the 2 & 5 mile events, and placed 2nd in both the 440 and 880 yard races. Finishing 2nd overall was Edward Theiner of the 100 Club in Detroit, with 60 points. Theiner won the 880 yard, took 2nd in the 2 mile, and placed 3rd in the 5 mile race. The winner of the 440 yard event was Vincent Vassali of the Dreamland Rink in Newark. Norman McGinnis, also from the 100 Club in Detroit, captured the other event, the 1 mile race. Other skaters entered in the competition were Harry Schierbaum, Harold Saindon and Edward Chudy of Chicago; Austin Thorton, Erving Reznick, Don Hamel, Leonard Godfrey, Armand Johnson and Dudley Maher of Detroit; Louis Bick of Newark; Ernest and John Scott, Jr. of Boston; Frank Wermes, Arthur and Bert Emanuel, Hershel Rhodes, Joe Ketter and John Uebel, all from Ohio; and Kenneth Haller of Pittsburg, PA.

As with the mens competition, the overall champion of the 1937 Inter-City Women's meet was determined by a points system. Three different events were held, with Nancy Flick of the Rollerdrome in Cincinnati emerging the winner. Flick took 1st in the 440 yard and 1 mile races, capturing the overall title with 60 points. Vivian Bell, also from the Rollerdrome, placed 2nd overall with 40 points from her 2nd place finishes in both the 880 yard and 1 mile events. Bell became the 1st Womens champion in 1938. The winner of the 880 yard race was Verna Picton of the Arena Gardens Club of Detroit, who finished in a tie for 3rd overall with Virginia Hancock of Detroit. Picton eventually captured the U.S. Women's title in 1940. Other competitors in the 1937 Inter-City meet were LaVeta Deemer, Shirley Hill, Beatrice Hancock, Helen Fleece, Helen & Mary Cunniff, and Ann Manion of Detroit; Mary Lou Clark of Cincinnati; Caroline Marquardt of St. Louis; Lillian Lewis of Cleveland; and Virginia Schwartz of Navarre, Ohio.

If anyone has, or knows where we can find a photo of the 1937 champions, Lloyd Christopher and Nancy Flick, please contact the museum curator.



ABOVE - The 1938 U.S. Amateur Speed Skating Champions: George Moore and Vivian Bell.

BELOW - The 1939 U.S. Senior Roller Dance Champions: Lloyd Young and Virginia Mount of the Arena Gardens Club of Detroit.



1ST OFFICIAL UNITED STATES AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIPS IN ROLLER DANCE AND FIGURE SKATING

25 Couples competed for the 1st American Roller Dance Championship at the Mineola Skating Rink, Mineola, NY, on April 27, 28 & 29, 1939. The meet was sponsored by the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association. Compulsory dances were: the Chicken Scratch, the Collegiate, Straight Waltz, Two-step, Schottische, Open position Spread Eagle Waltz, American Promenade, Closed position Spread Eagle Waltz, and Optional Dance. All competitors were requested to skate the compulsory steps, and the judges, by a process of elimination, removed all except the 3 most proficient couples. Couples eliminated in the 1st stage were given 1 point for skating, 2 points were given to those in the 2nd round, and the final eliminations received 3 points. Finalist couples were given 10 points for 1st, 7 points for 2nd, and 4 points for 3rd place. Only the 1st 10 couples were allowed to skate the Optional Dance. Each couple skated for 3 minutes. The dance was then graded by the judges and the grade given a factor of 2, this being done to "stimulate the competitors interest in advanced skate dancing". Most finalists selected the Canadian Fourteen-step in Waltz time as their Optional Dance.

The final placements in the championship were: 1st - Lloyd Young and Virginia Mount of Detroit (61 pts.); 2nd - Edward O'Neill and Helen Keil of Valley Stream, NJ (57½ pts.); 3rd - Jerry Santee and Eloise Burrous of Dayton, OH (54 pts.).

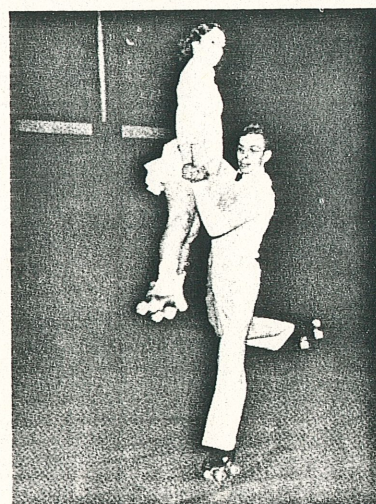
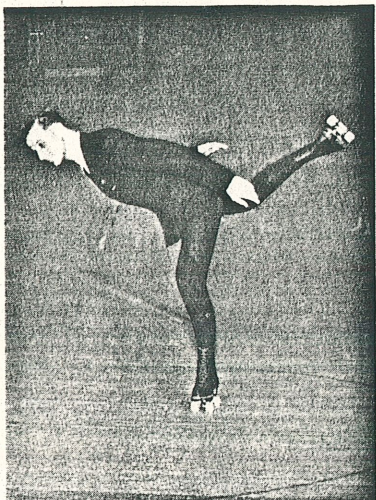
The 1st Amateur Figure Skating Championships were held at the Arena Gardens Club in Detroit, MI. Over 800 people were present to see their local favorites take 3 first places, and 8 out of the 12 total awards. In the figure skating competition, unlike today, both figures and free skating were combined. 10 figures were skated, plus 5 minutes of free style for the men, 4 mins. for the women. It was not until 1949 that figure and free skating became separate events.

In the Senior Ladies division there were 8 competitors, from Dayton, Detroit, Salt Lake City and Mineola, NY. Jane Peace Holcombe of Detroit won the championship, with Margot Allred of Dayton placing 2nd.

The Senior Men's division saw 10 competitors entered, from the same cities plus Saginaw, MI, and Cleveland, OH. Walter Stokosa of the Arena Gardens Club of Detroit emerged the winner in 1939. He repeated as the champ in 1940.

In the Pairs Skating event of 5 minutes duration, there were 7 entries. William B. Best and Eldora Andrews of Detroit were the 1st place couple, with William Opatrny and Dorothy Kolb of Pittsburg, PA finishing second.

Judges for the Dance Championships were Rodney Peters of St. Louis, Perry Rawson from New Jersey, and William H. Carpenter of Uhrichsville, OH (profiled in the last issue of the museum newsletter). Judges for the Figure & Pairs events were Elsbeth Muller of New York City, C.J. Fulton of Cleveland, and Oscar Klausner, James K. Lowden and Harry G. Diefendorf of Detroit.



Top to Bottom - The 1939 U.S. Senior Mens Champion, Walter Stokosa. Jane Peace Holcombe, the 1939 Senior Ladies Champion. Winners of the 1939 U.S. Senior Pairs Championship, Eldora Andrews and Bill B. Best.